

## WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Policy Reviewed:	June 2019
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Date of Next Review	June 2020
Signature of Chair of Committee	Signature of Headteacher:  Cath Thomas

All school staff at Porter Croft Church of England Primary School strive to make the school day an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for all children. School attendance is crucial as the school is dedicated to maximising the achievement of all children regardless of race, gender or disability. Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to educational achievement and social integration. To support regular attendance this school will work in partnership with the children, parents / carers and all stakeholders.

Whilst the legal requirements for attendance do not apply to children under 5 years old, regular routines for young children support the settling in process and enhance their sense of security. They can also foster good habits for later life. Poor attendance and punctuality even at the earliest age can influence achievement in later life. Establishing good habits from the start helps children adapt to the daily routines of their school day, and the familiarity of school life.

### **Aims**

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils, making attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents / carers, staff and governors and volunteers.
- To ensure that all parents / carers understand and appreciate that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education appropriate to their age, needs and ability.
- Parents / carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so can lead to a fine or imprisonment imposed by the Magistrates Court.
- The school attendance target is 97%, when this has been achieved the expectation is that this will be maintained by the support of the pupils, parents / carers and all those associated with the school.

The school aim is for your children to achieve and flourish, feel safe and happy, and to be confident to succeed to the best of their ability. A child who fails to attend primary school will be more likely to be poor attenders at secondary school. Establishing the value of education at an early age with parents / carers and children can be beneficial in later life, having a positive effect on self – esteem, behaviour and achievement.

### **Responsibilities**

The Local Authority has to offer educational provision for all school age children appropriate to their age, needs and abilities.

All parents / carers must ensure that their children are educated, and register their child at a school. Failure by parents / carers to ensure regular attendance at school of a registered child is an offence punishable by law.

### **Registration Procedures**

- Morning registration starts at **8.45am**. Children need to be entering school with their peers at **8.45am**. It is expected that all pupils are fully prepared for their school day.
- Morning registration takes place between **8.45am** and **8.55am**.
- Pupils arriving after registration will be given a 'late' mark. Pupils arriving after the register has closed at **9.15am** will be given an unauthorised late absent mark, which will be accumulated with other absence marks, and can lead to either a fine or prosecution for non – attendance.
- Afternoon registration takes place at **12.45pm** for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children and **12.55pm** for Key Stage 2 children. Children going home for lunch need to arrive back to school in time for registration as education commences immediately after. Pupils arriving after registration will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after 1.30pm will be given an unauthorised late absent mark.
- Registration is taken within school electronically using the SIMS database.
- All teachers complete the registers using the designated codes. Any absence reasons will be sought, and either an authorised or unauthorised code will be used. Not all reasons for absence are accepted by the school. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence from education. Contact from parents offering reasons for absence will not necessarily be accepted, additional proof can, and is often requested.

### **Punctuality**

For pupils to feel, and be included with the whole school day, it is vital that they start the day with their peers and teacher. Lateness can have the same damaging effect as absence, and Porter Croft Church of England Primary School expects all pupils to be punctual. Parents / carers can also be fined or prosecuted for repeated episodes of lateness.

- Pupils arriving late to school may be met by a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the main office. An explanation of why the pupil has arrived late will be expected. Parents / carers will be made aware of the potential damage being caused to their child's education, and of the interruption to the learning of other pupils.

The majority of pupils are punctual, and prepared for the school day, however it is sadly recognised that some pupils are regularly late, and this is a problem. School Meetings with parents / carers, Headteacher and Governors will be held regularly to discuss their child's lateness.

