

## Pottery Primary School Attendance Policy

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. The school aims to achieve good attendance, thus enabling children to benefit from access to the whole curriculum.

All staff have the responsibility to encourage good attendance, which is seen as an achievement worthy of merit. On a day to day basis office staff responsible for the input of attendance will monitor this in order that quick and early intervention can be organised if a problem is identified.

On a termly basis the headteacher will monitor attendance of all pupils by class and identified groups relevant to the context of the school: boys, girls, disadvantaged, SEND, FSM, LAC

There is a graduated approach to dealing with children absent from school (Appendix 1); every effort is made to work with parents/carers face-to-face before sending written correspondence but where parent/carer does not engage and / or children's attendance does not improve written correspondence will be sent.

Some children due to declining attendance are placed on 'first day alert' (**below 95% attendance**), class teachers alert the office of the absence of such children immediately upon taking the register and office staff make every attempt to speak to the parent/guardian, written correspondence may be initiated at this stage. Where a child's attendance **falls below 90%** it is likely that parents/carers will be asked for a GP note or evidence of prescribed medication for each and every absence before this will be authorised. Where this is not obtained the absence will be unauthorised.

The school expects good attendance and punctuality to be recognised by Governors, Staff, Parents/Carers and pupils as achievable, valued aims. Problems associated with attendance matters will be dealt with sensitively, but without compromising the expectations of the school.

Parents / Carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance before their child enters school, via the school booklet and at the new entrant meeting.

Staff will complete the attendance register electronically (e-portal) at the beginning of morning and afternoon school, marking in accordance with local authority guidelines. Phone messages regarding absences will be collated on a daily basis by the office staff and relayed to class teachers.

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration England Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays unless the absence is for 'exceptional circumstances.'

Any requests for absence should be made on the school absence request form available from the school office and handed into the office prior to any holiday/absence arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

It is an expectation that parents/carers take family holidays in the 13 weeks that children have for such purposes and not during the 39 school weeks. Derbyshire County Council issue a penalty notice for absence due to holidays.

Where there are exceptional circumstance for absence parents/carers should explain these to the headteacher in writing.

If a child returns to school after absence without a satisfactory explanation having been received a standard letter of inquiry from the attendance software system is sent by pupil post. If this does not elicit a reply from the parents, the Headteacher is informed and a further letter sent.

If a child returns having said they have been on holiday and the school have not been informed that this is the case a holiday challenge letter is sent.

The Headteacher will contact the multi-agency team for advice regarding children whose attendance remains a concern and attendances below 85% will be automatically investigated. A pre-legal meeting will usually be held.

Routine appointments such as the dentist are expected to be outside of the school day. Parents signing children out of school for an appointment are asked to bring the relevant appointment card/letter.

The school generally has an attendance rate above that of the local authority and national figures and whilst this continues the headteacher will be responsible for monitoring attendance. If the attendance figure falls below LA/national then the Board of Governors will formulate an action pla

## **Appendix 1**

### **MANAGING TRIVIAL MEDICAL ABSENCE**

The yardstick for any intervention is when a student's attendance falls below 90% and certainly before it reaches 85%, unless the figure has been affected by a holiday in term-time. Ideally, the school should send its own 'letter of concern' first, or make contact with the family to urge an improvement.

#### **MED 1**

If regular time is being lost through 'illness' and the number of broken weeks is half (or more than half) of the total number of weeks of school so far in the year, this is an indicator for a MED 1 letter to be sent (for example, 7 broken weeks out of 12 by November).

#### **MED 2**

After at least 2 weeks (up to a maximum of 4 weeks), please review to see whether the letter has had an effect. If the same level of illness is occurring and only being verbally reported, send the MED 2 letter.

After the MED 2 is sent, do not authorise the absences without clear evidence.

#### **MED 1 LETTER**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to you about \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance. You will see from the enclosed printout that \_\_\_\_\_ has been absent a lot recently for medical reasons. I am concerned that if \_\_\_\_\_ continues to be ill as often as this, he/she will be unable to keep up with school work and will not achieve his/her full potential.

At this stage, we would presume that you will have had some contact with your family doctor regarding \_\_\_\_\_'s illnesses. We therefore request that, from now on, you send school some form of official medical evidence to validate the illness. This can be a medical appointment card, showing the date and time of the appointment or a tear-off strip from a prescription, or the medicine itself can be brought to school and shown to your child's class teacher.

Alternatively, school would be happy to make a referral to School Health where additional support and advice on managing \_\_\_\_\_'s illness is available. Please let me know if you would like me to make the referral.

Attendance Policy  
July 2017 GH

If \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance does not show the improvement that we hope for over the coming weeks, we will be referring \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ the Education Welfare Officer, based in the local multi-agency team.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

### **MED 2 LETTER**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to you to follow up my previous letter regarding \_\_\_\_\_'s absences from school due to illness.

Since I wrote to you, \_\_\_\_\_ has continued to have regular time off school for medical reasons and medical evidence to validate the absence has not been provided as requested.

The school has reached the point where it will no longer authorise absences for \_\_\_\_\_ which you notify as illness, unless proper medical evidence is provided on each occasion. The consequence of absences remaining 'unauthorised' will be referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

<b>REFERRAL CRITERIA AND CHECKLIST FOR UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE</b>	
<b>PUPIL NAME:</b>	
<b>SCHOOL:</b>	
All cases will need to meet at least one of the following minimum criteria for unauthorised absence before a case can be accepted for investigation/consideration of possible legal intervention:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two consecutive weeks of unauthorised absence</li> </ul>	
OR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary schools: 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5 week period, or 10 sessions of authorised absence in a 5 week period where no medical evidence has been received.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Persistent absence threshold met within the last 12 months and where there is some current unauthorised absence.</li> </ul>	
<b>ATTENDANCE MONITORING CHECKLIST FOR CASES REFERRED BY SCHOOL</b>	
Current attendance:	
Number of unauthorised sessions over last 5 school weeks (from pupils attendance print out)	
Is pupil persistently absent (90% or below):	
<b>WHAT WORK HAS SCHOOL DONE SO FAR</b>	
Telephone contact with parent to establish reasons for absence:	
Letter contact with parent, offering support and explaining concerns/ consequences if unauthorised absence continues:	

Attendance Policy  
July 2017 GH

Home visits:	
Letter contact with parent asking for future medical evidence of absence:	
Parent invited into school to discuss attendance concerns:	
Outcome of meeting(s):	
Parent placed on a pre-legal school attendance panel:	
Was a Family Support Worker (EWO) present at the pre legal panel meeting:	
Outcome of panel process:	
Other agencies involved:	
<b>ACTION:</b>	
Return to school for further work	
Contact school for clarification of issues	
Allocate to MAT worker (already working with family) for investigation	
Allocate to FSW(EWO) for possible progression of legal action	
Signature:	Date: