

Athelstan Community Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

All children of compulsory school age have the right to full time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have, in order for them to realise their full potential. The school has a significant part to play in communicating their values and expectations, as well as outlining good practice and procedures for promoting attendance. Athelstan school takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts the continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, and can lead to underachievement and low attainment as well as impeding children's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Aims:

- To maintain a high level of attendance so that students can achieve their full potential
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secured and valued
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils
- To promote opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- To raise the awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Good communication with home is a fundamental ingredient in our school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other agencies
- To recognise the needs of an individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and respond to the needs of different children's reasons for absence

Statement of expectations

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities on offer.

What is expected of Pupils?

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is in school for every lesson after they have registered. Under the 1996 Education Act parents may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly or punctually. If a child is in the care of foster parents or Local authority it is important that their carers recognise their role where attendance and punctuality is concerned. This will be supported by close co-operation between the School, ESW and other relevant agencies.

Parents need to know

- We recognise that individual children and families may from time to time have problems. Our aim is to support regular attendance
- Lateness will be investigated and parents made aware of our expectations regarding prompt attendance

- Where a child is absent without prior authorisation, an explanation is required preferably on the first day of absence. If one is not forthcoming then the absence will be unauthorised and the register marked accordingly
- The School are not obliged to accept parental notes where there is reason to doubt the validity of the explanation offered
- Explanations such as minding the house, looking after other children, birthday treats or shopping treats will not be acceptable reasons for absence
- The law states that parents/guardians do **NOT** have the right to take their child out of school for holidays, during term time. In **exceptional** circumstances however, the Head teacher can authorise a period of leave up to ten days in any school year. The Governors of Athelstan School have decided that no child can be authorised a period of holiday in term time unless they met the following criteria
 - The child's average attendance for the previous 12 months is 95% or more
 - The child has not taken any holiday in the previous 12 months
 - The child has a good record of completing homework
 - The holiday is not during
 - The first three weeks of the Autumn term (as this is detrimental to induction)
 - The last three weeks of the summer term (as this is detrimental to transition)
 - For Y6 children it is not during the whole of the last half term (due to assessment and transition)
 - For Y2 it is not during whole of the half term after Easter (due to assessment)
 - The holiday is not for more than 10 school days

If you can meet **ALL** of the above criteria then you may in **exceptional, and only in exceptional** circumstances apply for a leave of absence in term time.

In doing so you **MUST**

- apply at least two **six** working weeks before the first day of the holiday
- give written reasons for the **exceptional** circumstances (please note expense is not acceptable as an exceptional reason) and be prepared to provide evidence of the exceptional circumstances if deemed necessary by the headteacher.

Parents and Carers should be aware

- ••To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS and the first three weeks in the new school year that are an important settling in time
- ••Families should see themselves as partners with the School and instill respect for education and those who teach their children
- ••Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements
- ••Work closely with the School and ESW to resolve any problems that impede their child's attendance
- ••Ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment, and ready to learn. A reason should be offered for lateness.
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Parents and Carers should note if they take an unauthorised holiday the school will automatically pass their details onto the Educational Social Worker who has the power to impose fines or begin court prosecution.

The local authority criteria for non-authorisation

- when the pupils attendance has been below 90% for the previous 20 weeks
- the pupil has already unauthorised absence
- the period of leave requested coincides with the first two weeks of the start of term or SATs exams or other significant events in the school calendar

Legal implications

where a pupil is taken out of school for the purpose of a holiday in term time without the prior permission of the school the parents/carers of the pupils may be issued either with a warning

letter from the Educational Social worker Service indicating that any further unauthorised absence taken as a Holiday in Term will result in a £60 Penalty Notice per parent per child or be issued with a penalty Notice after consideration of the circumstances and previous attendance record. If a Penalty Notice is issued and the notice remains unpaid after 28 days the penalty increases to £120. If the penalty Notice is not paid after 42 days the local authority will commence legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the 1966 Education Act in the Magistrates Court

What is expected of the School?

- ••To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- ••To meet the legal requirements set out by the Government
- ••To give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- ••To develop and maintain procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up absences and lateness with effective monitoring and intervention
- ••To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absence and lateness
- ••To develop a range of effective strategies to support children and families where absence and punctuality is a problem
- ••To encourage open communication between school and home
- ••To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- ••To develop procedures for a formal referral to the ESW
- ••To provide for pupils with difficulties an appropriate delivery of the curriculum
- To respond to holiday requests within 10 working days
- To have interviews (face to face or telephone) with families for whom the request is being turned down

The Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the LA provides support to schools and parents to fulfill their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support, through its officers it may take a parent/carer to court for not fulfilling their duty under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent/carer and put in place a School Attendance order, an Education Supervision Order or a Parenting order.

School procedures and systems

Registration

An accurate and consistent registration system to monitor attendance and lateness is essential. The register will be taken each day and will be completed within 10 minutes after the start of each morning and afternoon sessions. PUPILS WHO ARRIVE AFTER 8.45A.M. SHOULD REPORT TO THE MAIN OFFICE. All late comers will be asked to sign provide a reason for lateness. All Staff are aware that any child arriving late MUST report to the office for the purpose of fire safety regulations. Registers close at 9.10 a.m. after this the register will be marked with an L (late mark) and for pupils arriving after 9.30.a.m.they will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the session unless there is a valid reason e.g. medical appointment. All absences are shown as either authorised or unauthorised using the symbols agreed and indicated in the Local Authority guidelines. The registers are legal documents and the school may be asked to produce them in any judicial proceedings

A reason for absence is always required. Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but should wherever possible be followed up with a letter on the child's return to school. The school will then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence. This decision will be made within guidelines set out in the 1996 Education Act which identifies the following acceptable reasons for absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending school by unavoidable cause

- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LA has failed to make appropriate arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or failed to make appropriate transport arrangements
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent with "leave" This means that the school has granted the child up to 10 days leave in any 1 year

Monitoring Non attendance and Lateness

- Encourage all families to telephone school by 9.30.a.m. on the first day of absence
- Contact home, in the morning of the first day of absence informing them that the child is not in school and enquire as to a reason. If necessary for the safety of the child the PSA will visit the home. If no contact is made a message will be left to advise parents to contact school at their earliest convenience.
- If after the child has returned to school, there has been no reason given for absence the school will write to parent/carer requesting that they complete and return the attached absence note
- Monitor registers and identify poor attendance/punctuality patterns and advise families accordingly
- Offer support to pupils and their families, referring to other appropriate agencies
- Refer where necessary to the ESW
- Pupils who are late more than 10 times in a four week period will automatically be referred to the PSA.

The Headteacher and PSA will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a termly basis and identify any pupils causing concern. A letter will be sent to parents outlining this concern and offering support especially to vulnerable families. The pupil's attendance/punctuality will be monitored closely, if there is no improvement after a two week period the parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Head teacher and other appropriate staff to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the child from attending school. If the parent/carer does not attend the meeting or if there is no improvement after the meeting then the school will make a formal referral to the ESW.

Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

- Staff will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed
- Good attendance will be rewarded each term with a range of certificates
- Positive reinforcement will be given to those pupils who have been off school for a period of time and if necessary an action plan will be developed to help them catch up with the curriculum and promote future attendance
- Pupils and their families will encouraged to set personal targets
- Pastoral staff will provide support and guidance to pupils and their families

Official register

Electronic registers will be kept on SIMS which may then be used to generate reports. Parents/carers can request to see their child's attendance record by applying to the Head teacher. They will automatically receive information on their child's attendance on the annual report.

Agreed by Governors: September 2012

Review date: September 2015