

Exmoor Link Federation

East Anstey and Bishops Nympton Primary Schools

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The intended audience for this policy:

- Current and new members of staff, ensuring understanding and agreement on the school approach to attendance.
- School governors.
- Parents and external agencies to inform them of the schools position on attendance.

Rationale

In order to encourage maximum attendance levels, both staff and pupils need to work within a framework of good practice that both support and helps motivate pupils and is consistent across the school. Teachers should encourage punctuality and a high level of attendance, as it is good educational practice. All teachers should respond early to developing problems of attendance and punctuality, as good habits need to be established early on. Close links with parents are essential but these need to be formalised so that issues such as punctuality and attendance can be openly discussed. Poor attendance affects learning continuity and progress e.g. a child who is 15 minutes late each day loses 1.15 hours of learning per week.

Aims & Purposes

The school attendance policy is designed to fulfil our statutory duty and will:

- Ensure consistency of practice through the school
- Give clear guidance to pupils, parents and others.
- Enable the school to review these practices.

This policy includes

- Guidelines for marking the register
- Guidelines for reporting absences
- Standardisation of practice
- The procedures for parents to report absences to school
- Identification of appropriate management structure and general procedures for all of the above.

Monitoring and encouraging attendance is an integral part of the class teacher's role. Class teachers will receive support from the head teacher, or other members of the Senior Management Team if necessary.

Strategies

Marking the Attendance register

Each register must, by law, be marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. Registers are to be sent to the school office after completion. Children can collect registers at the commencement of the next session. They should then accompany the class. This is to ensure compliance with the school's Fire and Emergency Procedures. Registers should be marked in ink and the following symbols are to be used:

/	Present am (black)
\	Present pm
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised absences
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Extended Family Holiday (not agreed)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical (dentist / hospital etc)
N	No reason yet provided
O	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational Visit or Trip

W	Work Experience
X	Non compulsory school age absence
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to pupils

Class registers must clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences, as termly and annual totals must be reported to the DFE and in Governor Report to Parents. It is essential to total the register because of the reporting requirements to publish this information. All school prospectuses must show the percentage of authorised and unauthorised absences.

Class teachers hold important responsibilities for the general welfare of pupils in their classes; attendance and punctuality is an important feature of their responsibility and is part of good primary practice. An attendance register is a legal document and must be completed accurately and on time.

Parental Support

The role of parent/guardian in supporting the schools efforts in securing high levels of attendance is vital. At Exmoor Link Federation we aim to maintain close, effective and positive links with our parents and ensure that they are contacted at an early stage to deal with unexplained absences of their child. The LEA has published a leaflet for parent explaining the regulations and give guidance for parents about the school's expectations. These are circulated to all new parents in a pack with other 'starting school' literature such as the Home School Agreement.

Any policy reviews are circulated to all parents via the back of regular newsletters.

Holidays in Term Time

- Amendments made recently to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed references to family holiday and extended leave. Parents are no longer entitled to take their children out of school for up to ten school days per school year, which had been the previous interpretation of the legislation. Legislation now states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Reporting Absences

Parents are asked to send a note or telephone the school on the day of absence by 10.00am explaining the absence. A note should be kept of the telephone call if notification is made in this way. These notes are kept by the administrator in a class folder with individual pockets for each pupil. The class teacher is to ensure that letters from parents are dated.

Unauthorised absence

In the event of any unexplained absences the school will telephone home, normally by 10.00am.

It is acknowledged that an early response to developing patterns of absence can be most effective. Individual circumstances must be taken into account.

Unauthorised absences will be dealt with by-

- Talking to the parent/guardian. Acceptable forms of communication can be a note or phone call by either class teacher / head teacher or school administrator.
- If no response is forthcoming a letter should be sent to the parents on the third day. Note this in the register.
- If there is no response then a second letter should be sent on the seventh day. Again note in the register when this was sent.
- Report to the EWO after the tenth day of absence, if there still has been no satisfactory response.

Lateness

Any lateness for registration must be noted in the register, giving time of arrival and the reason why, if given.

Regular lateness must be followed up in the same way as absence. Patterns over time will be noted, actioned as appropriate (see below) and passed to the EWO for action.

Monitoring Procedures

The school administrator has daily responsibility for Attendance Registers. Monitoring will take place over a three week rotation after which a data trawl will take place.

3 Week Data Check:

1. Any children under 95% attendance will be highlighted
2. Registration certificate examination
3. Staff will make initial contact with parents as appropriate (attendance and late attendance)
4. After Autumn half term and any staff contact, attendance letters will be sent where attendance falls below 90% (AT1-3)
5. After initial staff contact, late letters will be sent where high numbers of lates are identified during a monitoring period (>10 during a 3 week period)
6. Where attendance / punctuality does not improve referral to EWO may be required

Any concerns will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer. The EWO will visit the school every term to monitor the registers and view the attendance policy.

Attendance figures will be sent to the DFES and LEA as required.

Role of the LEA Education Welfare Officer

The EWO operates within a legal framework on behalf of the LEA in discharging its legal obligations. He/she will ensure that The Education Act 1996 which relates to children receiving efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude is applied with, in line with the LEA values, policies and procedures. One of their main objectives is to maintain and improve school attendance and monitor school registers, hold regular consultation with school staff responsible for attendance and obtain referrals from school. They may follow up referrals by

- Communicating with parents/guardians by letter or phone
- Arranging a number of home visits
- Liaising with other professionals/agencies

The outcome of any intervention is communicated back to school.

The E.W.O. will investigate cases of attendance that fall below 80%.

The school attendance target is currently set at 97% attendance.

Named Governor for Attendance: Cath Jennings

Policy Adopted: 27.01.16