

Yorkmead Primary School

Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Improving attendance is a major target at our school. The school and Governing Body endeavour to work closely with parents on all matters regarding attendance.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward all those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school”.

DFE School Attendance 2014

Parents of children of compulsory school age (aged between 5 and 15 at the start of the academic year) are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school.

Children are asked to attend school for 190 days per year. Children have 175 days of holiday per year. School expects all children to attend school for as many of those days as possible – any attendance which falls below 95% is unacceptable.

Statistics show that, in general, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2. In particular, pupils with no absence are 1.6 times more likely to achieve expected “greater depth” are better than pupils who missed 15-20% of all sessions.

Attendance in one school year	= this number of days absent	Which is approximately these many weeks	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Our school aims are:-

- To improve the level of attendance.
- To improve the level of punctuality.
- To ensure parents, carers and children see that poor attendance can result in poor achievement.
- To have a system of strategies and rewards which encourages individual children and whole classes to attend regularly and improve attendance and punctuality.
- To enable parents and carers to understand the importance of good attendance.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate the reason for an absence and, therefore, whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

2. Definitions

2.1 Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received written notification from a parent or guardian, for example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/guardian has written a note to explain the absence.

2.2 Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised, for example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping for a wedding or to collect a relative from the airport, this will NOT be an authorised absence.

2.3 If parents/carers are in any doubt as to whether an absence is legitimate they should contact the school to discuss it with the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer.

2.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Both equally affect attendance figures and can lead to action being taken.

Authorised means that school has accepted that the absence was genuine and meets the set criteria for absence. It is for the Head Teacher to decide if an absence is authorised irrespective of information provided by parents/carers.

Unauthorised absences mean that no reason has been put in writing or school has not accepted the reason given. These absences are monitored carefully and can trigger penalty notices and court action.

When children are absent from school, parents should inform the school office on the first day of absence. If school is not contacted, then phone calls will be made to parents to find out why their child/children are not attending school. Children will be asked why they have missed school on their return. This is part of Schools' safeguarding procedures.

Parents are required to send in absence notes when their child returns to school. It is for school to decide if the absence is to be authorised. All unexplained absences will be followed up by a standard letter issued by school.

After a period of 10 days, from the first day of absence and if no written response has been given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

2.5 Other absences

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments e.g. Doctors, Dentist, Hospital etc. are normally authorised absences and often need to be made during school time, but wherever possible, to avoid disruption to children's education, parents/carers should try to make them before or after school.

When a child has a medical appointment parents/carers should provide the school with a copy of the appointment letter or card. **If this is not possible, a BLUE SLIP should be collected from the office**

which can be taken to the appointment to be stamped at the appointment. Please be aware that it is the parent/carer's responsibility to provide the school with the necessary medical evidence to confirm these appointments. If this is not provided the school will not authorise a medical appointment.

Long Term Absences

Where a child has an illness that means they will be absent from school for an extended period, the school will contact the support services (i.e. James Brindley School) so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given appropriate tuition outside school.

Religious Observance

As a school, and in line with regulations, we are permitted to grant a period of two days for children celebrating their religious festivities. If a child exceeds the permitted days, any further days will be recorded as unauthorised absences.

Persistent Absence

Any child who misses 10% of school time is regarded as a persistent absentee, whether the absence is authorised or not.

Under our new "Spotlight" attendance scheme, families who have children classed as persistent absentees with 20 sessions or more of unauthorised absence in any 12 month period may be placed on the SPOTLIGHT improvement programme. However, should the support programme fail to improve attendance, parents could face legal action! This could lead to criminal prosecution and parents receiving a criminal record.

Parents could also be issued with fixed penalty fines (one per parent) when unauthorised absence totals 20 sessions in 12 months.

It is important to highlight that in most cases school will support parents to improve attendance of their children. However, circumstances may occur where 20 sessions of unauthorised absences may be breached resulting in action being taken by the Local Authority, before support can be implemented. In these cases parents will be forewarned of the potential outcomes of any future unauthorised absence.

3. If a child is absent.

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence as a 'N' on the electronic register.

3.2 The office staff will contact parents/carers through 'First Day Calling' to check the child is absent and the reason for the absence.

3.3. ON THE DAY A CHILD RETURNS to school following an absence, a signed, written note should be sent to school explaining the absence. If this letter is not received within 3 days a First Request Letter will be sent home or presented to the parent/carer on the playground at the end of the day. If the absence is legitimate the appropriate code for the absence will be entered on the child's attendance record. If it is not, or is not provided, then the absence will be an unauthorised absence.

