

Attendance



Written by:	Ruth Liu	Job Role: Headteacher	Date: June 2019
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Paces School for Conductive Education.

Attendance Policy

Policy Statement

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Paces School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

We are, therefore, committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

Aims of the Policy

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand the procedures
- The commitment to allocate resources to support the policy
- Addressing attendance and inclusion issues in the curriculum
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year.

This policy also responds to the updated guidance issued from Department for Education (DfE) which states:-

Term-time leave

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Law

The 1996 Education Act requires that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise

- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils are absent for more than ten days without explanation
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law

Partnership

What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and prepared for the day
- To contact school on the first day their child is absent for any reason
- To inform school of any medical appointments and to provide where possible evidence of these appointments. These will be filed and may be produced if requested by the Local Authority
- To arrange holidays out of school time. Further guidance is offered under the section ***Term time requests for Exceptional Leave*** later in this policy
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school
- To provide a note, signed by the parent/carer, when the child returns to school explaining the reason for absence. This will be filed and may be produced if requested by the Local Authority

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school

- A broad, balanced education that is dependant on regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with officers from the Local Authority to assist and support families where needed
- Regular communication with parents/carers

Procedures

Registers are a legal document, care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

Registration

- Registration takes place each morning at 9.20 am and each afternoon at 1.30 pm.
- Pupils are collected from either the school transport or from parents in the entrance hall or classrooms.
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) in ink in the register for each pupil present and an absent mark (a red O) for any pupil that is absent. Any notes received will be placed in the register for checking by office staff. All notes will be kept in a file until the end of term and be made available to the Local Authority where appropriate
- At 9.30 am and 1.40 pm the registers are collected by the school office staff

Responding to lateness

- Pupils arriving in the classroom after registers have been returned to the office are deemed to be late. The pupil should be sent to the office where their O mark is amended to L.
- At 9.30 am and 2pm the pupil is deemed to be Late/absent. Any pupil arriving in school after these times will be marked U. In case of emergency the register shows the pupil is on the premises, but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance
- Parents/carers will be contacted by school if their child is persistently late.

Responding to absence – criteria for requesting support from the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)

- Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
- Poor overall attendance (e.g. below 80%) and no mitigating circumstances or acceptable reasons for absence provided to school
- If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include home visits from school staff, meetings in school with other professionals if deemed appropriate
- When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days the school has a statutory responsibility to inform the Local Authority.

Children Missing from Education

The headteacher Ruth Liu is the nominated member of school staff to liaise with the Local Authority's Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures **(See Whole School Policy for Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection)**

Children in Public Care

Eva Sebeszta is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Local Authority's Children Looked After team. CLE pupils will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term. There are currently no Looked After Children in school.

Partnership with parents/carers

It is vital that parents/carers are involved in promoting good attendance and punctuality

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make contact with school to discuss any issues impacting on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Any concerns or problems raised by parents/carers will be responded to quickly and sensitively by the school.
- Parents/carers are invited into attendance assemblies to share the success of their child and the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports provided by the Head teacher
- Attend School Attendance meetings as necessary

Head teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the other officers of the Local Authority to implement attendance strategies
- Works with the Deputy Head to implement targets, review statistics and amend the policy as necessary
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of Children Looked After by the Local Authority
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education

Class teachers

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes promptly following registration, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Attach any notes received to the register for the attention of office staff

- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a pupil
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school

Office staff

- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2001.
- Maintain SIMS attendance database and update on a weekly basis
- Provide reports from SIMS to governors, Head teacher and other school staff, Local Authority officers as requested
- Provide relevant information to Local Authority officers making contact with families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Complete attendance data feedback to accompany ECHP reviews.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head teacher may authorise absence.

- Even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the Headteacher will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.
- The school will clearly set out, in its Parent Handbook, obligations for parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality

Absence may be authorised if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school
- The pupil has a medical appointment. Evidence of this appointment must be provided where possible
- The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority *unless the parents/carers have chosen to send their child to a school which is not within walking distance*
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
- There is a close family bereavement
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence
- Leave of absence is granted *by the Head teacher* under exceptional circumstances

Absence should not be authorised if:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
- The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
- The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday
- The pupil is absent on exceptional term time leave for longer than agreed by the Head teacher
- The pupil is absent on holiday without agreement under the exceptional leave guidance
- The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut

Requests for term time exceptional leave

Parents/carers wishing to take a pupil out of school for a holiday should be actively discouraged. Any leave during term time can only be authorised by the Head teacher under *exceptional circumstances*.

Parents/carers are legally required to notify school of their intention to take leave in term time from the school at which their child is registered. The Headteacher will consider all term time leave notifications. Each request for exceptional circumstances must be considered on its own merit and the impact upon the child's learning and wellbeing must be central to the decision made. However, a Head teacher may take into account previous leave requests and other factors related to the child when making their decision.

If parents/carers wish to apply for term time leave under exceptional circumstances a request form must be completed by the parent/carer, clearly stating what the exceptional circumstances are, and given to the Head teacher for consideration no less than 20 days prior to the requested leave begins. The school will inform parent/carers in writing, within 10 days, whether the leave has been authorised (it should be made clear why a decision has been made and the criteria used should be re-iterated).

Term time leave notifications should include specific start and end dates, as this will formally constitute the leave period. Parents/carers who are intending to travel abroad with their children during term time should not book travel prior to securing approval from the school. Any changes to dates agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorisation prior to departure.

Family Emergency - where school have not been notified of leave

There will be some occasions where it has not been possible for the parent/carer to notify school of exceptional term time leave. Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents/carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity to inform of the absence and reasons for this.

Parents/carers taking their children out of school due to a family emergency are encouraged to consider:

- That they have considered the impact and appropriateness for their child;
- Whether or not alternative care arrangements could be made for the child to remain in school, e.g. stay with an extended family member;
- That they have looked at limiting the amount of time absent from school

This policy has been written to conform to both national legislation and guidance from Sheffield City Council.

Written by: Ruth Liu Headteacher June 2019

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This policy will be reviewed annually or whenever there are significant changes in legislation.