

# DERBYSHIRE LA

## *MELBOURNE INFANT SCHOOL*

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This policy was reviewed on 19 March 2018 and has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies including the Disability Equality Scheme.

Signed : ..... Dated .....

Chair of Governors

Minute No : .....

## **Introduction**

At Melbourne Infant School we place great importance on high attendance for pupils. We believe that an effective attendance policy will contribute to the general welfare of the children and help them to meet the challenging targets for achievement set by the school.

Although the head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance issues, all members of the school community will work together to promote excellent attendance.

## **Aim**

The overall attendance figure for 2016-2017 was 97.31% which was above the target of 97%. In line with Derbyshire LA's target we aim to achieve again for 2017/2018 97%.

## **Attendance policy into practice**

1. Attendance registers are marked according to national and local guidelines each morning and afternoon at the start of the session. They are returned to the school office after registration.
2. Parents are requested to inform school about any absence on the first morning. The message is recorded and transmitted to the relevant teacher/s.
3. If a parent has failed to contact the school on the first day of absence, the class teacher will inform the bursar who will telephone the parent. Should this be unsuccessful, a letter will be sent to parents so that the absence can be explained.
4. Attendance is transferred to the electronic system by office staff.
5. The School Business Officer and the head teacher monitor absence throughout the year, looking for regular patterns of absence, unauthorised absence and long-term absence. Particular attention is paid to vulnerable groups of children e.g. those 'looked after'.
6. Where attendance falls below 95% informal discussions will take place with parents by either the class teacher or Headteacher.
7. Where attendance falls below 90% parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Panel Meeting with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer where targets will be set and support offered. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken.
8. The Education Welfare Officer monitors attendance once a term. The aim of this monitoring is to identify persistent absentees and to visit the parents. This practice also monitors the school absence monitoring process.
9. The Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer will monitor attendance closely at least every 6 weeks.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Head Teacher**

- Has overall responsibility for attendance issues
- Ensures that electronic system is updated
- Monitors attendance
- Keeps teachers, parents and governors informed about attendance issues

### **Class Teacher**

- Responsible for completing the register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to meet legal requirements and comply with fire regulations. Children should be entered as present, absent or late. Absences should be marked as authorised or unauthorised. (see definitions below) If it is unclear whether an absence should be authorised, the head teacher should make the decision.

- Monitor attendance on a day-to-day basis and inform head teacher of any concerns.

#### School Business Officer

- Enters data into MIS system (Facility)
- Monitors absence, liaising with head and EWO
- Follows up unexplained absences on first day
- Records late arrivals after register has closed (after 9.30 a.m.)

#### Parents/Carers

- Have a statutory duty to ensure regular attendance and punctuality.
- Inform school on the first day of absence
- If taking a holiday in term time, fill in a holiday request form at least two weeks in advance.
- Keep school informed of any health, social or emotional issues that may affect their child's well-being and attendance.

#### **Main Categories of Authorised Absence**

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments, by necessity made in school time
- Domestic circumstances that could include death of a close relative, house fire or other traumatic event.
- Annual holiday in term time – exceptional circumstances.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

- Truancy-where the child is away from school without permission from an authorised person. A parent is not an authorised person and the school may refuse to authorise absences. ( For example, shopping expeditions, birthday treats etc)
- Late after the register has closed. This will be half an hour after the register has closed which will be classed as a half-day absence.

#### **Attendance Strategies**

- The importance of good attendance will be discussed at the meeting for new parents.
- A clear statement in school brochure about the high profile given to the issue of attendance.
- Newsletters will be used to remind parents about the school policy and the rules about holidays in term time.
- Rewards & incentives for excellent attendance & improved attendance. This includes certificates in Awards Assembly.
- Attendance is reported on to children at the end of each week. Praise is given to the class with the highest attendance.
- Prompt investigation of any issues that may be affecting a child's well-being and attendance.

#### **Holidays**

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children/young people with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

As a school we work incredibly hard to support all children/young people and their families so as to ensure that all children/young people have good attendance.

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1<sup>st</sup> September 2013**. These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes approval will not be given to requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances\*** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

This is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

\*Examples of **exceptional circumstances** as agreed by Melbourne Infant and Junior School's governors.

- Accredited Exam – ballet/music (extra curricular)
- Gifted & Talented opportunity (part in the pantomime, Wimbledon ball person etc)
- Bereavement
- Serious family crisis
- Holiday due to factory shut down (Proof shown to the school to verify from employer)
- Wedding – close family relative (parent, grandparent, sibling, 1<sup>st</sup> aunty/uncle)
- Religious Day
- Other exceptional circumstances to be considered on an individual basis

## **Reporting**

Levels of authorised and unauthorised attendance published in School Profile.

## **Safeguarding**

Any attendance issues which may be related to safeguarding and child protection issues will be followed up in accordance with the Child Protection Policy

## **Related Policies**

Child Protection

S.E.N.

Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities & Inclusion

Education Welfare Officer: Donna Smithen

February 2018