



Attendance Policy

William Law CE Primary School

Please return this slip to the school:-

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at William Law CE Primary School

Signed:

Child's Name: Class:



Attendance Policy

William Law CE Primary School

Policy shared with staff on Intranet (by email/staff briefing)

Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of William Law CE Primary School on

Date: 25th September 2019

Signed Kristian Toms

Policy to be reviewed on: September 2020

This policy is written in line with the Christian values and ethos of our school

Introduction

William Law CE Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Leader

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Reception Intake Induction period

PCC, in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Our School uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other exceptional cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);

- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

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/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.40am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.10am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the school building, but will be marked with a 'U' Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs T Cunningham, Headteacher and Mr D Smith, Deputy Headteacher

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Guidance on Absences due to Religious Observance

Peterborough is a diverse city that promotes equality and respect for all faiths and ethnicities. There are many religions celebrated within the city and it is important that we recognise and respect all of them. It is equally important that we recognise the diversity of our school communities.

This guidance has been compiled to help schools meet the needs of pupils from different faith groups requesting absence due to religious observance within the UK.

It is important for Headteachers to balance authorising absence for religious observance and the cumulative effects on pupils of missing education and it is in light of each school's different circumstances how this guidance is implemented.

The Law

The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 state that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised (absence) 'on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'

Leave for pupils for religious observance should only be agreed if the dates fall outside the normal holiday periods. These absences should be coded 'R'. Any additional days for shopping or extended celebrations should be treated as unauthorised

Recommendations

In order to support parents and carers with regard to the school's policy on religious observance it is recommended that it is communicated to all parents and carers through their school prospectus and school Attendance Policy.

The policy should clearly state the school's position on authorising absence due to religious observance.

Peterborough City Council's guidance for Headteachers and governing bodies, is, that only one day is authorised for each religious festival with a maximum of three days in any one academic year. Additional days for extended celebrations should be treated in line with the school's leave of absence process and at the discretion of the Headteacher.

It is recommended that any requests for absence due to religious observance follow the schools normal 'Leave of Absence' procedures. However, this process would be down to each individual school and if there are a high number of pupils that may celebrate a particular religious event then the school may introduce a different means of recording for these families to express their intention to observe on a particular day (for example a register in reception for parents to list their children on).

Options for Schools

Where a school has a large cohort of pupils who may be absent on a particular day due to religious observance the school can opt, in agreement with their governing body, to close the school for that particular day. The school must ensure, however, that they are open for the

380 sessions determined by legislation. Any closures should be reported to the Local Authority.

If schools choose to close for religious observance, wherever possible, they should include this in their term dates/arrangements. If the actual day/date of observance is not known in advance schools should, if they choose to close, inform all parents and carers in good time so that they can make alternative arrangements for their children.

The school may wish to consider an INSET day to coincide with days of religious observance if it is expected that a large cohort of pupils will be absent. Consideration would have to be given to staff who also wish to partake or observe the festival.

Peterborough City Council will, wherever possible, minimise any adverse effects of religious observance on pupils by:

- Determining term dates around major religious festivals;
- Supporting schools that wish to close on religious festivals, whilst ensuring that they are open for 380 sessions in the academic year;
- Encouraging schools to work with local faith groups;
- Supporting schools, where possible, to consider INSET days that coincide with religious festivals.

Action taken by schools to reduce absence for religious observance

1. Communicate their policy on religious observance to parents and carers by including this in their prospectus and Attendance Policy.
2. Clearly stating that they follow the Local Authority guidance to Headteachers and governing bodies (one day authorised for each religious festival up to a maximum of 3 in any one academic year).
3. Clearly state that any absences for religious observance in excess of the above that are not authorised by the Headteacher, will be unauthorised.
4. Ensure that all parents and carers are aware of the school's term time policy
5. Ensure that all parents and carers are aware of the Leave of Absence Form and the process required to request leave.
6. To request that all parents and carers inform the school of any special requirements, for example, whether their children will be taking part in fasting during the school day etc
7. During the admissions process schools could record on the child's records any particular events that the parents' religious body has set aside for religious observance. Parents should be advised that they must follow the school's request for leave process is followed each time.

Christian religious festivals

Peterborough City Council plan their school term dates around the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter.

Pupils who wish to celebrate a Christian festival that has been set aside by the parents' religious body can, at the discretion of the Headteacher, on the submission of a request, be granted a days' authorised leave for religious observance.

Muslim religious festivals

Eid Ul Adha – this is a festival that marks the end of the Hajj pilgrimage, taking place on the tenth day of the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar.

Ramadan – this is a holy month in which Muslims practise fasting. Fasting is a requirement of all Muslims who reach puberty and are healthy. Schools will have to make arrangements to support pupils in observing this requirement. Special consideration should be given to the effects of fasting for example sleepiness, possible mood swings and headaches.

Schools should also give consideration to certain events that may need to be rescheduled due to Ramadan.

Eid Ul Fitr – this is the end of the month of fasting during Ramadan.

Timing of Eid

- The Islamic calendar is lunar and important dates such as Eid are decided by the sightings of the new moon
- The Islamic year is approximately ten days shorter than the solar year used in western calendars – this means the Muslim festivals move 'back' approximately ten days each year
- It is therefore possible to predict the week in which any Muslim festival will fall in any year
- The precise day is decided by the sighting of the new moon, Since different mosques have different mechanisms for deciding on when the new moon is visible, it is possible that a different day is celebrated by different mosques.

Jewish religious festivals

There are many Jewish festivals that fall throughout the year, either celebrating a time of year or a major event in the Jewish history.

Yom Kippur – the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. Jews fast for 25 hours from sundown on the previous night until sundown the next night. Children who are below batmitzvah age are discouraged from fasting. Children should however be able to pray on the day. Children of or above batmitzvah age may engage in fasting and parents and

carers should inform schools of this decision so that they are aware of the effects of fasting for example sleepiness, possible mood swings and headaches.

Yom Kippur is celebrated ten days after the beginning of the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah).

Pupils who wish to celebrate a Jewish festival that has been set aside by the parents' religious body can, at the discretion of the Headteacher, on the submission of a request, be granted a days' authorised leave for religious observance.

Hindu religious festivals

Hinduism is made up of a variety of different religious beliefs and festivals that vary between regions. Amongst these are Diwali which is celebrated in October/November and is known as 'The festival of Lights' and Holi which is celebrated and is known as 'The Coloured-water Spring Festival'.

Pupils who wish to celebrate a Hindu festival that has been set aside by the parents' religious body can, at the discretion of the Headteacher, on the submission of a request, be granted a days' authorised leave for religious observance.

Buddhist religious festivals

Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who became known as 'Buddah' meaning the Awakened One. The primary day of observance is Buddah Day and is celebrated in May.

Pupils who wish to celebrate a Buddhist festival that has been set aside by the parents' religious body can, at the discretion of the Headteacher, on the submission of a request, be granted a days' authorised leave for religious observance.

Sikh religious festivals

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak. The religion is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak and the nine Sikh gurus who followed him. There are several festivals that are celebrated throughout the year and Diwali is one of these.

Pupils who wish to celebrate a Sikh festival that has been set aside by the parents' religious body can, at the discretion of the Headteacher, on the submission of a request, be granted a days' authorised leave for religious observance.

Overseas Religious Visits

Any requests for overseas visit due to religious observance should be treated as per the school's leave of absence process and at the discretion of the Headteacher