

Yatton Federated Schools

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Document Information			
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Signature (FGB)	Not required	Signature (Head)	Not required

To be read in conjunction with:-

North Somerset Guidance re: Parents/carers taking children out of school during term time Single Equalities Scheme

RATIONALE

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is vital.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is important they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Children who are persistently late or absent are more likely to fall behind with their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be referred to Education Welfare Services if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

AIMS

- To enable children to gain maximum benefit from the educational opportunities offered to them at school.
- To promote continuity and progression in the learning process through regular and sustained access to the curriculum.
- To ascertain the whereabouts of absentees to ensure, as far as possible, their safety and well-being.
- To endorse and underline the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and to recognise that poor attendance and punctuality can have a detrimental effect on social, emotional and educational development and academic achievement.

GUIDELINES

The school will adopt the following procedures for maintaining and monitoring records of attendance and punctuality:

- All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.
An absence is classified as **authorised** when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.
An absence is classified as **unauthorised** when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and which do not fall

within the category of 'exceptional circumstances'. This includes absence for family holidays/family events (unless agreed within the exceptional circumstances category), keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy absence, unexplained absence and where children arrive at school too late to receive a present mark.

- SIMS (Schools Information Management System) Attendance Register is used to record pupil attendance and punctuality. The Attendance Codes used are those approved of by the DfE.
- Class registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session and afternoon session on each day that pupils are required to attend school. Class registers will be completed in black ink where a child is present and in red ink for absence.
- Doors open in the Junior School at 8:50 a.m. for 8:55 registration; in the Infant School doors open at 8:55 a.m. for registration at 9:00 a.m. Registration will close at 9:15 for the morning session and at 1:30 for the afternoon session. Children arriving after the register has been called, but before 9:15 for the morning session / before 1:30 for the afternoon session will be recorded as "Late". Children arriving after 9:15 a.m. for the morning session / 1:30 for the afternoon session will be recorded with an "Unauthorised Absence" .
- Children arriving after registration has closed due to attending an appointment (medical/dental/opticians, etc), will be recorded with an "Authorised Absence" for the whole session. Children leaving school after registration has taken place for such appointments retain their 'present' mark for the whole session.
- All telephone calls/messages received regarding pupil non-attendance will be recorded in the Absent Book each day. Absences in Class Registers will be matched against details recorded in the Absent Book each morning when registers are returned to the school office.
- If the parent has not contacted the school to inform the school of the reasons for absence by 10am the school office will contact parents. If no reason is forthcoming or the reasons given for absence are unacceptable or unclear this will be taken up by the office in the first instance and passed on to the Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher.
- Where a child arrives after registration or leaves school during the session, this will be recorded, using the appropriate codes, in the class register by the school office staff.
- Pupils will not be allowed to leave the school premises during session time unless they are collected by their parent/carer, or their named responsible representative.
- Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Registers will be monitored regularly and any pattern of non-attendance, lateness, sustained absence or undue absence will be reported to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher for further investigation. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher to discuss any attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns.
- Attendance falling below 90% is classified by the Department for Education as 'persistent absence' and will be closely monitored by the Head teacher / Deputy Headteacher. Although absence patterns and records will be considered on a case by case basis, parents can expect to receive a letter from the school if their child's attendance falls below 90% or if there are other concerns, especially if absences are not seen as being justifiable or reasonable.
- The school believes in working with parents in improving a child's attendance; however, if following discussions and/or initial warning letters, attendance does not improve or there are serious concerns, more formal meetings will take place. Education Welfare authorities may be contacted. A fixed penalty notice may be issued.
- During the last week of every term, a Punctuality Report will be produced by the school administrative team. Depending on the circumstances, a letter may be sent to the parent/carer of any child who has five or more "late" marks recorded during the term.

Recognising Good Attendance

- We aim to recognise and celebrate high levels of attendance by awarding certificates to those pupils who achieve 100% attendance in a term. A special certificate and small prize will be presented to children who manage 100% attendance over the year. We will also look to praise and recognise those children whose attendance, whilst not 100%, improves notably over time or where special efforts have been made.

Parents/carers are requested to follow the procedures below:

- **Contact the school on the first day of their child's absence.** When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. They should contact the school before 09:30 hours if their child is unable to attend for any reason. The school has a designated answerphone line for leaving messages regarding absence for times when there is nobody available to take the call.
- **Encourage good attendance and punctuality.** Parents should consider very carefully whether their child really needs to be absent. Children should aim to arrive at school at 8:50 a.m for a prompt start at 8:55 a.m. in the Junior School / 9:00 a.m. in the Infant School.
- **Report to the school office if their child arrives late** (ie after 09:00 hours) or needs to be collected prior to the end of the school session. Pupils arriving late must report to the school office with their parent/carer upon arrival and should not be 'dropped off' or left to come into school on their own.
- **Notify the school of appointment times and ensure that their child attends school before and after the appointment.** Absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment time and travel. Children should not be absent for whole sessions to attend appointments unless this is unavoidable due to the nature of the appointment.
- **Children must be collected by the parent/carer, or their named responsible representative, if it is necessary for them to leave school during session time.**

TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1 September 2013. These amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be absent from school should the leave be considered as exceptional circumstances and be granted.

Following guidance from North Somerset Local Authority and to create a consistent approach for schools, the following reasons may support an application for absence in term time:

Exceptional circumstances

are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- A significant family event or circumstance (such as a weekday family wedding). Where the event is a weekday family wedding only the day of the wedding will be agreed.

Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

The Headteacher will consider every request individually but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad

- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays.

Parents/Carers are required to write a letter with a clear reason for the request must be given. This should be done well in advance of the requested date and before any holiday booking takes place.

If absence is taken without permission from the Head teacher, this will be recorded as **unauthorised** in the school register and on the school attendance computerised records. A referral may then be made to Education Welfare Services and/or a Penalty Notice may be issued.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 introduce changes to the procedures for issuing penalty notices with effect from 1 September 2013. The amendments reduce the timescale for paying a penalty notice from 28 days to 21 days (£60 initial penalty notice), and from 42 days to 28 days where the initial fine has not been paid (penalty increased to £120). This allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

- **Each** parent can be issued with a penalty notice of £60 for **each** child for unauthorised absence if paid within 21 days, or £120 for **each** child if paid within 28 days.
- Non-payment could result in prosecution.

Appendix A

Punctuality Report Letter (5 or more late attendances in one term)

date

name and address of parent/carer

Dear

Pupil Name

I see from the register that (name) has been late on several occasions during the last term. A total of (no.) instances were recorded.

May I remind you that your child should be in class ready for registration at 9:00 am for the morning session and 1:10 pm/ 1.20pm for the afternoon session. Children arriving between 9:00 – 9:15 am or 1:15 – 1:30 pm/ 1.20-1.30pm are marked as late. Children who arrive after 9:15 am or 1:30 pm, without good reason, are marked with an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Would you please ensure that (name) arrives in class ready for registration. Continued late arrival is monitored by the school's Education Welfare Officer and may result in a referral and the issue of a penalty notice (fine).

Should you wish to discuss this matter please do not hesitate to contact me. Yours

sincerely

Jo Keeble
Head teacher