



Attendance Policy

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	Safeguarding	14/10/2019	SFG19/17
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New Mills Primary School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (pupil registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Pupils with Special Education Needs may require different start and finish times dependent upon individual needs but all other arrival and registration requirements still apply, (e.g. they will be recorded as late if arrival is 15 minutes after their start time.)

Arrival & Registration

- All children should be ready to come into school at between 8.50 & 9.00 am each day. The register is taken twice a day at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.15 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as unauthorised. Between 9.00 am & 9.15 am, the child will be marked as late.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/carer outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the school office. The signing in/out register is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.
- Where a reason for a child's absence has not been received at school by 9.30 am, the parents/carers will be contacted.

Illness & Medical Appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed by 9.30 am of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.

- If a child has a serious medical condition or needs that requires appointments in school time, providing the appointment letters are shown to the school, the child's overall attendance will not be affected, this includes appointments for speech therapy.

Definitions

Authorised Absence – 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. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the Head teacher can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have the authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classed as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence – an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the school without the permission of the Head teacher.

If a Child is Absent

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence on the register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent/carer by text by 9.30 am, if no message has been received regarding the reason for absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to text or telephone the school by 9.00 am on the morning of the day of the absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.

Leave of Absence

In line with the Governments amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Head teacher and Governors have determined that:

- Leave of absence during term time will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. Permission for absence in term time may only be granted for compassionate reasons and approved educational experiences at the Head teacher's discretion.
- Where the leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, a form to request the absence must be submitted to the Head teacher, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance. When a request is not authorised, parents have the right to appeal to the Education Welfare Team at Derbyshire County Council.
- If the leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Welfare Team will be notified.

To have a holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper than during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Penalty Notices for Holidays

In line with the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 please note the following:

The Head teacher makes the decision about exceptional circumstances and will base their decision on what they know about the family and their circumstances.

- Ofsted will ask if schools are using the penalty process for holidays in term time.
- **The Head teacher can now request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.**
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if they pay within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority is obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.
- Penalty notices are issued to **each parent for each child.**

Monitoring Attendance

Weekly a record of the weekly registers will be reviewed and kept.

Monthly a record of the monthly percentage will be reviewed and kept.

Termly school registers will be inspected by the Head teacher and parents contacted in the event of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Frequent short absences, particularly where pattern emerges; e.g. every Friday.
- Persistent lates.
- The term attendance falls below 97%.

Contact will be made by:

- A letter sent to parents informing of the schools concern. Must be stressed to parents that this is their legal duty for good attendance & compliance with school policy.
- Contact inviting parents to meet with the Head teacher to discuss concerns.
- School can make a referral of Early Help Assessment without parental consent/permission as school attendance is a legal issue.
- If the concern continues, make a referral through Starting Point (this referral service replaces the MAT request for support paper form and part A of the Early Help Assessment). The thresholds are in Primary Schools: 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5-week period or 10 sessions of authorised absence in a 5-week period where no medical evidence has been received.
- Send Starting Point the EH Assessment form and attach other documents.

- Starting Point will then refer it to the Multi Agency Team member within 2 days of receipt.
- The Multi Agency Team then has to make one attempt at a home visit before issuing a penalty warning letter. There is a monitoring period. If there is a further laps in attendance, the MAT team will move it directly onto a penalty notice.

A record of all concerns, correspondence and meetings will be kept in the attendance file & the Head teacher's office.

Rewards for Good Attendance

Good attendance and good behaviour are essential to receive special certificates. A special attendance assembly will be held in July each year to give out the certificates.

Attendance Targets

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the Head teacher, the Governors and the LA School Improvement partner at the annual School Improvement review. The Head teacher will report on attendance in the termly report to governors. A nominated governor will meet with the Head teacher to discuss attendance percentages.

Monitoring and Reviewing

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The governing board also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is implemented.
- The governing board will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that the schools attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of six years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the day, they will contact the school office immediately.
- Termly monitoring will look at the attendance of the whole school, of each class and different groups of pupils.
- Individuals who are below 97% are monitored closely and referral to the MAT team if no improvement is made.