

# **Tividale Community Primary School**

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

This statement will be implemented on an equal opportunities basis, ensuring that it does not discriminate in any way against any pupil group, regardless of gender, ability, disability, religious or cultural belief or racial background.

### **Introduction**

At Tividale Community Primary School we believe that good attendance and punctuality is key to effective learning. Without regular attendance, learning becomes fragmented and ineffective. Parents, teachers and governors must be committed to a shared responsibility and a partnership which ensures that all pupils have regular good attendance. This then ensuring equal opportunities and access to the whole school curriculum, and in turn, developing the children to their full potential. The attendance policy is related directly to our whole school values, ethos and curriculum, and touches all aspects of school life.

### **Aims**

- To facilitate the effective education of pupils by encouraging regular, good attendance at school.
- To facilitate the effective education of pupils by encouraging good punctuality.
- To encourage in pupils and parents an awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

### **Objectives**

- To detail the statutory responsibilities of school and parents.
- To define authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To detail non-statutory monitoring and record keeping in respect of attendance and punctuality.
- To detail the strategies for improving and maintaining high levels of attendance.
- To detail the strategies for improving unauthorised absence and maintaining low levels of unauthorised absence.
- To detail the strategies for improving punctuality and maintaining good punctuality.
- To detail procedures for setting performance indicators.
- To detail effectiveness and evaluation procedures.

### **The Statutory Responsibilities of School and Parents.**

#### Responsibilities of the School

It is the duty of the school to keep two registers:

- An Admissions Register (the school roll)
- An Attendance Register

The Admission Register contains a list of all pupils at the school.

The Attendance Register will be taken for all pupils on the school roll twice a day; at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Each pupil must be marked present, engaged in an educationally approved activity off-

site, or absent. If they are marked absent, the register must determine whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

### Responsibilities of parents

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child attends the school at which he or she is on roll, and failure to do so could result in legal action being taken.

### Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact us by 9.05am, either by telephone or in person on the first day of absence on 0121 557 1765

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone, text or send a message via an automated message service on the first day of absence. If we have not heard from you, this will be repeated.
- If absence persists, you will be invited into school to discuss concerns.
- For pupils who have 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absence in a four week period, a referral to Attendance and Prosecutions Team will be made. This also applies to pupils who have an attendance record of below 80 %.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence.**

#### Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Headteacher, Deputy or another authorised representative of the school. This includes instances in which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. Illness or medical appointments). Parents are required to provide evidence of medical appointments and, where possible, to arrange such appointments outside of school times.

#### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Headteacher, Deputy or another authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained absences or absences that the school feels are unjustified.

#### Extended Family Holidays & other absences

Parents are required to complete a Leave of Absence Request Form (available from the School Office) and will be notified of the outcome of their request.

Changes to regulations mean that from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 schools are no longer allowed to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances **do not** include family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, attending sporting or other events, looking after family members who are unwell, babysitting younger family members, birthdays, shopping or airport trips etc.

Where parents still decide to take children out of school during term time the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and notified to the Sandwell Council's Attendance and Prosecutions Service which may result in a

Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. Parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be fined £60 (per parent, per child). This can rise to £120 (per parent, per child) if not paid within the deadline.

If the pupil does not return to school after a period of absence, and no further notice is given by the parent, then that pupil will be removed from the school roll.

### Absence for Religious Observance

Parents are required to complete a Leave of Absence Request Form (available from the School Office) and will be notified of the outcome of their request.

In accordance with DFE statutory guidance, absence for one day will be treated as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day has been set aside for religious observance. Any absence on days other than or, in excess of those set aside by the religious body will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee (PA), when their attendance falls below 80% or more across the school year; for whatever reason, or has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a four week period. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to the child's educational prospects, and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA benchmark will be given priority and be informed of this by school to try to bring about an immediate improvement, before a referral is made to the Attendance and Prosecutions Team.

Parents may be requested to sign an attendance agreement and in some cases an action plan may be implemented to include activities around raising attendance.