### **Absence**

- Parents and carers are expected to contact school on the first day of absence either by telephone, writing or by visiting school by 9.15am. This school will also expect an indication of the length of the absence. Proof of the absence will be required if attendance is below 95% in order to authorise it. Proof may include:
  - A Doctor's note

- A stamped appointment card with the date on it
- Evidence of prescribed medicine
- If the parent / carer fails to contact school then school will make contact by either a telephone call or by text. To support school with this task it is expected that all relevant contact details are provided to school.
- School staff will update the office if they are aware of any possible reason for absence, and will update the SIMS database of all knowledge shared by parents / carers.
- If explanations for absence are not authorised then the parents / carers will be notified, and made aware of any possible consequences linked to poor school attendance.
- If a pupil is absent due to an allegation of bullying or incident then the school will either contact the parent / carer by telephone or conduct a home visit.
- Medical appointments and similar should be made out of school hours, however this may not always be possible. In this case parents / carers should inform school **in advance** of any medical appointments, and provide the appointment card as proof. An authorised absence pass will be issued by the office when the pupil is collected. It is expected that the pass be returned to the office when the pupil returns to school. Pupils are expected to attend school before and after all appointments. If proof is given of an appointment then an authorized medical mark will be given. This mark still counts as an absence mark.
- Parents / carers may also be asked to ensure an appointment letter is signed by the medical practice to confirm attendance. This will contribute to supporting the practice of safeguarding.

### **Authorised Absence**

- Illness
- Exclusions
- Authorised absence discussed and agreed with the Headteacher
- Religious Observance (maximum of 3 days per academic year)

### **Response to Poor Attendance**

- The parents / carers will be made aware of the concern expressed by school by a letter or telephone call and meetings in school and/or a home visit.
- Parents / carers will be invited into school to be made aware of their child's attendance, and to discuss positive routes of improvement.
- Parents / carers may be invited to enter into a Parenting Contract. This is a formal written agreement between the parents / carers and either the Governing body or the Local Authority.

- If interventions and support agreed by the parents / carers and school fails due to the lack of co-operation by the parents / carers then a Penalty Notice Warning Letter (PNWL) will be issued.
- If the PNWL is failed, then the case will be progressed for a fine per parent. If the fine is paid then all incidents of non attendance relating to the fine are cleared.
- If the fine is not paid, then the case will be processed to be heard in the Magistrates Court where a fine, tagging, community service or imprisonment can be disposed.
- If the parent / carer is deemed capable of securing their child's regular school attendance but is not willing to take responsibility of doing so, then the case can be progressed as 'aggravated' and becomes necessary to be declared.

### **To Promote School Attendance**

- The school will work as a team to deliver the importance of attendance to pupils, parents / carers, school staff, governors and all stakeholders.
- Attendance will be reviewed on a regular basis ensuring that parents / carers receive half termly updates, and that the Governor for Attendance has access to all statistics.
- Each term pupils who achieve 100% attendance are rewarded with a certificate.
- Details of attendance figures are placed around the school at key points.
- Attendance will be regularly highlighted formally and informally at coffee mornings, social gatherings, workshops, transition meetings etc.
- All improvers are recognised throughout the school year by receiving a letter and recognition from the Headteacher.

### **Exceptional Leave and Holidays in Term Time.**

- Term time absence due to holidays is not a right. Headteachers **do not have to authorise any term time leave**. However any request made will be considered separately.
- All school absence is enormously harmful to a child's education.
- Pupils must have 95% attendance before any consideration is made.
- Any leave must be applied for 20 days in advance
- Leave during SATS or at the start of a new term will not be authorised.
- Any request for leave in term time must be firstly applied for by completing the request form, and secondly be discussed in a meeting with the Headteacher.

- If the pupil fails to return to school by the agreed date supplied by parents / carers then the process of removing the pupil from the school roll will begin. The pupils parents / carers will have signed an agreement which agrees to this action being taken. Sheffield City Council policy and procedures will be followed and a referral made to Children Missing from Education (CME)
- Once a child has been removed from roll a place back at this school cannot be guaranteed.
- Parents / carers are expected to arrange for the pupils schooling to continue during the agreed absence.
- Children in Year 2 and Year 6 will be provided with work to complete during their leave.
- Pupils in KS2 are expected to complete a work package provided by school, and they are offered the use of a disposable camera.

### **Children Missing from Education**

Where a child is missing from school for 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make a referral to Sheffield City Council Children Missing from Education.

Reasonable steps taken should include

- Telephone calls home to all contact numbers
- Letters home
- If they have siblings, contact their relevant schools to see if they are in school / nursery
- 2 Home visits – if no one in a note is to be left asking them to contact school urgently.
- Enquiries made with neighbours
- If any other known services involved contact made to these.
- All contacts to be recorded