



## Child Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Person Responsible: Principal.

*Please note: The monitoring & review of this policy comes under the remit of the Academy Advisory Board*

Date adopted: February 2016                      Review by: bi-annually

Date Reviewed: February 2017

### 1. Principles:

At Windmill Primary School we believe that good attendance is essential if our pupils are to take full advantage of school life and gain the educational and social skills which will equip them for their futures. It is important too, that children arrive at and leave school on time.

Our school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, children and parents work in partnership. We shall monitor attendance and punctuality, working to solve quickly any identified problems so that absence and lateness are kept to a minimum.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and our Learning Mentor will liaise with families and other agencies when this is appropriate. Good attendance and punctuality are viewed as achievements in their own right and we reward these accordingly.

#### We aim to:

- ① **Promote good attendance and punctuality as the norm**
- ② **Help every child to reach their maximum potential unhindered by unnecessary breaks in their school life**
- ③ **Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality are valued by our school**
- ④ **Maintain a pattern of monitoring attendance and punctuality that ensures consistency across the school**
- ⑤ **Communicate with parents/carers in relation to their children's attendance and punctuality**

### 2. Recording of Attendance:

All absences from school have to be classified by the Principal, not by the parents, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

**Parents/Carers are asked to inform our school on the first day of their children's absence by written note, verbal message or telephone call. These must be received before 10am for them to**

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Educational Excellence

**be recorded and accepted. It's important for Parents/Carers to realise that not all reasons for absence may be recorded as valid and may not be authorised.**

**Authorised absences** are for when a child is away from school for an acceptable reason. These could be illness, hospital appointments, religious reasons, or unavoidable circumstances such as bereavement, moving house or a serious emergency

**Unauthorised absences** are those which are not exceptional circumstances and for which no "leave" has been given. **This can include:**

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily (as deemed by the Principal)**
- **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**
- **routine doctor or dentist appointments that can be organised outside of the school day**

### **3. New Law:**

**From 1st September 2013, a new law gives NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** It states that "Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. **Principals would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.** Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent."

Exceptional circumstances may be;

- ① Family member (e.g. grandparent) is very ill in another part of the UK or other country.
- ② Child is entered into a local, national or international sporting event.

If a child or children are taken out of school on a holiday that does not meet this criteria then this may lead to a fixed term penalty notice being issued. (See below for further information)

Parents 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 will refer the child to the Education Entitlement Team at Northamptonshire County Council.

### **4. Registration Procedures:**

School gates open at 8.40 and pupils can enter school from 8.45am

**Early Morning Work begins promptly at 8.45am and 1.20pm**

Registers are completed by the class teacher and will be marked at the beginning of each half day session.

Children who are absent or late will be noted.

## **The registers will close at 9.05am and 1.20pm**

Registers must be sent to the office each morning immediately after closure (9.05am)

### **5. Arrangements for the recording of lateness:**

Children who arrive after the closure of the register must report to the school office where their name and time of arrival will be noted in the lateness folder. An adequate reason for lateness may be authorised, but children and parents/carers who fail to provide an adequate explanation for the lateness must be marked as an authorised absence for that session.

There are three ways 'lateness' can be recorded:

1. If a child arrives in class as the register is being taken and they have been marked absent, but are still in the process of doing the register the teacher can mark the present column as well.
2. If the register has been 'closed' and sent to the office, the 'L' code will be used in the register by the admin staff. Pupils will need signing in and a reason given for the lateness.
3. If a child arrives after 9.30a.m. The code which must be used is 'U'. This will then be recorded as unauthorised. Again the parent/carer needs to sign them in and give a reason for the lateness.

### **6. Late Collection Procedures:**

Children should always be collected punctually at 3.20pm. If a child is not collected they are taken to the Office at 3.30pm and their name is recorded in the late collection folder. Parents/Carers will be asked to record a reason for their lateness. Emergency contact numbers will be used if we are unable to contact parents/carers. Social Care will be informed if any child is left uncollected after 4.20pm.

If Parents/Carers have an emergency that means they are going to be significantly late, school should be informed as soon as possible and attempt to make alternative collection arrangements.

### **7. Absence concerns:**

In the event of a child not being in school by 9.15a.m., if a message has not been left as to the reason why, it is the responsibility of the admin staff to make sure that all reasonable attempts have been made to contact the parent or guardian.

