



USWORTH COLLIERY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Designated members of staff: Gary Wright & Marcus Dickinson

Chair of Governors: Alison Logan

INTRODUCTION

Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. Pupils will be encouraged to aspire to achieve 100% attendance but we appreciate that some absence may be unavoidable. Where this is the case, Parents/Carers should contact the school promptly on the first day of absence to explain the reason and provide an estimate of how long the absence is likely to last. If the absence continues over a weekend, Parent/Carers should again contact the school on the Monday morning to advise that the absence is continuing.

ORGANISATION AND PROCEDURES

Lessons start at 8.55am and it is important that all pupils enter the school building between 8.45am and 8.55am when the doors are open. If a child misses the doors then they must enter via the School Office. If this is between 8.55am and 9.00am, the office staff will send them along to their classrooms without a late slip. If a child is late so as to miss registration at 9.00am, they will be marked late in the register. The child will be provided with a late slip to take to their class teacher which advises the teacher the child has arrived late and has been acknowledged by the office staff. A late mark will be inputted in the register on the Pupil Asset system by the office staff which will include the number of minutes late and the reason provided for lateness. If they arrive after 9.30am, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there has been a prior arrangement or communication with office staff (e.g in the event of a medical appointment).

All messages pertaining to school absences should be left on the allocated absence voicemail listed in the telephone options when calling the main school office (0191 417 8888). Alternatively, parents can inform the office of a school absence via the dedicated absence email inbox - absence@usworthcolliery.co.uk. When leaving a message, please ensure the information below is clearly stated in your contact:

- The full name of the child/ren that will be absent and their class (e.g Joseph Daniels, 5EP)
- Your relationship to that child (e.g Joseph's mum)
- The reason for their absence (e.g unwell with sickness)
- When you expect the child to return to school (e.g will be absent 48 hours and return Thursday)

This information will then be electronically recorded on your child's attendance record and will be useful for your and school's future reference in communications and updates on your child's attendance.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence, providing school with the reason for the absence and an estimation of how long the child will be away from school. If contact is not made by the Parent/Carer when a pupil does not attend school they will be contacted by Mr Dickinson (Family Liaison Officer), by text message. If there is no response to this message, a call will be made by Mr Dickinson investigating the reason for absence. If no response is received explaining the absence of a child within 48 hours, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

For absences longer than one day, parents must contact the school office each subsequent morning of the ongoing absence to advise that their child's absence is continuing and that the child should not be expected at school that day. Absences will be followed up in the above manner each day, even if we have spoken with or received a message from a parent the previous day about their absence. This is in line with our robust safeguarding purposes. We cannot assume that a child is still unwell without having this confirmed by a parent.

Dental and medical appointments should, whenever possible, be made outside of the school day. If it is unavoidable that a child should have an appointment during school hours, the school office should be notified and provided with written evidence of the date and time of appointment and when the child will

be collected/returned to school. Appointments that are made urgently by telephone should be supported by an appointment card on the pupil's return to school.

TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Due to Government Legislation, the school may no longer authorise family holidays during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances which validate why the holiday should be taken during this time. If the Parent/Carer feels that they have exceptional circumstances, then they must provide these reasons in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence and the Parent/Carer will be informed in writing of the decision. The Headteacher will take into consideration:

- The extenuating circumstances – For example, one days leave for the wedding day of parent/carer.
- The pupil's record of attendance.
- The length of the leave requested.
- The timing of the leave – Leave should never be taken and will not be authorised during periods of assessment, such as the SATs.

In the case of unauthorised term-time leave, the letter that is sent by the Headteacher refusing a term-time leave application will be regarded as the formal warning to the Parent/Carer. If the Parent/Carer then takes the decision to remove their child from school for the holiday, despite the notification of the leave being unauthorised, the school will request the Local Authority to consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice in accordance with Sunderland City Council's Code of Conduct. Please note penalty notices are issued to **each** parent for **each** child. Each case will be judged under its own merit based upon our school's attendance policy.

OUR PRACTICE

Regular attendance is encouraged by the school providing a caring and welcoming learning environment, which motivates and supports pupils, and helps them to feel safe. Our Family Liaison Officer works with families to promote early intervention for attendance issues and works closely with a range of external agencies and providers to ensure a depth of support for children and their families. The Senior Management Team have regular pastoral meetings and highlight for discussion any children where attendance is an ongoing concern and where this may be directly impacting upon progress and achievement.

Maintaining good attendance is promoted weekly in assemblies, through displays and in the newsletter. Certificates are issued for good attendance at the end of each term and at the end of the year. Extra playtime is awarded to the class/es with the highest attendance each week. Classes with the highest attendance for the whole half-term will receive a non-uniform day. Regular consideration is given to the inclusion of other motivational rewards for excellent attendance through attendance lotteries. Children with 97%+ attendance at the end of the year will receive a special award, e.g. trip, prize, and those with 100% attendance receive another special award, as well as certificates.

If a pupil's attendance or punctuality raises cause for concern, the Parents/Carers will be informed of this in writing and the child's attendance will be monitored closely. If necessary, home visits will be carried out where there are ongoing concerns. The relevant support will be implemented and individual incentives established. Should there be no improvement in the pupil's attendance, the case will be progressed and Parents/Carers invited to an attendance review meeting to discuss the reasons for absence and to agree targets for improvement. This will involve the Headteacher, Family Liaison Officer and any other relevant member of staff or governor. During this meeting, the underlying reasons for continued poor attendance will be explored and appropriate support will be discussed, planned and implemented. Parents/Carers will also be required during this meeting to agree and sign an attendance

contract which will outline the targets/expectations for future attendance. Failure to improve attendance from this point will result in the concern moving to the Local Authority stage three level and taken out of the school's hands by the LA Attendance Team Manager. Persistent absence may result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices and court prosecution. Please refer to Appendix A (Flowchart of Attendance Procedures & Stages) in this policy which demonstrates these stages.

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES (FPNs)

From 1st September 2014, Sunderland Local Authority will be using **Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)** for unauthorised absences from school where such absence meets the criteria. The criteria for issuing FPNs are contained in the Sunderland Local Code of Conduct, a copy of which can be found on the school website. A frequently asked questions response sheet has been prepared to assist parents in understanding how the scheme works, and this is also available on the school website.

There is much research that demonstrates the links between regular attendance at school and academic achievement – the more a pupil attends the more they can achieve. If your child has two weeks off or a number of odd one day absences from school over time, those days cannot be recovered, the learning is missed and your child will be in danger of falling behind and not achieving their full potential.

Please contact Mr Dickinson (our Family Liaison Officer) or the Headteacher at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any attendance problems; there may be times when other agencies (e.g. Foundation of Light, CAMHS, Healthy Child Team) are able to offer specialist support. It is vital that you contact us at the earliest opportunity if your child appears unhappy about school so that we can work together to support you and your child. Our goal is a shared one in that we are working towards the best possible outcomes for your child and we take our safeguarding and attendance responsibilities very seriously. Working together we can ensure that we deal with issues and barriers that arise so as to avoid poor attendance and the enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices.

Author: M.Dickinson

Agreed Date: 29/1/21

Implementation Date: 29/1/21

Review Date: Annually

Signed:

Head Teacher

Date:

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Date:

APPENDIX A

Flowchart of Attendance Procedures & Stages

