



Attendance Policy

Signed: (Head Teacher)

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Date: 1.2.2016

Date of next review: 1.2.2019

School Attendance Policy Development

School Attendance Policy and the development of good practice.

The Vision for Our School

At East Markham School we are committed to developing highly motivated lifelong learners, and for our children to gain a wide range of knowledge and understanding. To do this we need our children to be regular attenders. We therefore have a school attendance policy:

1. To provide a structure of action.
2. To ensure consistency of practice.
3. To give clear policy to staff, students, parents and others.
4. To offer security to newcomers.
5. To enable people to share good ideas and practices.
6. To enable the school to review these ideas and practices.

In order to encourage maximum attendance levels, both staff and pupils need to work within a framework of good practice that both supports and helps to motivate students, and is consistent across the school.

School Attendance Policy Development

The following Policy includes:

- Guidelines for responding to absence
- Examples of good practice
- Standardisation of practice
- Procedures for communicating with parents
- Procedures for dealing with post-registration truancy
- Procedure for phasing in returning absentees

- Procedures for extended leave overseas
- Identification of appropriate management structures and general procedures for all of the above.

Good Practice Development: Parental Support

The role of the parent/guardian in supporting the school's efforts in securing high levels of attendance is critical. At East Markham Primary we intend to maintain close, effective and positive links with our parents and ensure that they are contacted at an early stage to deal with unexplained absences of their child. The school has published a leaflet for parents explaining the regulations and giving guidance about school's expectations. These will be sent out to all parents at the beginning of the academic year, together with a summary of this policy.

Unauthorised Absence

School will contact parents on the day of absence, if there has been no communication from parents unless prior telephone contact has been made by the school. This and brief details of any other communication made by the school will be kept in the register. This will ensure that child protection issues are being addressed (ie the child could have walked to school alone and gone missing for some reason on the way). Should there be no contact the absence should be reported to the head teacher for referral to social services. Absence will be authorised for illness and attendance at doctors/dentists etc. or for education elsewhere.

Lateness

If a child arrives after the register has been closed (8.55am) a late mark is recorded in the register. The gates will be shut, and the parent then buzzes for access, and signs the child in using the register in the office.

Leaving School for an appointment

Parents are asked on arrival to sign a child out for attendance at doctors, dentists etc. using the book in the office.

Children missing in Education

Children can register in the morning and then go missing throughout the day without a satisfactory explanation. If a child is 'missing', their whereabouts cannot be established within the school. Schools will need to identify whether the child is at significant risk.

Children are more vulnerable who:

- are on a plan (child protection plan, child in need plan, looked after child, early help)
 - have specialist educational needs and or a disability
 - are using substances
 - have an education health care plan
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- there are indications that the child is at risk of CSE, grooming, radicalisation etc

There may be other contributing factors that should be taken into consideration when determining if the child is at significant risk such as the child's emotional health, known issues at home etc.

School staff will always try to locate the child and attempt to establish the whereabouts of the child. Once a child has been identified as missing and cannot be located within school, the designated safeguarding lead will be informed

Staff will use their professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the child's whereabouts before notifying the police. Parents/carers will always be informed before contact with the police is made, unless a child is at immediate risk of harm and a police response is needed. This will be judged on a case by case basis.

When a decision has been made to contact the police, the police will require information from the school to assist in locating the child and returning them to a safe environment.

If a child has a social worker or case manager (eg. early help) then they should also be informed.

Where a child is known to regularly go missing from school, a risk assessment for the child will be undertaken.

For further guidance please see the missing protocol or speak to Nottinghamshire County Council's Glen Scruby, Children's Missing Officer. Missing.CME@nottscc.gcsx.gov.uk / 0115 8041045

Early Intervention

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teacher's role. Class teachers will receive support from the Head or Deputy, if necessary. It is acknowledged that an early response to developing patterns of absence can be most effective. The circumstances

of the individual pupil or group of pupils must determine the nature of communication regarding attendance.

Major early signs of absenteeism are:

- Unauthorised absences
- Lateness
- Occasional/developing patterns of absence

Strategies to be used by Class Teachers when tackling these early signs of absenteeism:

Discussion with the pupil

Communication with the parent/guardian by telephone (the Secretary can be asked by the Class Teacher to telephone)

Standard or personal letters

School based interviews/meetings with parent/guardian

Publication of Information about Unauthorised Absence:

The prospectus must show the percentage rate of unauthorised absence and the percentage of pupils with authorised absence for each year and for each of the three terms.

Specific Responsibilities of Class Teachers Relating to Attendance and Punctuality

Class teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of pupils in their classes; attendance and punctuality is an important feature of their responsibility and is part of good primary practice. An Attendance Register is a legal document and must be completed accurately and in time.

Line Management

Class teachers are responsible to the School Governors and Head for carrying out the responsibilities outlined below:

Taking the Register

Teachers are responsible for marking the register twice a day; this must be done at the beginning of each session.

