



Attendance Policy and Procedures

Policy Updated: Sept 2018

To be reviewed: Sept 2020

Presented to Governors Sept 2018

At Acklam Whin Primary School we recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These are key factors in ensuring your child achieves well during their time at school. Parents/carers of school age children registered at a school have a legal duty to ensure their children receive suitable education, by regular attendance at school. All children are expected to attend school every day unless they are too ill to do so or due to some other unavoidable cause notified to the school.

We ask that the parents/carers of all our children follow our attendance policy and procedures.

AIMS

1. To encourage regular attendance of all our children.
2. To identify patterns of irregular attendance at an early stage.
3. To work with parents to overcome any difficulties that may cause absence/poor attendance.

EXPECTATIONS

Parents/carers:

- To ensure that children attend school on time each day
- To notify the school on each day of absence the reasons for their child's absence before 9:30am. This can be done in person at the school office, by telephone or by email to the school.

Children:

- To follow the school rules
- To attend school on time each day they are well enough

School:

- To closely monitor attendance of all children on roll and take action as appropriate.
- To make first day absence calls to the parents of all children who are absent without explanation.
- To categorise absence as authorised or unauthorised.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

At Acklam Whin Primary School we have specific people in school that lead on attendance however overall everyone at school is responsible for the attendance of the children who attend here. Where parents/carers have any concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality to school we encourage them to approach a member of staff about this at the earliest opportunity.

The taking of registers is a legal requirement of the school. Registers are taken promptly by the class teacher at the start of each session. These are taken electronically. Any absences are then followed up in the first instance by the office staff (please see first day response procedure below).

Monitoring attendance is part of the Attendance Lead's role. They ensure that weekly attendance rates are gathered and pass on any concerns to the Education Welfare Officer as appropriate. Half termly letters are sent to parent/carers informing them of the level of attendance of their child. Parent/carers may also be asked to attend a meeting in school with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss how we can support a reduction in absence or late arrivals to school.

First day response

Should children be absent from school we ask that parents/carers notify the school office in person, by phone or by email of the reason for absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence. The school

has a 24 hour answerphone which can be used at any time by parents to notify the school of the reason for absence.

The parents/carers of all children absent without a reason provided will be contacted by the school office. Parents/carers will be asked to explain the reason for absence. Depending on the reason for absence given the school will then determine if the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Where parents cannot be contacted an answerphone message will be left, if possible, asking for contact from the parent/carer. The first two contacts will be used in an effort to establish the reason for absence and the child's whereabouts. It is therefore extremely important that the school is notified immediately of any changes of contact numbers including mobile phone numbers. The Education Welfare Officer may be asked to make an unannounced home visit where parents/carers have not responded to these calls.

If a child continues to be absent without any contact from parents and the home visit was not successful this will be considered a safeguarding concern by the school. The school will follow the appropriate safeguarding steps in line with our policy and may also make a Children Missing Education referral to the local authority who will also then investigate the absence.

Should a child return to school without a reason provided for the absence the absence will remain unauthorised.

Categorising absence

Acklam Whin Primary School follow the national guidance on register codes. This can be found in the publication *School Attendance, Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities, November 2016*

Authorised absence

An authorised absence code will be entered into the register where a valid reason for absence is communicated to the school. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence to cover illness absence and medical appointments. We ask wherever possible that medical/dental/opticians appointments are made outside of school hours. Children are expected to attend school before/after the appointment where possible.

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence code will be entered into the child's register where the school feel that the reason for absence provided is not valid. For example, absences for shopping trips, birthdays or for holiday absence (except where this is deemed exceptional by the Head teacher) will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absence may result in intervention from the Education Welfare Officer. In the event of persistent unauthorised absence, formal attendance procedures will commence which may lead to penalty notices or court action against parents. We always hope to avoid such procedures by working together at an early stage with parents/carers.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A child may be considered to be a persistent absentee if they miss 10% of their schooling no matter what the reason. This level of absence will have a significant effect on your child's education. Parents/carers will be notified on a half termly basis by letter should their child fall into this

category. Parents/ carers are asked to approach any staff member if they require support in overcoming any barriers to regular attendance. Whilst the school understands that there may be times when absence is unavoidable such as when a child is ill or due to an unexpected event the national average and therefore the minimum expected attendance for all primary school children is 96%.

Parents/carers of children who are persistent absentees may be subject to more formal attendance procedures from the Education Welfare Officer.

PUNCTUALITY

We expect that all children will attend school on time each day. Late arrival to school can be disruptive not only to the child themselves but also to the rest of the class. Registers are taken promptly at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Registers close at 9am and 1pm and any child arriving into school after this time will be required to enter the school through the main entrance. The reason for late arrival will be recorded electronically and the child's register will reflect that late arrival by the appropriate register code.

If late arrival is frequent the parent/carer will be sent a letter informing them of schools concern. Parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting in school with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for late arrival with a view to supporting the parent/carer and child to be able to arrive to school on time each day.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

We strongly discourage parents/carers from taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. In line with national regulations applications for leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. All applications for leave of absence must be made in writing using the appropriate leave of absence form. These forms are kept in the main reception area of the school. All requests for absence must be made prior to any holiday being booked and each application will be considered on its own merits and set of circumstances.

Please note that it is highly unlikely that leave of absence for holidays will be authorised by the school.

Should the absence be recorded as unauthorised the parent/carer may receive a formal warning letter that states if the absence is taken a penalty notice will be issued to parents/carers. Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer responsible for the child at a rate of £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days. On the 22nd day the fine increases to £120 per parent per child payable from the 22nd to the 28th day from issue. Should the penalty notice remain unpaid after this time parents/carers may be prosecuted by the local authority under the Education Act 1996 and be liable for a criminal conviction and a range of penalties including a fine up to £1000.

EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER

The Education Welfare Officer works closely with the Attendance Lead and the School Business Manager. The Education Welfare Officer may contact parents by telephone, in writing or by home visit where attendance rates are below average or where there have been unexplained absences. The Education Welfare Officer where necessary will also commence formal attendance procedures where unauthorised absence or late arrival to school is persistent. They can also make referrals to the local authority for sanctions to be issued to parents where despite intervention and support attendance levels have not improved.

ENCOURAGING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Teachers and support staff regularly praise and encourage regular attendance. Excellent levels of attendance are recognised on a termly and annual basis with certificates and prizes awarded to both year groups and individual pupils.

NURSERY ABSENCE

Although nursery education is not statutory, it is important that good attendance and punctuality habits are formed. Our Nursery places are taken quickly each year and so it is important parents use their allocated places. Parents/carers of children with persistent unexplained absence will be notified that they are at risk of losing their nursery place. The nursery place may be withdrawn and allocated to someone else if the absence continues.