Outcomes First Group.

ACORN EDUCATION AND CARE

OptionsAutism

School
Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy
Stretton Shires School

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Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

1.0 Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

> We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2.0 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

It also refers to:

> School census guidance

> Keeping Children Safe in Education

> Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3.0 Roles and responsibilities

Governance

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school.

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it via governance.

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

The designated senior(s) leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader(s) responsible for attendance are Jamie Hill and Amy Chipunza.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Amy Chipunza.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School administration staff

School admin staff will:
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the senior leaders responsible for attendance in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

4.0 Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should telephone call Reception on 01780 411944 or email on susan.barley@theshires.org.uk .

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should telephone call Reception on 01780 411944 or email on susan.barley@theshires.org.uk.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

- We recognise that all of our pupils are at different stages of their educational journey so we will always work in conjunction with parents and carers to support pupil attendance and punctuality and will operate reasonably on a personalised basis.

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

Reporting to parents

Pupil attendance will be reported termly to parents/carers via end of term written progress reports.

5.0 Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

6.0 Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Shires we aim to recognize and celebrate all achievements linked to consistent attendance and progress made in relation improving attendance.

Close monitoring for all pupils via the EHCP process and termly reporting, also for all LAC pupils EPEP termly reviews with professionals are in place and are used to support the removal of any barriers to attendance or learning.

As a result of the various complex challenges our pupils face to attend their educational offer we endeavour to always work with families and professionals to explore and overcome any presenting barriers preventing them from attending school. This work is done with the pupil's needs at the heart of the decision making process and families and wider professionals consulted in order to explore possible solutions.

7.0 Attendance monitoring

The attendance officers at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent should maintain regular contact with the school should their child be absent for more than one day, ensuring regular updates are maintained.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare

officer from the relevant local authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school collects and stores attendance data via Double First MIS, and it may be used for internal purposes to;

> Track the attendance of individual pupils.

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern.

> Monitor and evaluate those pupils identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:
> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
> Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8.0 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved via governance processes.

9.0 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

› Safeguarding policies

› Behaviour policies

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

All attendance codes are taken from Working Together to Improve Attendance [Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)](#)