



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR PUPILS**

### **Introduction**

**THIS DOCUMENT IS** a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for attendance at North Downs Primary School.

**IT WAS DEVELOPED** through a process of consultation with teaching and non-teaching staff.

**IT HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR APPROVAL** to the Governors in March 2018

**THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED** as required.

### **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

### **1. Being at school**

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. It has been proved that irregular attendance can severely impede academic and social development. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. Parents are expected to support the school by ensuring that their child attends school as much as possible and arrives at school on time every morning.

### **2. Travelling To & From School**

*It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.*

### **3. School Times**

- The school day begins with registration at:
- 9.00am at all three village sites
- Afternoon registration takes place after lunchtime.
- School finishes at 3-3.15pm for the Infants at all Village Sites and 3.15pm for Juniors, unless otherwise notified.
- It is your responsibility as a parent/carer to ensure that the child in your care attends school regularly and gets up in the morning in time to arrive punctually.

**When the class arrives on time:**

- registration takes place quickly and smoothly;
- the day gets off to a good start for everyone;
- everyone hears information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected of him or her.

#### **When a child arrives late:**

- it interrupts concentration;
- it wastes valuable learning time;
- the teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait;
- the child is at an immediate disadvantage because he/she may have missed important teaching points and discussions where ideas were shared.

*Pupils should be in their class for the registration time. If a child arrives after the register is taken they will be marked as late and if they arrive after registration has closed (15 mins later) they will be considered absent. Unless a good reason is given for this absence, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence.*

#### **5. Taking the register**

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the day, the parent/carer must contact the school staff with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must be accompanied by a parent or their representative and must sign out at the school office.

Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

#### **6. Absence**

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given for these absences.

Parents/carers are required to provide reasons for absences, and the school must decide whether or not these reasons justify authorisation according to government guidelines.

#### **Examples:**

##### **Authorised absences:**

- genuine illness of the pupil;
- hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil;
- religious observances (funerals, major feast days in religions other than Christianity)
- visits to prospective new schools
- external exams or educational assessments

##### **Unauthorised absences:**

- shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park;
- a birthday treat;
- oversleeping due to a late night;
- looking after other children / other family member;
- appointments for other family member
- absence of 5 days or more without authorisation

**Whenever a child is absent from school the parent/carer must:**

- contact the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence (An answer phone service is provided to receive messages.) The school will do its best to contact parents at home or at work if a child has not arrived at school by 10.00am and there has been no notification of absence.
- if possible let the school know in advance of any planned absences, e.g.: hospital appointments. Wherever possible medical/dental appointments should be made for after the school day.

## Holidays

**Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates which are published a year in advance. Following Government recommendations, holidays during term time will NOT usually be authorised.**

From September 2013 the law regarding attendance changed and Headteachers are not permitted to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In accordance with the regulations requests for leave of absence will be treated sympathetically, but can only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Surrey County Council's policy now states that parents who take their child out of school for more than 5 days without the authorisation of the Headteacher will be liable to receive a penalty notice (issued by S.C.C.) for each child in the family.

The penalty is £60 per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice or £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. At the end of that time, if still unpaid then the local authority will prosecute the parent.

Please be aware that SCC may also issue penalty notices to any parent whose child's attendance falls below 85% or for whom there are 5 days or more unauthorised absence in the previous 6 weeks, this may include late arrival at school (i.e. after the register has closed).

Advice and support is available from the Education Welfare Officer 01737 737777

- *parents must complete an application form stating the exceptional circumstances before the holiday is booked. NB requests will not be considered as exceptional due to costs during school holiday period.*

When considering taking a family holiday in term time, please consider the impact this will have on your child: they will miss part of their education, miss important learning events and may find it hard to settle back into the classroom routine following their absence.

## 7.Encouraging regular attendance

### **How can you help?**

You can help the child you care for by:

- ensuring that he or she has everything needed for school ready the night before;
- ensuring regular bedtimes and wake up times on school days;
- ensuring they arrive at school punctually;
- talking to a member of the school staff if there is a problem.

At the end of each term we analyse absence and lateness across the school. We will contact you if:-

- Attendance falls below 90% -
  - 1) For the first time - letter sent to parents saying attendance is causing some concern and offering an appointment with the Head teacher to discuss ways of supporting you to improve this
  - 2) Over a second term with no identifiable reason - letter sent with appointment given to meet Head teacher and begin to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor attendance.
  - 3) If, following 1) and 2) there has been no significant improvement - Panel interview arranged with Head teacher and Education Welfare officer to plan together for improvements.
  - 4) If there has still been no improvement - the school will inform you that they are not able to authorise any absence without seeing medical evidence whenever a child is absent.
  
- Lateness is regular or persistent

At North Downs Primary School we are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All discussions regarding persistent absence will be handled sensitively and in confidence.