### **Non-Statutory Monitoring and Record Keeping in Respect of Attendance and Punctuality.**

Individual registration group absence is monitored and recorded weekly by the class teacher and the Admin Assistant ensures that where necessary absence return forms are completed by parents showing reasons for absence. Any pupils whose attendance is showing particular cause for concern is reported to the Deputy Headteacher.

Punctuality is monitored and recorded daily and, for those children who are late more than twice weekly calculated over a half termly period, a letter will be sent home informing parents.

Whole school attendance and punctuality is monitored and recorded, both weekly, monthly and accumulatively by the Deputy Headteacher.

Attendance figures and targets are reported to Governors at interim periods throughout the year and comparisons are made with the national average.

Individual pupil attendance figures are reported to parents in the summer term.

## **Strategies for Improving and Maintaining High Levels of Attendance.**

- First day contact where the absence is regarding a pupil whose attendance is causing concern.
- Rewards and certificates for attendance and punctuality presented weekly in assembly.
- Weekly rewards and incentives given by class teacher.
- End of term certificates and badges for pupils with 100% attendance.
- End of year rewards and certificates for those pupils achieving 100% attendance.

## **Strategies for Improving Unauthorised Absence and Maintaining Low Levels of Unauthorised Absence.**

- First day contact where the absence is regarding a pupil whose attendance is causing concern by Administration Staff or Deputy Head Teacher.
- Letters sent home by office staff regarding reasons for absence.
- Contact with home by Head or Deputy Head.
- Letter sent home requesting formal interview with the Deputy Headteacher to discuss attendance and unauthorised absence rates.
- Medical evidence will be requested for those pupils whose levels of absence are giving cause for concern to determine whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.
- Refer to the Attendance & Prosecutions Officer who will then issue the relevant notices, dependant upon the individual circumstances and the terms of the Service Level Agreement.

## **Strategies for Improving and Maintaining Punctuality.**

At Tividale, the school day starts at 8:55am, and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Nursery sessions start at either 9am or 1pm.

Registers are marked by 9:00am, and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

- Weekly rewards and certificates awarded to class group in assembly.
- Names of individuals with a 100% attendance and punctuality record for the week in each class, entered into a class draw for a prize presented by class teacher.
- Late book kept every morning to record names of pupils late before and after close of register.
- Letters sent home to parents weekly for pupils who are late more than once during that week.

Where there are concerns in relation to poor punctuality, the following action will be taken:

- Contact with home by Head or Deputy Head.
- Letter sent home requesting formal interview with the Deputy Head to discuss punctuality concerns.
- Refer to the Attendance & Prosecutions Officer who will then issue the relevant notices, dependant upon the individual circumstances and the terms of the Service Level Agreement.

## **Children who are not collected punctually after school ends**

Our school day ends at 3:30pm, and Nursery at either 12 noon or 4pm.

There are rare occasions when perhaps, due to an emergency, parents are not able to collect their children after school, or make arrangements for their collection. Parents must inform school as soon as possible should this occasion arise.

In accordance with Sandwell Local Authority Policy, if a child is not collected, the school will make enquiries to find the parents using the emergency contact numbers provided. If after one hour, it has not been possible to contact parents, then it is our duty to inform the local police. If this becomes a regular occurrence, the Headteacher will make a referral to Sandwell Children's Services to inform them of the concerns.

## **Procedures for Setting Performance Indicators.**

Targets will be set and reviewed yearly across the school.

In order to set and review targets the following procedures will be taken:

- An Analysis of the previous years attendance figures sent to the DfES.
- A Comparison of attendance figures at Tividale with local and national averages.
- The setting of targets to move Tividale forward towards meeting the national averages.

## **Effectiveness and Evaluation Procedures.**

An evaluation of the effectiveness of procedures and strategies being implemented will be carried out weekly by the deputy head teacher and by each class teacher. Registers and absence returns are monitored and comparisons are made with previous weekly data.

Targets are monitored each term.

Emma Burnell/Premjit Dosanjh  
September 2013

Approved by Governing Body November 2013