



# Attendance Policy

Policy Formally Approved	Sept 2019
Policy to be Reviewed	By July 2020

It is the responsibility of the **Standards Committee** to review this policy and bring it forward to the full Governing Body for approval.

Signed by

Headteacher: .....Date:.....

Chair of Committee: .....Date:.....

Chair of Governors ..... Date .....

## **Principles**

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children.

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result 'succeed and thrive'.

We endeavour for children to take responsibility for their own attendance, recognizing the link between attendance and good learning.

## **Legal Requirements**

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized. The

Government expects:

- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Act early to address patterns of absence

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognized and rewarded.

- Weekly Class Attendance – each week class with the best attendance will receive the attendance teddy (Reg) in the celebration assembly.
- Termly Individual Attendance – At each parent consultation evening the parents will be made aware of their child's attendance and if there are any issues these will be discussed with the parent. Each child with over 96% attendance will receive a bronze award for the first term, silver for the second term and gold for the third term of any given year.
- Yearly Individual Attendance – at the end of the school year children with 96% attendance and higher will be presented with a bronze, silver or gold certificate (see above). Those with 100% will receive a special certificate at our end of year celebration and take home the attendance trophy for a period of the following year.

## Notifying Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorized** or **unauthorized**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 9.00am on the first school day of his/her child's absence from school. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues - or is likely to continue - for more than a week, medical evidence should be obtained and submitted to the school.

If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the school office will call or send a text to the child's parent/carer. This will be followed up by a telephone call when necessary. In the event that contact could not be made the office staff will record this on the register. If there are any child welfare / safety concerns then the matter may be referred to the local authority Customer First service and/or the Suffolk Safeguarding Board.

## Authorised Absences

Examples of authorized absences are:

- Illness;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs;
- Absences allowed by the school. These would usually include:
  - medical appointments
  - exclusions
  - extreme family emergencies/occasions (bereavements, house fires, close family wedding, etc)

## Unauthorised Absences

Examples of unauthorized absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorized by the school

## Holidays During Term Time

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.' Therefore our school will only authorize holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed **very rarely**.

Holiday absences are only authorized in extreme circumstances and any leave of longer than five days or a combined absence of more than five days during an academic year will lead to a fixed penalty notice.

The penalty is:

- **£60** if paid within 21 days
- **£120** if paid between 21 and 28 days

The above penalties are to be paid for each child absent by each parent. Therefore, if a family of two parents take their two children on holiday for more than five days during term time they will face a fixed penalty of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 if paid between 21 and 28 days.

If you don't pay the penalty in full within **28 days** of issue, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against you in the local Magistrate's Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine of up to **£1,000**.

After payment of a penalty notice has been made parents and carers will no longer be liable for their child's absence from school during the period to which the notice relates.

But, if your child has further periods of unauthorised absence from school, the local authority may decide to take you back to court for a further prosecution. Please click on the link below for more information.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/school-attendance-and-penalty-notices/>

Parents should apply using the schools application for leave form (available from the schools office), if they are considering a holiday in term time. At least half a terms notice should be given before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorized.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The school will continuously monitor each child's attendance record. The school follows a three step process for any children who are persistently absent for any reason:

- 1) The Headteacher will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 90%. The school will contact the parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns.
- 2) If a child's attendance level does not improve, or has fallen further, by the end of the next half term, the headteacher will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting. At the meeting the headteacher will discuss with the parents whether other professionals should be contacted and/or to provide support for the family.
- 3) In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve then the school will refer the matter to the local authority attendance team. Action which may then be taken and can include court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an education supervision order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £1000.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, this can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The school day starts at **8.45am** and we expect all children to be **in class** at this time. Registers are marked by **9.00am**. Any children arriving after this time **must report to the school office** to be marked in.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after this time – for reasons not considered acceptable by the school – they will be recorded as 'Late after registers closed'. They are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an **unauthorised absence** and affect their attendance record.

### **Persistent Lateness**

The school follows a three step system for children who are persistently late:

- 1) When a child is considered to be persistently late (this is at the discretion of their class teacher, the school Admin Officer and/or the Headteacher) then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns.
- 2) If a child continues to be persistently late the school will send a second letter to the parents/carers

requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.

In the event that the child's punctuality still does not improve then the school will refer the matter to the Suffolk Attendance team for action.

### **Monitoring**

The school Standards subcommittee is responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy.



