

WINTERBOURNE NURSERY & INFANT SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE & REGISTRATION POLICY

Agreed by governors:
Next review:

22nd May 2018
September 2019

INTRODUCTION

PLEASE NOTE – Where the word parent is used in relation to a pupil at school this also includes any person who is not their parent but who has parental responsibility for them or who cares for them.

Attendance and punctuality are the responsibility of the Headteacher and school office.

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of teachers and schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and, in some cases, it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Maximising attendance rates is one of a school's key tasks and is measured by Ofsted. It is recognised that irregular attendance raises complex issues: pupils may be failing to attend regularly for a variety of reasons. Some of these may be outside the immediate control of the school but Winterbourne Nursery and Infants' should actively pursue the goal of regular attendance, both in relation to individual pupils and for the student body as a whole. Individual absences will be carefully investigated and parents left in no doubt that unjustified absences will not be tolerated.

THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend, and stay at, school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. They need to see themselves as partners with school in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education – and for those who deliver it – and ensuring that they support pupils with their homework and items needed for school eg P.E. kit, packed lunch. Parents should also impress upon their children the need to observe schools' codes of conduct and reinforce this through discipline in the home.

REPORTING ABSENCES

It is parents' responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible – parental contact on the first day of absence should be the normal expectation – and to provide such further information as may be required.

Extracted from School Attendance – a DfES publication.

ATTENDANCE

A child's absence is monitored initially by the class teacher and followed up by the administrator with responsibility for attendance as well as the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Reasons for absence – when known, should be written on the absence sheet in the register by the class teacher. (See Appendix 1)

Letters regarding reasons for absence must be handed to the Office and kept until the end of the academic year or longer if there is a problem with a particular pupil's attendance.

Verbal and telephoned messages received by the office must be written down. These will be placed in the register and retained until the end of the school year.

The office assistant will telephone parents who have not given reasons for absence and follow up any unexplained absences.

The appointed Family Support Worker will assist the school office with poor attendance and punctuality.

The EWO meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement. The EWO attends the meeting for new parents in reception to outline the importance of regular school attendance and inform parents of legal requirements. All new parents joining the school will be given a copy of the most recent leaflet issued by the DFES with regard to attendance.

Any requests for referrals that the Headteacher makes will be followed up by the EWO and may result in a home visit. Where there is no improvement this could result in prosecution.

Requests for long term absence.

The parents must complete requests for absence with reasons given for absences at least two weeks before the request date. The Headteacher will consider these requests.

In view of the nature of our school community it is realised that many children have relatives living abroad and may therefore request longer periods of absence for family or religious reasons. These requests will be dealt with on an individual basis and only in exceptional circumstances will any leave longer than ten days be authorised.

Where problems continue, the Education Welfare Officer may be contacted and the matter referred to them.

REGISTRATION AND TIME KEEPING

The school uses computer generated registers. These must be completed in pencil.

“Computerised registers must be printed out monthly and bound into annual volumes. Registers must be kept safely for three years end of school year”.

Doors open at 8.50am. The morning registers will be taken at 9.00am. Registers for Years R and 1 should then be sent to the school office. The afternoon registers are taken at

12.45pm for Years R and 1.00pm for Year 1 and 2 and returned to the school office. Years R and 1 send their registers to the office immediately after registration, Year 2 to the resources area where they are collected by a member of the office staff.

All external doors to the school are closed at 9.00am. Children entering the building after this time can only use the main front door. A member of the office staff records the time each child arrives late and the reason for this.

Children arriving after 9.10am and on or before 9.30am are marked 'L' with the time recorded against their name. Children arriving after 9.30am are marked U. If a child arrives to school after 9.30am on more than 5 occasions in a six week period a penalty fine will be issued.

When a child is arriving at school consistently late, it is recognised that the cause of this is most often the adult caring for that child. School staff are to be aware that such children find this distressing and should be treated with compassion.

The EWO together with the Headteacher, initiate regular late checks when parents of children arriving late will be interviewed by the EWO and a record made.

POLICY TO PARENTS

PRINCIPLES

Your child should come to school every day.

They should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or three months in prison. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school

(not by parents), as either *authorised* or *unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason; illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and from which no 'leave' has been given. This includes keeping children off school for minor reasons; truancy; absences which have never been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to get a mark, after 9.30am. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is 'avoidable'. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house or as a treat or holidays during term time.

Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parent and the child. It is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local education authority. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the school. The EWO can be contacted at Croydon Council. The EWO may be able to offer advice and support to help improve attendance.

PROCEDURES

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

ILLNESS AND OTHER LEGITIMATE REASONS

If a child is unfit for school parents should contact the school on the first day, in person or by phone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave will be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments, if they must be in school time, provided evidence is produced in writing.

INFORMING THE SCHOOL OF AN ABSENCE

Parents must inform the school of their child's reason for absence **on the first day of their child's absence**. The exact reason needs to be clearly stated as this is recorded on pupils' records and, therefore, 'unwell' needs to be defined e.g. flu, vomiting, chicken pox etc.

You may also:

- inform the office in person;
- complete a reason for absence form left at the office hatch; (Appendix 2)
- tell a senior member of staff;
- inform the class teacher.

HOLIDAYS

Holiday leave in term time will not be authorised other than in exceptional circumstances. This could incur a fine. Any request must be made in advance in writing by the parent looking after the child. Leave for up to 10 days per school year may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Leave may be refused where children have already missed a lot of work or at crucial times of the year (e.g. during exams). Requests for leave beyond 10 days a year will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Children leaving the country for long periods of time may be removed from the school roll if a return date is not given and agreed. Re-admittance to the school cannot be guaranteed if there is uncertainty about when the child will return.

LATENESS

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Registration marks are given in accordance with the LA circular 00505 dated 5th January 2005.

All parents must take their child to the office should they arrive late for school. Children must not be left unattended at this time as doors are closed and there is no way for pupils to enter the building. This can be very distressing for them and is a risk to their safety.

SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. You will receive a copy of your child's attendance record with your child's report. The school has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Attendance/Punctuality is the responsibility of the Headteacher and school office.

References

DfES – School Attendance – policy and practice on categorisation of absence.
 Circular 00505
 10/99 Pupil Regulations 2003
 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
 Penalty notices and parenting contracts

Appendix 1 Reason for absence form (teacher's for

Pupil's name _____

No reason for absence on _____

Letter sent via child on _____

Reply received YES/NO _____

Appendix 2 Reason for absence form (parent's form)

Child's name _____ Class _____

Absent on _____

Reason for absence

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian

Signature: **Date:**

Headteacher