

YENTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims and Targets

The Governing body of Yenton Primary School places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school.

Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 96% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (any child with an attendance of less than 90% is classed as persistent absence);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early and robustly to address any patterns of absence.

Procedures

PARENTS will:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly
- Notify school on the first day of absence before 8.30am by phone/letter

- Complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances
- Ensure when their child returns to school they bring in written confirmation of why they were absent
- Hand in medical evidence for 4 or more days absence due to illness and meet with the Deputy Head Teacher (or lead attendance teacher) to discuss their child's attendance when necessary

CLASS TEACHERS will:

- Complete e-portal register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon)
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the Phase Leaders/Deputy Head Teacher/lead attendance teacher (LAT)
- Provide work for children to do at home if an absence is due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances
- Make parents aware of concerns over good attendance

OFFICE STAFF will:

- Input attendance data on CMIS system
- Print off official reports for each calendar month for monitoring purposes
- Complete the absence record book
- Monitor alongside the Deputy Head Teacher/(LAT) , patterns of attendance and lateness
- Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence
- Aid the Deputy Head Teacher and Attendance Officer in administering Spotlight/Penalty Notice procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern

DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER/LAT (working alongside INDEPENDENT ATTENDANCE OFFICER) will:

- Monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified
- Inform Governors of attendance records

- Inform parents of individual pupils attendance record, each term at Parents' Evening and in the end of year schools report
- Inform/Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern
- Make referrals to the Education Legal Intervention Team
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team.
- Carry out Spotlight procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern. (See Appendices for Procedures of Spotlight and Attendance Letters)

ATTENDANCE AND WELFARE OFFICER will:

- Support the school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns.
- Support families in ensuring their child/ren attend school regularly.
- Prepare and facilitate school attendance review meetings for punctuality and organise Late Gate sessions to monitor pupil punctuality
- Contact you by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved

GOVERNING BOARD will:

- Monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.
- Nominate a named Governor for Attendance.

Late Procedures

Children who arrive late (after the registers have closed at 9:15am) and have gone to the office entrance, must be signed in by their parent/carer or appropriate adult, a reason for the lateness is also requested.

The admin staff will update the CMIS system with their mark.

Children who frequently arrive late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Attendance Officer considered.

The Attendance Officer is to carry out unannounced 'Late Gate' sessions to challenge parents over reasons for poor punctuality.

Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M (in). For regular (e.g. once a week) medical issues causing lateness the child will have their code move from M to / (present).

Any child arriving after 09.15 for any reason other than medical will be marked U (late after registers closed).

Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

Holiday in Term Time Procedures

Children attending Birmingham schools are not allowed days absence for holidays.

Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised (G) - Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised.

Parents may choose to complete an 'Exceptional Circumstances Form' stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Headteacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. (For a list of examples of exceptional circumstances - See Appendix A).

If an 'exceptional circumstance form' is rejected then the absence; should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time; is dealt with under the Spotlight process.

Strategies for Monitoring Good Attendance

- Individual certificates and prizes are presented termly where full attendance (100%) has been gained.

Individual prizes/reward afternoons are presented each half year where full attendance (100%) for this period has been gained.

- 100% attendance for the year is rewarded with an individual certificate.
- Trip to Conkers Activity Park for ALL children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole school year.
- Weekly assembly to award the best attending class and rewards given.
- Each class with the highest attendance in KS1 and KS2, receive a pizza the following week.

- Weekly attendance shared with whole school and written on attendance notice board outside the Head Teachers Office
- Deputy Head Teacher/LAT will monitor attendance and any child with below 96% attendance will trigger concern and an action plan put in place.
- Children with attendance below 90% (Persistent Absenteeism) will be monitored by the Deputy Head Teacher/Attendance Officer//LAT and Court Section.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015, updated in 2016).

All Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12. This attendance policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the SCHOOL'S Safeguarding Policy.

Illness

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern (we expect medical evidence to be provided for absences of more than 4 days). In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

Appendices

Appendix A - examples of exceptional circumstances

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed and Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

For example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child; nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from School. The Head Teacher will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time. If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teachers authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Appendix B - Codes

PRESENT / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)

L Late (before registers closed)

AUTHORISED ABSENCE C

Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)

E Excluded (no alternative provision made)

F Extended family holiday (agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)

M Medical/Dental appointments

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)

U Late (after registers closed)

APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITY -

PRESENT B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)

D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)

J Interview

P Approved sporting activity

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

NOT COUNTED IN POSSIBLE ATTENDANCES

X Non-compulsory school age absence

Y Enforced closure - whole school or partial

Z Pupil not yet on roll

School closed to pupils

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Appendix C – Spotlight

The aim of the spotlight is to work in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. It is an incentive designed to raise individual and whole school attendance.

The spotlight programme raises parents/carers, pupils and community awareness of the importance of school attendance, the negative impact of absence and demonstrates that the Local Authority uses statutory powers to bring about change.

The programme is run by the school and supported by court section that can and will take legal action to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibilities.

The school publicises the use of the spotlight programme and informs parents/carers who are entered into the programme, by letter.

Parents/carers will be expected to work with the school to improve attendance. The school will inform all parents/carers of the outcomes following the spotlight's completion.

Appendix D - Attendance Letters

Letter 1 (an example)

Spotlight on Attendance

A very important message for all parents

Dear Parent,

Yenton Primary School is working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance.

We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

You may be aware that Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional. If your child takes leave that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, it will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and legal action may be taken.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendship with peers and support from staff can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- Issuing penalty notices: Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year equals this number of days absent which is approximately this many weeks absent which means this number of lessons missed:-

- **95%- 9 days- 2 weeks- 50 lessons**
- **90-% 19 days -4 weeks- 100 lessons**
- **85% -29 days- 6 weeks- 150 lessons**
- **80% -38 days- 8 weeks -200 lessons**

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Letter 2 (an example)

Dear Parent

Your child's poor attendance at school this year is causing serious concern as he/she has been absent for number of sessions out of a possible number of sessions and this will make it much harder for your child to achieve good results in their school work.

Most/ All of the absence has been due to illness or for medical reasons. It has been decided that due to the high level of your child's absence, the Head Teacher will no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons unless supported by medical evidence.

I have to advise you that we monitor all pupils with poor school attendance and will take action when absence is unauthorised; this may lead to prosecution. Therefore should Pupil's name have any further sessions of absence because of illness or medical reasons you are strongly advised to provide one of the following which may enable the Head Teacher to authorise your child's absence:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional
- Medical note
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription

- Print screen of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist

Please be aware that telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are not acceptable as medical evidence when attendance is of serious concern.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school.(Education Act 1996 Section 444).

We work with parents to improve school attendance.

Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class.

Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel that your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact me.

If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Letter 3 (an example) Spotlight on Attendance Letter to Parent who attended School Attendance Meeting

Dear Parent,

Thank you for coming to the School Attendance Review Meeting regarding the poor attendance of your child. We were very pleased that you came to the meeting and hopefully your child's attendance will now improve.

As explained, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular school attendance. I will continue to monitor their attendance.

If there is further unauthorised absence; we will be submitting the paperwork to Court Section, Education Welfare Service and this may result in you being prosecuted at court and/or a penalty notice being issued.

Please contact me if your child is experiencing any difficulty preventing their attendance. If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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