



Edith Cavell Primary School

Attendance Policy

Signed: *G Bishop* Chair of Governors

Signed: *H Cooke* Head teacher

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EDITH CAVELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and well enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Edith Cavell has adopted and follows the principles as outlined in the Attendance Toolkit produced by Bedford Borough Council and will instigate changes to this policy following updates or amendments in National Policy or expectations.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note, telephones, texts or emails the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

Parents should endeavour to notify the school by 9.15am if their child will not be attending and inform the school of the reason that they will not be attending school. That reason will be recorded by the school and form part of the official attendance register.

Where ever possible parents should try to make medical or dental appointments outside school hours.

Medical evidence may be requested for long periods or sporadic periods of illness.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Routinely, office staff check the registers in the morning and phone or text the parents of the children where no mark or message has been received.

Requests for leave of absence

Good attendance at school enables children to fully participate in all learning opportunities offered at school and as such appointments, such as dentist, optician or other appointments should be made outside school times. In emergency situations this is not always possible, but parents are expected to make every effort to make appointments outside the school day.

The Statutory Instruments (number 756) governing leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday were significantly tightened and took effect in September 2013. These Statutory instruments removed the right to request leave for absence for the purpose of a holiday, and should only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

All requests for leave of absence will be considered by the head teacher.

Any requests for leave of absence must be made in advance of the requested leave of absence. If the child has poor attendance, the child is often late for school, the request is around assessment periods or it is a second request, the request will not be authorised.

Where a leave of absence is not granted, and the holiday in term time is taken this will be noted on the child's file. If a second leave of absence is requested in the same or subsequent years, not authorised, but still taken, a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Educational Welfare Office when that child returns to school. When a leave of absence has not been requested but a holiday is still taken in term time a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Educational Welfare Office when that child returns to school. When a child does not return to school after a school holiday period due to extension of holiday arrangements, a fixed penalty notice will be issued by the Educational Welfare Office when that child returns to school.

The Governors and the school wish to encourage the individual gifts and talents of all children and so, with evidence of the activity, the Head teacher may authorise extra-curricular activities such as dance and music exams or auditions and performances up to a maximum of 5 school days.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

If the family requests an extended holiday, the school will arrange a meeting with the parents and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If a family take an extended holiday and a child fails to return by the agreed date, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's records. If the child has not returned within 10 days of the expected date of return, then the school may take the child off roll, after consultation with the Local Authority.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Educational Welfare Officer, to arrange a meeting in school or at home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The Head teacher, supported by the EWO, reserves the right to consider issuing a Penalty Notice or taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school punctually and on a regular basis.

Monitoring Attendance

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis. If a child's overall attendance is less than 92% for the academic year, a letter will be sent to parents outlining the school's concerns and that the child's attendance will be monitored over the following four weeks. If when the attendance officer checks the records the following month the child's attendance has improved, then no further action will be taken at that point. If the child's overall attendance for the academic year has fallen further, parents will be invited in to the school to meet with the head teacher to discuss the reasons for poor attendance, what the school and parents can do to support an improvement in attendance and formulate an action plan for the school and family to work together to improve attendance.

If attendance fails to improve then a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made and may result in parents being fined.

Lateness

We like children to be on time for school so that they are ready to learn. If your child misses the start of the day they miss the learning input, information and news for the day. Arriving late for school can be embarrassing for your child and is disruptive for other children.

How we manage lateness:

The doors are open from 8.45 a.m. and the school day starts at 8.55 a.m.

We expect your child to be in class by 8.55 a.m. (the start of the school day) when registers are marked. If your child is not in the classroom at that time they will receive a late mark.

Registers are closed at 9.25 a.m. and, in accordance with the Regulations, a child who arrives after the registers are closed will be marked "absent late" – a mark that shows the child to be on-site but which is included in the unauthorised absence figures. If the problem persists you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued against you.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head teacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. However, you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting to school on time and we will try to help

Rewards for good attendance

Class attendance

We review the attendance each week, with the class with the best attendance looking after "Attendance Bear" for the following week.

Children with 100% attendance

All the children who have 100% at the end of the school year receive a special certificate.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year which are agreed with the EWO. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and the head teacher's report gives a termly update. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of 3 years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus.

The Scholl Secretary is responsible for monitoring the attendance classes and for following up absences in the appropriate way.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

The school with the EWO will monitor attendance on a regular basis.