

Attendance Policy

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 The school aims to work together with parents/carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually; subsequently they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

2. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- 2.1 Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that parents/carers meet these responsibilities. From 1 March 2001 parents/carers found guilty of school attendance offences could be subject to a penalty and /or a period of imprisonment for up to three months.
- 2.2 Parents/carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should inform the school on the first day of non-attendance by 9.20am when registers close. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person.
- 2.3 Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence – only the Head Teacher can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers; should parents/carers fail to prove a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.
- 2.4 Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (9.00am). If a child arrives after 9.00am his/her parents/carers should report directly to the school office and sign into the late/absence log.
- 2.5 Term-time holidays will only be authorised under the following circumstances.

Criteria

- If a parent/carer, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.
- If there has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.
- If the holiday is a unique, one-off, never-to-be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

The financial factor (of taking holidays during term time) will not be taken as constituting an 'exceptional circumstance'.

If leave is granted it can only be for one holiday in any one school year, up to a maximum of ten school days. Any requests for Leave of Absence must be made before booking any term time holidays.

Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)

Schools are unable to grant leave:

- If a child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness.
- If the period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to, or coincides with tests, SATs or other significant events in the school calendar. *(For this reason, the Governing Body at Upwood Primary School has agreed that no holiday requests in September and May will be authorised).*

If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as Unauthorised Absence (the same as truancy), and the matter referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

3. School Responsibilities

- 3.1 The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- 3.2 Pupil registration – the Head Teacher is required to maintain two registers: an admission register (known as the school roll) and an attendance register. The admission register shall contain a list of all pupils at the school (see the school's management information system, SIMs). The Head Teacher must ensure that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.
- 3.3 Registers will be called at 9.00am and at 1.30pm for both Key Stages. Registers will close at 9.20am and at 1.35pm. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session.
- 3.4 Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the school's policy. The Head Teacher will ensure registers are completed accurately and efficiently.

- 3.5 The Head Teacher will meet with the School Secretary each Friday to ensure that registers are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage, including lateness.
- 3.6 Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, then the class teacher should speak to the Head Teacher or Office Staff.
- 3.7 If a child is absent the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received from the child's parent/carer the school office will endeavour to make contact with the parents/carers the same day, wherever possible. If this proves impossible the school office should refer the matter to the Head Teacher.
- 3.8 All absence notes from parents/carers are dated and signed by the school secretary when the absence has been entered into SIMs. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of Head Teacher (who will then choose to speak to the parents/carers concerned himself/herself).
- 3.9 The School Secretary notifies class teachers of impending holidays on the school registers to allow them time to plan for curriculum changes etc.
- 3.10 The Head Teacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the EWO. School attendance statistics will be reported in the School Profile by the Governors.
- 3.11 The Head Teacher is required to tell the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised.
- 3.12 Reporting – the school will submit to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) details of the level of absence within the school in terms of authorised and unauthorised absence as requested.
- 3.13 The school will employ a number of strategies to help, encourage and support children and parents/carers to achieve regular, punctual attendance:-**
- the Head Teacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters;

- the Head Teacher will encourage a good working relationship with parents/carers by publicising attendance in the Home-School Agreement;
- the Head Teacher will offer pastoral support to parents/carers who are finding it difficult to achieve regular attendance;
- appropriate personal encouragement or congratulations will be offered to individual children who achieve regular attendance, where appropriate;
- clear attendance information will be entered in the School's Prospectus;
- LA leaflets will be sent to all new parents/carers, where relevant.

4. The Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the SDP Committee.