

## **SHARMANS CROSS JUNIOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Context**

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children between 5 and 16 years old receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that parents meet these requirements. Schools are required to notify the LEA if a pupil is not attending regularly or has been absent for more than 10 days without reasonable cause.

### **Aims**

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective partnership and communication regarding attendance between home and school
- To improve attendance and punctuality to 97% across the school

### **Responsibilities**

We expect that children will:

- a) Attend regularly.
- b) Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- c) Inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

We expect that parents will:

- a) Ensure that their children attend school.
- b) Ensure they contact school, as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend school.

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- c) Ensure their children arrive at school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- d) Contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

Parents and children expect the school to:

- a) Provide an empathetic response to matters affecting attendance.
- b) Keep regular, efficient and accurate records of attendance.
- c) Contact parents quickly when a pupil fails to attend without providing good reason.
- d) Act swiftly on any problem notified to us.
- e) Refer specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.

- Playground gates will close at 9.15 am.
- Registers close at 9.15 am. If a child is not in class by this time they should be marked as absent.
- From 9.15 am onwards, all children will report to reception where they will be given a late after close mark.
- Where the teacher is unsure as to what to code an absence, they should seek advice from the Deputy or Head Teacher.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Whilst holidays taken during term are discouraged by the school, we do accept that in some cases allowances have to be made. It is the express intention of the school to maintain a balance between a positive working relationship with the parents and uphold the educational welfare of the child. The only holidays that can be authorised are those by the Head Teacher, and then only one holiday of up to a maximum of 10 days per year. Holidays will not be authorised during the month of September nor in the month preceding Single Level Tests, November / May. Holidays

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taken without this authorisation will be liable, upon advice from the LEA, to prosecution.

Holiday request forms are available upon request from the school office. When submitted, the child's attendance is checked by the admin staff and entered onto the form. All requests are dealt with on an individual basis, however it is extremely unlikely that attendance below 90% will be authorised.

Having been checked by the Head Teacher, the form is dated and passed on to the class teacher.

### **Extended Leave**

Any requests for leave beyond 10 days need to be put in writing for the attention of the Chair of Governors. These will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chair and the decisions reported to governing body meetings as Chair's Actions. Such decisions will take into account, the age of the child, time of year, current level of attendance, nature of the leave and the child's current stage of education and progress. Parents may be invited into school to discuss this decision with the Head or Chair of Governors.

Any extended leave authorised by the Chair will be recorded as an authorised absence [F]. Those requests not agreed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence [G]. These unauthorised absences may be passed on to the Education Welfare Officer for further action, which may lead to prosecution.

Should a child not return to school on the agreed date, the absence will then be recorded as an unauthorised absence [G]. If this goes beyond 10 school days of the agreed return date, unless in exceptional circumstances, the school may, in agreement with the LA, remove the child from roll.

### **First Day Absence**

Parents should contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence. These messages will be entered into the absence message book, with a copy put into the register for the class teacher.

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## No Response

If no reason has been received by the teacher upon completion of the Absence Report on the following Tuesday, the teacher will issue a standard letter, kept in the register, to the child for return the following day. The absence report for that date will be left blank.

Where the letter requesting a reason for absence is returned in time for the following Absence Report, the teacher will complete the form appropriately [see *Authorised Reasons for Absence, p5*]. If there is no response to the letter, the absence will be marked as an 'O' for unauthorised absence.

## Frequent Absence

Where it is noticed that there is a pattern of frequent absence emerging, we will try to support the parents in resolving this matter. Jan Stewart will contact the parents verbally to determine any problems, offering help to the parents where possible, for example a place on the Walking Bus.

Pupils whose attendance is below 94% at the end of term will be contacted by letter. This letter will in all cases offer families support. The letter will also include a printout of the child's attendance records. All cases will be considered individually and viewed empathetically.

Pupils whose attendance is between 90% and 93.9% will then be monitored each term. Should the matter continue, then another letter will be sent to arrange a meeting with Mrs Stewart to discuss the situation and resolve the problem.

Pupils whose attendance is between 80% and 89.9% at the end of term will have their attendance monitored every three weeks. Should the situation not improve then the family will be contacted and a meeting arranged with Mr Pratt to discuss and resolve the matter.

Pupils whose attendance is below 80% will be automatically referred to the EWO, unless there are special mitigating circumstances, such as hospitalisation or prolonged illness.

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## **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to be aware of the importance of regular attendance and share any concerns that they have with the Deputy Head Teacher. The responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils and overseeing the process, however, lies with the Deputy Head Teacher.

**Date** : January 2009

**Review** : January 2010

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