

BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Two Gates Community Primary School**Principles**

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance and behaviour policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Support Team.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required by telephone or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

**parents keeping children off school
unnecessarily truancy before or during the school day
absences which have never been properly explained
children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should Contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment. Penalty Notices are issued per child per parent.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to Contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Parents whose children are unable to attend school should telephone the office before 9.00am on the first day of absence and leave a message on the dedicated absence line this will then be recorded with the appropriate code on the register.

Parents should wherever possible confirm the absence with a written note when the child returns to school. If no notification has been received by 9.20 am on the first day of absence a member of staff will endeavour to contact the parents by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence, this also ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.

Any child arriving in school after registration times ie: 8.45am - morning session, 1.00pm - Foundation or 1.15pm - KS1 and KS2 afternoon session should report to the office for registration as a late arrival. Arrival before the closure of registers (30 mins after registration times) will be recorded as L - late before registers close - present mark. Arrival after closure of registers will be recorded as U - late after registers close - unauthorised absence.

Children arriving after the closure of registers due to medical/dental appointments will be recorded as M - medical/dental appointments - authorised absence.

In exceptional circumstances ie: severe weather conditions the time for closure of registers may be extended at the discretion of the Headteacher.

The Dept of Education made changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence during term time. Headteachers may not grant any leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

Parents wishing to take a child out of school during term time should Complete Notification of Pupil Leave of Absence Form available from the school office.

The completed form will be referred to the Headteacher who will consider the Request, parents are notified in writing as to the outcome of the request and advised that unauthorised holiday taken during term time could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Penalty Notice for Leave of Absence (Holiday) in term Time

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised absence may result in parents receiving a penalty notice fine.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

A penalty notice warning can be issued a child has achieved 10 unauthorised late marks. Late marks do not need to be consecutive in order for a penalty to be issued. You are therefore encouraged to ensure your child attends school on time.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any academic year without good reason the pupil will be considered a Persistent Absentee, a discussion will take place with the LST and a subsequent referral may be made by the school. Parents will be made aware by letter when their child's attendance has triggered this action. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. Penalty Notices are issued per child per parent.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

- It is proposed that the LST will issue Penalty Notices in Staffordshire either as part of their ongoing casework or following referral from schools. It is intended that this process will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, retain school-home relationships and allow cohesion with other enforcement sanctions.
- The LST will only issue Penalty Notices by post and never as an on the spot action i.e. during a Truancy Sweep. This will ensure that all evidential requirements are in place and meet Health and Safety requirements for the County Council employees.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Where Schools, Staffordshire Police and neighbouring LA's ask that Staffordshire County Council issue such a Notice, their request will be investigated and only actioned by the LST where:

- The LST is satisfied that it has all relevant information;

- The circumstances of the pupils absence meets the requirements of this Protocol;
- There is a reasonable expectation that the use of a Penalty Notice would improve attendance; and
- The issue of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or enforcement sanctions already being used.

The LST will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where the criteria are met will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent or carer that they may be issued with a Penalty Notice;
- In the same letter set a period of 20 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence; and
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 20 school day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- The Council is satisfied that there is proof that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person;
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Protocol; or
- The parent can show that they did not receive the Penalty Notice eg. it was delivered to the wrong address.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's or carer's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice;
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120; and
- The County Council retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996.

Policy and Publicity

- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parent's or specific children should not be made public;
- Issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy;
- All school Attendance Policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

The EWS will:

- Report at regular intervals to the Schools Forum and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices;
- Make termly reports to the Staffordshire County Council's Management Committee on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and
- Review Penalty Notice
- use at regular intervals and amend the enforcement strategy as appropriate.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

The highest achieving class attendances in both key stages are detailed on the weekly school newsletter. These are recorded as weekly/monthly/half-term and full-term figures.

The school operates an individual achievement scheme which consists of a bronze, silver and gold reward system.

Bronze Certificate and award for 100% attendance for 1 whole term in the school year

Silver Certificate and award for 100% attendance for 2 whole terms in the school year

Gold Certificate and award for 100% attendance for all 3 terms in the school year.

The certificates and awards are presented during a whole school assembly at the end of the school year.

The school is part of the Belgrave Pyramid and issues attendance letters to parents linked to the Attendance Colour Codes, these letters are issued by all schools within the pyramid.

95%-100% Excellent

90-94% Improvement Needed

Less Than 90% Persistent Absence

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Headteacher - Nést Llewelyn-Cook

Office Manager - Jeanette Redfern

School Secretary - Michelle Render

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.