



## Radleys Primary School: Attendance Policy

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**Our Attendance Policy has been agreed by the senior management, our attendance officer and approved by Governors.**

### **Development Process**

When was the policy adopted: May 2013

When was the policy be reviewed (1): Feb 2014, Jan 2015 – reviewed due to new 90%, Jan 2016, June 2018, June 2020, **July 2022**

When will the policy be reviewed:., July 2024 unless legislation dictates

*Signed: ..... Head Teacher*

*..... Governor*

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction**

- We expect all children on roll to attend every day, on time, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on 1 September 2013, changing the rules about term-time holidays. The regulations specify that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. If a Head Teacher grants leave, they should determine the number of days the child can be away from school. The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised and notification of the possibility of receiving a fine.

### **Definitions**

#### **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Late attendance, after the register has closed are classed as unauthorised.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours or takes a day off for a birthday treat, these would be unauthorised absences.

### **If a child is absent**

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend. This is called an **exceptional circumstance**. Any request for an exceptional circumstance leave of absence needs to be made in writing, attaching any relevant information.
- Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday. We are no longer allowed by law to authorise absences during school term – **unless it is deemed an exceptional circumstance, as above**.
- Making requests for authorized absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary, as there are not automatically authorized
- Any parents who take their child/children out of school during term time will be liable to a fixed penalty fine of £60 per parent, per child, issued by Walsall Council.

### **Long-term absence**

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Repeated Unauthorised Absences, Lates and Poor Attendance**

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- Our absence record is monitored weekly by school and our Education Welfare Officer. The school will contact the parents or guardians of any child who has a number of unauthorised absences or repeated lates to ask for an explanation. If a child continues to have any further unauthorised absences, lates or general poor attendance and their attendance rate drops below 90% (from January 2015), parents or guardians will be invited to an Attendance Meeting. If the situation does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer will ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation and the possibility of parental/guardian attendance at a local authority Attendance Panel. If attendance then fails to improve after attending Panel, the local authority may forward the case for prosecution.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

### Registration

- School gates open at 8.30am and are closed at 8.55am. This time is sufficient for all children to come into their classroom.
- Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any child who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and 1.10pm. (Attendance codes / and \ for children who are present). These registers are then electronically returned to the school office.
- All attendance records are documented using SIMS software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### Lateness

- Once all pods are in and the gates/doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the school office. The registers close at 9.10am so that any child who comes to school after 9.10am will be marked late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each child (Attendance code 'L'). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code 'U')
- Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code 'M'). **Evidence of appointments will need to be**

**provided. Children, unless in an emergency, should attend doctor's/dentist appointments outside of school hours.**

- In the event of a parents, carer or relative being hospitalised or seriously ill. The decision to leave early must be discussed with the Head Teacher or Deputy prior to collection.
- Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

### **Absences**

- Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with the reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

### **First Day Contact**

- Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those children who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why a child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **Illness**

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.
- Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will ask parents to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription, e may seek written permission from parents/carers for the school to make their own enquiries.
- Any child whose attendance falls below the expected 96% will be asked to provide medical evidence.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School for a Holiday**

- With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year, if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

### **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

- The school expects attendance of 96% and above, however, 100% attendance is favoured and is rewarded at the end of the academic year.
- It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and, therefore, where concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents informally, but, if they persist, parents will be invited to attend meetings with both the Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher. Minutes of these meetings are kept for reference.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

- We celebrate good attendance in our weekly 'Celebration Assembly'. Classes with attendance over 95% are rewarded with an extra 10 minutes play time. A record of the weekly attendance for each class is kept by the school office. The EWO prepare termly attendance reports for school. These are presented by the Head Teacher to governors and the school's annual attendance can be tracked on the OFSTED website by clicking the 'Data Dashboard' tab. All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, from both school and the LA, awarded at the last assembly of the year.

### **Attendance targets**

- The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LEA as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

### **Monitoring and review**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The

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governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The rates of attendance will be reported via the OFSTED website and in the annual governors' report.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the EWO, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or sooner, should legislation or EWO advice dictate.