



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

It is the policy of the Governors, Headteacher and staff that all children on the roll of the school, including Foundation 2 (Reception) should attend school regularly. This is supported by the **Education Act 1996**, which provides that parents and guardians should ensure that children '*receive efficient full-time education*'.

Working together with parents

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' should also be taken to also mean 'carer' or 'guardian'.

Although this policy contains many references to duties and responsibilities, the Headteacher and Staff will always try to resolve any difficulties amicably. Parents who have any concerns about their children's attendance should feel confident to talk, in the first instance, to their child's Class Teacher. This is especially the case if a child's attitude to coming to school changes unexpectedly. It can also be the case that a change in home circumstances may affect the child's attendance. If talking to the Class Teacher does not solve the matter, parents should make an appointment to see the Headteacher.

Punctuality

It is equally important that children arrive at school on time each day. Children who arrive late often miss information about the day ahead and so don't know what to expect - this can leave them feeling unsettled and so impact on learning. The school day begins at 8:45 when teachers come to the playground, collect their classes and take them in for registration. Children who arrive after this time will be asked to go through the school office and will be marked as late in the register. Continued lateness may result in conversations with the headteacher or the Education Welfare Officer.

Authorised absences

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as authorised absences. These might include: if a child is too ill to attend school, a family bereavement or a religious observance. When children are unwell, parents need to consider carefully whether they are fit to attend school and if there is a risk to other children and staff. If a child is really ill, he or she should stay at home. If your child is feeling a little unwell, it is usually appropriate for them to come to school. In these instances, we will always telephone you if we feel you should come and collect your child. We realise that there will be *rare* occasions when there might be a particular

problem that causes your child to be absent. In these cases, we will always try and deal with them sympathetically.

Children must not come into school in the following circumstances:

- If they have been vomiting or are suffering from diarrhoea and should stay away for school for 48 hours after the last episode
- If they are suffering from a high fever
- If they are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease
- If their parents have been advised by a doctor to keep them at home.

In the case of any doubts, the school is always happy to provide guidance.

Explaining Absence

Parents have a legal duty to explain their children's absences. Acceptable ways of telling the school are:

- In person at the School Office
- In writing to the Class Teacher, Admin Officer or Headteacher
- By telephone message (01488 668219)
- By e-mail to office@inkpen.w-berks.sch.uk

Parents should inform the school immediately at the beginning of a child's absence and again **each** day. The school can only accept explanations for absence from parents and never from children. If the school has not received notification of an absence from parents at the beginning of the school day, the Admin Officer will attempt to contact the parents as this could be a **safeguarding** issue.

Making appointments

Most routine appointments can be made outside of school hours. Sometimes you will need to see a doctor more urgently, so be guided by what they say as to whether your child comes to school before or afterwards. If your child is absent due to attending a medical or dental appointment, you will be asked to provide documentation regarding this appointment.

Unauthorised absences

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **NOT** permitted by law.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping
- Having a haircut
- Birthday
- Family day out
- Unapproved holidays

- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation, or reason for the absence, is considered unsatisfactory by the school

Regular unauthorised absences are brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer, who may contact you to discuss the reasons for these absences and explore help that could be given to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Challenging Poor Attendance and Punctuality

The school monitors all pupils' attendance and punctuality and liaises with our designated Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) through West Berkshire Council's Education Welfare Service (EWS). Government guidelines class any attendance less than 90% as persistent absence. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.

Where a child's attendance falls into this category, the school and the EWO may consider a range of measures appropriate to the level and frequency of absence. These may include:

- Informal communication with parents through a letter
- Individual attendance targets for children and their families
- Warning letters from the Headteacher
- Attendance support plans
- Home visits from the EWO
- Warning letters from the EWO
- Statutory Fixed Penalty Notices
- Prosecution in court, with penalties which may include fines and or imprisonment
- Request for medical evidence to explain absences

Holidays and Extended Absences

There is no entitlement to take children out of school during term time for holidays and/or days out, and this is strongly discouraged. Any parent wishing to take his or her child out of school for a holiday, of whatever length, must ask the Headteacher's permission before any bookings or other arrangements are made. Requests must be made in advance of the absence using the specific request form, which is available from the school office. The Headteacher will consider each application on an individual basis and will consider the child's percentage of previous absence and any previous holiday requests during that academic year. Holidays in term time will be authorised in **exceptional circumstances** only.

The Headteacher will not authorise any holiday requests during the period of Statutory Assessment for children in Year 2 and Year 6.

Taking a child out of school without the Headteacher's permission is against the law and counts as a period of unauthorised absence. Parents who do this may, in some circumstances, be liable to a Statutory Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in court.

Policy review Bi-Annually.

Date Reviewed by FGB

January 2023