3.4 A note may be sent to school prior to the day of absence e.g. for a medical appointment.

3.5 The Parents'/Carers' are legally responsible for informing the school about any absences their children may have.

4. Lateness.

4.1 Children are expected to arrive at school before the school bell rings. This is at 8.55 a.m. In the morning sessions, registers are opened at 8.55 a.m. and submitted at the close of registers at 9.25 a.m. Any child arriving between 8.55 a.m. and 9.25 a.m. will be marked as late with a L. Any child arriving after 9.25 will be marked as late with a U and will be deemed as an unauthorised absence even though the child may physically be in school for the rest of the morning.

The afternoon session starts at different times for each Key Stage. For KS1 the registers open at 1.10 p.m. and close at 1.40 p.m. Arrival within this time will be marked with a L, after 1.40 p.m. will be unauthorised and marked with a U. For KS2 the registers are opened at 1.30 p.m. and closed at 2.00 p.m. Arrival within these times will be marked with a U and arrivals after 1.30 p.m. will be unauthorised and marked with a U.

Arriving late....

Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- *Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends*
- *Missing the start of vital lessons*
- *Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.*

Where a child is persistently late, School will contact parents/carers to set up a meeting to discuss any issues and an action plan will be put in place to improve punctuality.

Action may be taken if there is no improvement.

Minutes late per day during the school year	= days' worth of learning lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

4.2 It is the Parents'/Carers' responsibility to ensure their children arrive in school on time each day.

4.3 Late Collection from School

All parents/carers must take appropriate arrangements for their child at the end of the school day. Some children make their own way home; others are collected from school. Collection of a child must happen at 3.15pm.

School appreciates that, on occasion, an emergency may prevent a timely collection from school and we will of course keep the child in school until the parent arrives if we have been notified by the parent to do so.

All children - attending a club

returning from a school trip after 3.15pm

taking part in an evening activity at school

must be collected by an adult at the agreed time.

When a child has not been collected on time, this becomes a safeguarding issue. If school cannot make contact with a parent/carer, after 45 minutes the Children's Information and Advice Service (CIAS) or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be contacted for advice. This may result in the police being involved or the child being handed over to the care of a Social Worker.

School keeps records of children who are persistently late being collected from school and following a meeting between school and parents, if there is no improvement, the Children's Information and

Advice Service (CIAS) or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be contacted for advice as this becomes a safeguarding issue. This may result in a social worker becoming involved with the family.

5. Persistent Lateness

If a child is persistently late for school, the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer and Home/School Liaison Officer will contact parents/carers to discuss the situation and discuss ways in which their lateness can be improved. Parents/Carers should be aware that the school runs a Breakfast Club which could be used to improve lateness problems.

6. Requests for Leave of Absence

6.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the maximum progress possible.

6.2 By Law,(Birmingham Local Authority 'Leave in Term Time' Guidance/2013 Education(Pupil Registration) Regulations), the Head Teacher may not authorise leave in term time for pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.3 Leave for family holidays or visits to relatives will NOT be granted and will count as unauthorised absence. Any request for leave of absence should be submitted to the Head Teacher before any travel arrangements have been made and at least two weeks before the start of the leave.

6.4 A Leave of Absence Request Form should be collected from the school office, completed and returned to the Head Teacher, who will make a decision whether to allow the leave of absence, or deny it. Parents/Carers will be informed of the Head Teacher's decision in writing.

6.5 If the leave is approved, the Head Teacher will specify dates and the number of days granted.

6.6 If the leave is denied and you still chose to take your child out of school during term time, it will be recorded as unauthorised and the Local Education Authority Court Advisors will be informed. This could lead to a penalty notice (fine) being issued by the Local Authority which may also result in legal action via the Court or loss of school place. We may also inform the Children Missing Education

Team (CME) who may conduct their own investigations into the whereabouts of the child and the family.

7. Attendance Programme – Spotlight

Children whose unauthorised attendance falls below 85% (Persistent Absence – PA) may be put on the Spotlight programme. The aim of the programme is to work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance. The programme is run by the school and supported by the Court Section of the Local Authority who will take legal action to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibilities regarding attendance.

8. Rewards for Good Attendance

8.1 Each week, the class with the best attendance in each key stage will be revealed in assembly and awarded £5 for their branch of the money tree. Then at the end of each half term each class can decide on how to spend the money they've earned.

8.2 Each half term, children who have 97% and above attendance will be rewarded with an activity e.g. bouncy castle, circus activity etc.

8.3 An attendance postcard may be sent to parents/carers to celebrate their child's good attendance.

9. Contact Details

It is the parents/carers responsibility to inform school if any contact details change.

School should hold a home phone number and mobile/work contact for both parents/carers.

Parents/carers should also give up to two other relative/carer contacts who could be phoned if first contacts are unavailable. These support contacts must bring appropriate ID with them if collecting a child and are unknown to school staff.

Only parents/main carers can advise school of any contact detail changes.

10. Attendance Targets

Our target set by the government is above 96%.

11. Monitoring and Review

The policy was adopted by the Governing Body in December 2017 and will be reviewed in 2018.