

Attendance Policy

Date becomes Effective: 30th October 2017

Next review date: September 2018

Person responsible for implementation: Head of School

Author: KW

Director responsible for oversight: Vanessa Bragg

School Aims

To raise pupil achievement.

To improve pupils' attendance.

To reduce all absence, authorised and unauthorised.

To reduce lateness.

To clarify procedures and expectations for staff, parents and pupils regarding attendance and dealing with absence from school.

To encourage a genuine 'partnership' with parents/carers.

Expectations

Children:

At Padstow School we expect pupils to attend every day and to arrive on time so that they do not miss registration and valuable learning time. We also expect parents/carers to let staff know if there is any problem that might prevent them from attending school.

Parents:

At the School we have high expectations of parents in relation to attendance and in line with the Government we expect them to:

- Support the School in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full attendance at school;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn;
- Ensure their child attends school every day;
- Book medical and other appointments outside School hours wherever possible and to bring in a copy of the medical appointment cards if this has been unavoidable;
- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence;
- Take all holidays and trips during School holiday periods; Work closely with the School and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- Sign the Home School Agreement agreeing to the above.

The School will:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Meet the legal requirements set out by the Government to ensure efficient and accurate registration of pupils. Ensure parents/carers are made aware of the schools attendance policy and their roles and responsibilities relating to attendance.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance making immediate contact with parents/carers if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absences, patterns of absence and parent-condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1995 Education Act.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- Develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality (including significant improvement) with certificates, letters home, etc.

Registration Procedures

The School has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity offsite or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The class teacher between 8:50 and 9:00 a.m will complete the registers. This is done electronically. If a pupil is not present when his/her name is called, an absence is recorded. If the child arrives before the end of the time set aside for registration, the time of arrival is noted and the child can be counted as present.

Any children arriving at school after the register has closed and has been submitted to the office will be asked to register at the office if they haven't already done so. Pupils arriving between 9.00 – 9.15 will be marked as present but their time of late arrival will be noted. Pupils arriving after 9.30 will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Absence

Contact on the first day of absence is the central part of our attendance policy.

Parents of any child not registered by 9:30 will be telephoned to ascertain the reason for absence unless they have already notified the school. Parents will receive a text should the telephone not be answered.

An "authorised" absence will be considered if the parents/carers provide an acceptable explanation by telephone, email, letter or in person. The specific reason for an absence will be recorded on the on-line register alongside the child's name (for example, "unwell" is not specific enough).

The Head of School will review the attendance on a weekly basis looking for persistent absences and trends. If a child is developing a pattern of lateness, the school will invite the parent/carers in to discuss what support can be offered. If the parents/carers fail to respond to the School's requests to improve a pupil's lateness, the School will refer the matter to Education Welfare Officer.

The Head of School will formally review the registers with the member of staff responsible for monitoring the registers:

- To pick up patterns of absence;
- To pick up patterns of lateness;
- To ensure procedures are being followed;
- To monitor the major causes of unauthorised absence;
- To monitor the percentages of authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- To refer any pupil for investigation whose attendance falls below 90%

The School recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of child protection concerns therefore special attention is paid to children identified within the School to be a child protection risk.

Obtaining a clear and precise reason for any absence is an important element of identifying child protection concerns.

If a child who is on the child protection register is absent for two days then Social Care will be notified.

Holidays – the School recognises that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. However, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head of School, the Head of School may choose to grant leave of absence of **up to 10 days** in any calendar year. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to allow a longer planned absence. In all such cases, the return date must be agreed by the Head of School as any child who is absent longer than 10 days after the agreed time can legally be removed from the school roll. The Head of School will discuss requests for any absences of more than 10 days with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer, before deciding whether or not to grant permission.

- *All holiday requests should be discussed with the Head of School before any bookings are made.*
- *An absence for holiday that has not been agreed by the Head of School will be recorded as unauthorised.*
- *Authorisation will not be granted retrospectively.*
- ***Holiday requests will not be granted if the absence will push the child's attendance below 95% for the academic year.***

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance. If a child has to miss school for a special family circumstance, then ideally the time when they will miss the least academic work is during the last week of term.
- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance.

To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Criteria by which the Head of School will make decisions concerning the authorisation of holiday absence:

- a) The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to 'afford' to miss any further schooling.
- b) A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
- c) The timing of the proposed holiday – one of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new school year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class; and for Y6 pupils, in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests.

Doctor/dentist/medical appointments are not absences unless the child misses the whole session. A child who registers as normal and is then collected for an appointment will be credited as having attended for the whole session. If however the appointment is at the beginning of the day or afternoon and the child misses registration, then providing the parent has provided an appointment card an authorised absence will be recorded.

A letter from the parent/carer and authorised by the school must support **Religious Festival absence**.

Special circumstances for absence will be considered at the discretion of the Head of School (e.g. death in the family, moving house, etc.) who, if unsure, will discuss with the Executive Director before authorising.

Supporting Non-Attendance

Where persistent non-attendance exists without an explanation the parent will be invited into school to meet with the Head of School to discuss the School's concerns for that individual pupil's absence.

If there is persistent absence that is authorised through sickness and that absence is affecting the pupil's progress, the school will invite the parents/carers into the School to discuss what support can be offered.

The School will investigate the pupil's circumstances in an effort to identify any school-based difficulties that may be affecting the child's attendance, e.g. bullying, or to investigate and establish if inappropriate parenting is the reason. Support may be offered to the parent/carer if this is the case.

If parents fail to respond to the School's requests to discuss a pupil's absence the School will refer the matter to the EWO.

If the School has not received an explanation for an absence even though the child has now returned, the School will continue to follow-up the matter by telephone or letter as appropriate. If no explanation is forthcoming or the explanation given is not considered to be acceptable, the absence will be recorded in the register as "unauthorised". This may result in the matter being referred to the EWO.

If there is no contact or explanation on the first day of absence and the child continues to be absent for a further 2 days without contact with, or notification from, the parents, the School will refer the matter to the EWO as this may be a Child Protection issue. If a child fails to return on the agreed day (the day the School has agreed with the parents/carer in light of the nature child's illness), the office will contact the parent/carer to find out the continued reason for absence. If no explanation is forthcoming or the explanation given is not considered to be acceptable, the absence will be recorded in the register as "unauthorised". This may result in the matter being referred to the EWO.

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

To encourage good attendance and punctuality, results for each class are read out in assembly on a Friday and celebrated in the weekly newsletter.

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