



# Madley Brook CP School

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

Regular attendance at school is vital to a child's educational progress. This policy will provide clear guidelines about how the school promotes and attains high levels of pupil attendance. This will ensure that all stakeholders understand the school's expectations of themselves, and each other, and strive to attain them.

### Objectives

1. To achieve a 95% + attendance rate
2. To restrict days taken as holiday, during term time in any one year.
3. To promote partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
4. To involve other agencies when all possible supportive measures have been put in place.

The policy will give clear guidance on expectations and procedures for the following personnel:

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors

### **Procedures for Implementation**

#### Expectations of pupils

Pupils will:

- Attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 95 – 100%
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

#### Expectations of parents

Parents will:

- Ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 95 – 100% attendance rate
- Contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (e.g. by 9.00am) whenever their child is unable to attend
- Follow any absence with a written explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day
- Make sure that their child arrives in school on time and well prepared for the school day
- Contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

#### Expectations of school

Staff will:

- Ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence
- Make early contact with parents when a child fails to attend
- Refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- Communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance
- Give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

## Expectations of governors

Governors will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Head teacher reports
- Support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling
- Communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate

## **School Procedures Related to Attendance**

### **Registration**

- Registration periods are 8.30 – 8.40am / 1.00 – 1.10pm (the nursery class will register by 8.45 am and 12.15pm)
- Registers will be completed during these periods and returned to the office at the end of registration
- Registers will be completed using the codes identified in Appendix A
- If no information regarding the absence of a child has been received by 9.00am, the office will telephone the parent to check the reason for absence
- If there is no initial reason given for the absence, or letter of explanation on the child's return, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The decision to authorise an absence is taken by the Headteacher, who will follow statutory requirements and the school's policy on attendance

#### **Authorised Absence**

- Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence and a note of confirmation on the child's return if the absence is longer than one day
- If the child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents. Parents must request the period of absence or inform the school in advance.
- If the absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures then this will be an authorised absence.

Absences may not be authorised, even if parents provide a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence because of illness, the school may request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on his or her ability to attend school regularly.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

Absences will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Unexplained absence
- Absence for a shopping trip or looking after a younger child at home
- A trip or holiday that has not been approved by the school in advance
- Any absence that is not considered by the Headteacher to be as a result of extenuating circumstances and has been refused.

#### **Persistent Lateness**

If a child arrives after the register has closed at 8.40 am, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school in order to resolve the issues, the matter may be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team which will offer support. If there is no improvement a Fixed Penalty Fine could be issued.

#### **Request for Absence**

- Requests for absence during term time will only be considered if there are extenuating circumstances. Parents are expected to fill in an appropriate

Absence form and provide information in respect of the extenuating circumstances which apply.

- Requests will be considered by the Headteacher who will invite parents to come into school to discuss their request and the circumstances in which it has been made
- If a request is refused by the school and the child is subsequently absent, the matter can be referred to the Attendance Team and a Fixed Penalty Fine can be issued accordingly as long as county council guidelines have been adhered to.

### **Response to Non-Attendance:**

- If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents.
- If there is no response on the second day of absence the school will attempt to make a home visit to determine the safety of the child. Visits will be carried out by two members of staff.
- If after 3 days there is no response and the school has no reasonable explanation for the absence the DSL will contact the MASH team for advice, and subsequently the police.
- Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers once the child has returned to school.
- Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the county council Attendance Team
- If a child's attendance slips below 85%, over the course of a term the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance Team if appropriate.
- If a child is repeatedly late, the school will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrivals and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance Team if appropriate.
- In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved by school and parents with the support of the Attendance Team, the school will refer the matter formally to the service and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.

### **The Law relating to Attendance at School**

The Education Act 1994, Section 444 and the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23, gives powers and duties to the Local Authority to initiate a range of legal procedures to secure a child's regular attendance at school. These include a Fixed Penalty Fine, an Education Supervision Order, a Parenting Order, or prosecution which can result in a fine, unpaid work in the community and, in extreme cases, a term of imprisonment.

### **Incentives for good attendance:**

- Attendance data will be checked half termly by the Senior Leadership Team to identify any issues
- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns
- Reasons for regular attendance and arriving on time, well prepared for school will be raised in assemblies and PSHE sessions
- Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance with the end of year report.

## **Monitoring and Evaluating Effectiveness**

- The SLT will analyse attendance data at the end of each term to identify issues and trends
- The school will work closely with the Attendance Team in their monitoring of the attendance and registration procedures in the school
- The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance % against their target at the end of the year, and their progress towards attaining the target in February.
- Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the school's procedures through headteacher reports at governors meetings.

## **Summary**

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- A 95% + attendance rate
- A positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning
- Clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

Reviewed January 2020