The appropriate code will be marked on the electronic 'absence form' when it is issued.

From September 2013 any parent whose child is marked as an unauthorised absence for any of these periods

- 18 **sessions\*** of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
- 5 consecutive days unauthorised absence (10 sessions)
- An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 85% or less

will be referred to the Educational Entitlement Team who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

*\*A session is a morning or afternoon i.e. 2 sessions = 1 school day*

### **Clarification: Section 576 Education Act 1996: Definition of a Parent**

The education-related provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in this section of the Education Act 1996.

This defines 'parent' as:

- ① All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- ② Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- ③ Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person – having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom
- ④ the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law.
- ⑤ Throughout this document, references to 'parent' mean each and every parent coming within the definition, whether acting jointly or separately, and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to 'parent' in the singular.

## **8. Monitoring, Recording and Reporting Procedures:**

Monitoring and reporting procedures are vital to improve attendance and punctuality at Windmill Primary School. The following procedures are in place:

- Attendance monitoring reports are produced weekly and shared with the Principal
- Additional monitoring is carried out in 6 week blocks. This enables rapid identification of trends where attendance is falling below the desired level (95%); conversely it enables attendance to quickly return to the desired level once a child returns to school
- Absence concerns are raised by the Inclusion Lead with the Principal
- Detailed attendance and lateness monitoring is carried out every 6 weeks
  - Improvements and continued decline is noted and communicated
- Attendance is reported to AAB at least three times a year
- Continued communication with parents

## **9. Request for Leave of Absence:**

Any planned leave of absence must be notified to school. Special Leave of Absence forms are available from the office and must be completed in advance. If the request is based on exceptional circumstances then the parent/carer must be willing to have a meeting with the Principal to discuss the request (please note that a meeting may not be arranged and authorisation may just be declined). Before making a booking written permission from the school authorising the absence must be given. Authorisation is **not** guaranteed and 'exceptional circumstances' is at the discretion of the Principal. Please see above (**Paragraph 7**) for further details of penalty notice situations.

## **10. Procedures for communication with parents:**

### **Lateness:**

- ① If a child is late for **three sessions** (i.e. **morning or afternoon**) **in a week**, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the parent will be contacted by written and verbal communication

- ④ If a child is late more than **ten times** in a **three week period**, the parent will be asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss any problems they may be experiencing
- ④ Lateness letters will be sent in line with the attendance percentage monitoring cycle – any pupil with more than 30 minutes late will receive a letter.

### **Attendance:**

- Whole school letters are sent termly to emphasise the need for good attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance and punctuality statistics are reported to Parents/Carers at regular points during the academic year.
- Where attendance drops below 90% parents will be informed of this through a standard letter explaining that while we acknowledge these absences are authorised we are still required to monitor and report on them.

## **11. Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality:**

### **Early Bird (Punctuality):**

This is a reward that is aimed to encourage parents and pupils to get to school early and be ready to learn. Children need to be in their classes, ready to learn (carrying out their Quick 10 work or Bright Ideas morning work) by **8.55am every day**.

Pupils collect an early mark for everyday that they are at school and working before 8.55am. These marks are banked. Every mark counts towards a reward.

There are 3 levels of reward:

30 Early Bird Marks: Basic prize e.g. pencil with topper, rubber collection, yoyo/puzzle, muffin voucher etc.

75 Early Bird Marks: Prize equivalent to up to £5.00 e.g. DVD, craft set, fiction books, baking cakes etc.

150 Early Bird Marks: Prize equivalent to up to £7.50 e.g. Tesco voucher, DVD, Lunch with Headteacher etc.

### **100% Attendance:**

Every half term attendance is monitored. Pupils who have achieved 100% attendance since September will receive an email recognising their achievement. Their names will also be displayed and they will be recognised with a certificate.

Any pupil who sustains 100% attendance throughout the year will receive a medal and reward at the end of the academic year in the final assembly of the year.

### **Class Attendance:**

Every week class attendance percentages are recorded. Each week classes will be recognised for their attendance. The top attending class will be presented with a certificate for the week.

## **12. Targets:**

The Government consider attendance of 95% or above to be good. As a school we aim to maintain our attendance above National figures. On average our annual percentage tends to fall just below 95%. This needs to improve. Regular monitoring aims to do this.

### **13. Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.