Blackwater Community Primary School

Attendance Policy 2019

Draft

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (March 2018):
Protecting children from maltreatment.
Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on class attendance in our regular Newsletter;
- Report to you on how your child attendance and punctuality rate is through the eSchools app.
- Termly letters for children who fall below 96%.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through half termly certificate: Platinum =

100%, Gold = above 98%, Silver = above 97% and Bronze = above 96%.

- Rewarding good or improving attendance though having a 100% raffle in which each half term, if a child has attended school for 100%, their name goes into the raffle. A name is pulled out of the raffle pot at the end of the year and they win an item chosen by the school council.

The Law relating to attendance
Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*
(a) to age, ability and aptitude and
(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding
Section 175 of the Education Act 2011 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- 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
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

If parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
****	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorized absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorized absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorized absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorized absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorized absence
S	Study leave	Authorized absence
T	Traveler absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible

		attendances

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.
We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Half termly meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer and the Headteacher ensure that all PA children's parents are supported and held to account on a regular basis.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to our Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 95%.
- Discuss your child's attendance regularly with Education Welfare Officer within the school.

Telephone Numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. **You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of**

any changes to contact details.

The School Attendance Officer:

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 may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority.

Education Welfare Service

If your child's attendance falls below 95% we will consult our Education Welfare Officer for advice on how we should proceed with the case, in some instances it may be necessary for the officer to meet with you and/or your child (as a meeting or part of a clinic) to discuss the reason for absence, please be aware that we may not always give you prior warning of this contact, so please advise us if you would prefer contact before such action. Please be aware if your child's absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notice fines or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court to address irregular school attendance.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers will be marked at that time and your child will receive a late mark if they are not present in the class.
The register will be closed 15 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holiday in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other

absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

(a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
(b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.
Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time would not be authorised.
On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.
Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.
The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96**%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to children fulfilling their potential.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs. Evey Evison ~ Headteacher
Mrs. Jinny Clark ~ Attendance Governor

Summary

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible and that through good attendance

ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Date of Policy: October 2019
Review: October 2020