Following up absences:

- Any absence should be followed up by talking to the pupil and then the parent/guardian.
- Acceptable forms of communication can be a note, a personal visit from the parent/guardian, or another responsible adult, or a phone call.
- If no response is forthcoming teachers can phone parents. (The school Secretary can be asked to do this.) If no reason is given for the absence a standard letter (first letter) should be sent after the third day of absence and a copy placed in the absence file.
- If parents/guardians do not respond within 7 days to the first letter, then the second standard letter (2nd letter) should be sent.
- As a general rule teachers should try to get a satisfactory reason for the Absence within ten working days of the first day of absence.
- If after this time no satisfactory reason has been given (even though the child may now be in school) then teachers should refer the absence to the Headteacher, who will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

NB. All reasons for absence must be recorded in the school register. The symbols for reasons for absence are as outlined in the sheet enclosed in each register. These then transfer straight into SIMs attendance manager, kept by the office staff and updated every Friday afternoon.

The head teacher will monitor absence. Parents/guardians of children who are absent for more than 20% of days in a term will receive a letter and be invited to discuss any issues with the head teacher. Should this not be effective in reducing absence a referral will be made to the EWO. Current data suggests 5% absence is the normal expected rate in a school academic year, but through experience this tends to reduce with age.

Recording information in the registers:

Teachers must sign and date all letters from parents when they are brought in. These can be put into the envelope at the back of the register.

Providing support and guidance:

- Teachers should encourage patterns of punctuality and good attendance as it is good educational practice.
- All teachers should be aware of responding early to developing problems of attendance and punctuality. Close links with parents are essential but these need to be formalised so that issues such as punctuality and attendance can be discussed openly and frankly, e.g. a child who is 15 minutes late each day loses 1 hr 15 mins tuition per week. Multiply that by 38 weeks and it accumulates to almost two weeks absence over the year without taking into account any other absences.

Develop good patterns of attendance and punctuality by:

- Any absence should be followed up by talking to the pupil and then the parent/guardian.
- Monitoring authorised absences: excessive numbers of authorised absences such as illness may need following up with the school nurse.
- Monitoring patterns of lateness: are parents/guardians aware that the child is regularly late.
- Identifying patterns of absence: are children absent on particular days eg swimming days, PE days, class visits, etc.
- If a pattern of unauthorised OR/AND authorised absence should be noted, the class teacher should refer this to the Headteacher. Should a child be absent for 20 sessions or more through illness (not including holidays of which only 10 days (20 sessions) should be authorised), a standard letter will be sent which makes clear the importance of regular attendance and asking the parent/guardian to discuss any problems with school. Following this should there not be a significant improvement the referral procedure to EWO will be followed.
- Certificates will be issued at the end of term to all children who have achieved 100% attendance termly, hence rewarding good attendance.

At the beginning of each new term, attendance of the previous term will be reviewed. Teachers will be asked to identify those children who have not had any absences for that term and certificates of merit will be given out accordingly. Children who have NO absences for the whole academic year will receive a special certificate of merit at the end of the year.

If teachers are concerned about a child's absence and/or punctuality they should discuss these matters with the child. If there is no improvement then the parent/guardian should be contacted. If there continues to be no improvement after contact with the parent/guardian then the matter should be referred to the Headteacher.

Monitoring Procedures:

1. The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for monitoring Attendance Registers
2. The School Governors will receive a copy of the authorised and unauthorised attendance figures.
3. Annual attendance figures will be sent to the DfE and LEA as part of the national and local monitoring of attendance.

Holidays

Present legislation does not permit any family holiday. However on occasion e.g. family illness, leave may be granted. The forms to fill in for this are available from the display cabinet outside the Head Teacher's Office or from the school office. Under special circumstance e.g. parent working abroad arrangements can be made with the school/class teacher/head teacher for work to be taken. If holidays are taken in term time school reserves the right to engage NottsCC who can issue proceedings and fine the family. The Head Teacher will monitor absence generally for the child in question and consult with the governing body should this be deemed necessary.

Role of the Local Education Authority

The LEA carries out the role of supporting schools and parents in the area of attendance by means of the **Behaviour Support Team**.

Referral to the Behaviour Support Team

The BST team should be contacted and a referral made in the case of persistent unauthorised absence. They may follow up referrals by:

Communicating with parent/guardians by letter or phone.

Seeing a pupil in school

Arranging a number of home visits

Liaison /referral to other professional/agencies

The outcome of any intervention is communicated back to school

The team may consider the use of legal action in relation to school non-attendance. The LEA may initiate proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act. This allows the LEA to prosecute parents for failing to ensure that their child receives an efficient full-time education. This could result in parents being fined.

Staff Attendance

All staff must notify the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher of illness, as soon as they know they will not be able to attend work.

For teaching staff this means contacting the Head Teacher /Assistant Head Teacher by telephone or text at their home address the night before, or on the morning they become unfit for work. For non-teaching staff the school should be contacted as early as possible, certainly before 8.45pm. Staff must inform school regarding the progress of the illness.

Staff are able to self-certificate absence for the first week, thereafter a sick note from the GP must be sent in to the school.

Permission from the Head Teacher / Assistant Head Teacher must be obtained beforehand to seek time off work for visits to the Dentist, Doctor, Hospital, etc.

Unless in an emergency, all appointments if possible should be made outside school hours, or during school holidays.

All leave of absence must be approved in advance by the Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher and in the case of a request for special leave in accordance with the teacher's pay and conditions policy, the School Governors.

All staff must be punctual, and be on site ready to begin work, at the appropriate time, 8.35am at the latest.

Teachers must not leave school before 3.40 pm, as 3.30-3.40 pm is Directed Time (to supervise uncollected children, tidy classrooms, etc.).

This policy will be reviewed as appropriate.

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