

## **Attendance Policy**

### **POLICY IN PRACTICE**

You will see:

- very few pupils arriving at school after 9.00am;
- no unexplained absences in registers day to day;
- parents informing the school office about attendance issues;
- parents taking their children out of school for a medical appointment but bringing them straight back afterwards.

### **AIMS**

- To maintain very good levels of attendance.
- To reduce unauthorized absences from school.
- To reduce broken weeks in school.
- To improve punctuality.
- Improved attendance to help raise levels of achievement.
- Positive attitudes towards attendance to enable pupils to maximise their opportunities both in school and in later life.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. The school supports the LEA guidelines.
2. The school follows the statutory framework.
3. The whole school community takes responsibility for attendance.
4. There are clear procedures for following up attendance on a daily, weekly and termly basis.
5. The school clearly defines what are acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence.
6. The school has clear procedures for responding to absence and lateness.

### **Related Policies**

- This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## **GUIDELINES**

### **1. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education whether by school attendance or otherwise.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between Authorised and Unauthorised absence from school. A letter or telephone call does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered in the letter or message will the absence be authorised.

### **2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTENDANCE**

Improving school attendance at Minchinhampton Academy is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

#### Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

#### Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child/children attend school regularly and punctually and that annual holidays are taken during the school holidays. Requests for term time holidays should be made in writing before booking and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. Medical appointments should be made for outside school hours if possible. Where appointments are made during the day, pupils will be expected to return to school afterwards.

#### School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching). The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absences, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absences and lateness formally and consistently.

#### Governors

The head teacher reports on attendance to the governing body in the headteacher's report 5 times a year.

The governors are responsible for ensuring the school's policy and practice are in line with statutory regulations and effective.

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### Daily

**Class teachers to complete registers at 8.55 am.** Attendance registers are legal documents and it is essential that they are completed accurately and neatly in the morning and after lunch. All marks should be in black and red pen. No tippex must be used. If a change needs to be made to the document, the change should be in form of an additional note at bottom of the page.

**If a child arrives after the classes have come into school, they must report to the school office to be signed into the 'late' book.**

Registers should be sent to the school office straight away after they have been taken at 8.55am.

**Pupils who arrive after registers have been sent to the office will be marked as late by the school office (who will need to refer to the 'late' book when completing registers).**

**Where pupils are absent and no message has been received from the parent/carer, the office will contact the parent/carer on the first morning of their absence no later than 10.30am.**

#### Ongoing

Parents kept informed of school expectations and procedures through information website.

### 4. REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school immediately (**before the start of the school day on their first day of absence**) if their child needs to be absent from school.

Preferably absence to be followed up with a written note explaining the child's absence given to the class teacher or the office on the child's return to school.

Authorised absences - are acceptable reasons for absence and cover things like sickness, hospital appointments, dentists, religious holidays, clinic, funerals etc. Medical appointments should be arranged, if possible, outside the school day. Where this is not possible, it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day.

Unauthorised absences\_ - for which no acceptable reasons are given and things like shopping, going to the airport, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent unwell etc.

Holidays- any requests for holidays made in writing to the Head Teacher.  
Requests will only to be considered in exceptional circumstances.

## **5. RESPONSE FOR ABSENCE**

The school expects to be notified about a child's reason for absence by the parent/carer on the morning of the first day that the child is off. The office will contact the parent/ carer on the first morning, before 10.30am, if they are not contacted first.

If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence but the child continues to be absent for 3 days or longer, then the office will contact the parent/ carer to enquire regarding the welfare of the child.

If the child continues to be absent for 3 days or longer, and communication with the parent/carer has not been achieved within 2/3 days then details will be passed to the head teacher who may make the decision to either write to the parent/carer or refer to the Education Welfare Officer,

Where absences are considered not to be a justified reason or no reason has been given, it will be recorded as unauthorised. The parent/carer will be informed if their child has received 5 or more unauthorised absences.

Where children have continued unauthorised absence and persistent attendance problems, the head teacher will discuss this with parents/carers directly. Targets may be set and a plan drawn up. Evidence will have to be produced if there are any further absences are to be authorized. A referral may be made to the EWO.

If targets are not met, parents could be invited to an attendance panel, which will include the governor responsible for attendance and the manager of the EWS. If targets are not met after the panel meet, the matter will be taken to court. At any point in the process, the head teacher will refer the children onto the Educational Welfare Officer if they feel it appropriate.

## **6. LATENESS**

A child is considered to be late for school when arriving at school after 8.55 am. It should be noted that when a child arrives later, after the register has been closed (9.10 am) their mark is lost for that half session and will be considered as unauthorised absence.

Where children have persistent lateness problems, the head teacher will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting. (See above for process- same as absences). The head teacher will refer the children onto the Educational Welfare Officer if they feel it appropriate.

## **7. PENALTY NOTICES**

In extreme cases of unauthorised absences or truancy, the school will seek to issue a Penalty Notice on the parents/ carers through the Educational Welfare Service. (see attached documentation for guidance).

This policy reviewed by the HT: January 2016