

# Broadacre Primary School



## Attendance & Punctuality

Reviewed: March 2011

Next Review: March 2013

# **Policy Statement for Attendance and Punctuality**

## **As a school we aim to:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 95%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance

## **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

**“Every day counts.....”**

## **Principles**

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parents responsibility to contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to

- set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- clarify the role of the parents/carer

### **The School will:**

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- Share good practice with other schools
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence

### **Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality**

- All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus
- EWO will be invited to meet new parents at pre school meetings to raise awareness of punctuality and attendance and the legal responsibility of the parent/carers
- News letters are used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work
- Attendance certificates to reward children for high attendance are awarded at the end of each term and at the end of the academic year
- The class with the highest percentage attendance will be awarded a certificate each week. This will be presented during an assembly.

- Weekly attendance for each class displayed for all to see
- Attendance cup awarded every 6 weeks to the class with the highest attendance
- Special reward at the end of the school year for children with best attendance
- Free Breakfast Club open to all children from 8.00am

**We expect the parent to:**

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, early on the first day of the absence
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return
- Inform the school personally or via the telephone; or provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child
- Arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks if possible

**Registers**

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMs Attendance Module. Class teachers complete the register twice daily and return it to the office.

Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes.

I	:	Illness (not med/dental appointments)
M	:	Medical or dental appointments
L	:	Late before registers closed
U	:	Late after registers closed (with reasons)
C	:	Other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
H	:	Annual family holiday (agreed)
F	:	Extended Family holiday (agreed)
G	:	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
N	:	No reason yet provided for absence
O	:	Unauthorised Absence (not covered by other code)
V	:	Educational Visit
P	:	Approved sporting activity
R	:	Religious observance

E	:	Exclusion
B	:	Educated off site (Not Duel reg.)
T	:	Traveller absence

Registers close at 9.25 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed as an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

The following reasons are acceptable for a child to be absent;

- Sickness/illness – a medical certificate may be required for a prolonged absence
- Hospital appointment – appointment letter must be produced
- Approved religious observance
- Short term family crisis

Any other reasons, such as those listed below, are unacceptable reasons for absence from school:

- term-time holidays
- getting up late
- looking after brothers or sisters or relatives
- shopping
- birthdays
- visiting friends and family
- Attending medical appointments for other family members

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment the school office or class teacher must be notified before the appointment. The class teacher dates and signs all notes he/she receives and returns them to the school office in the register.

The school will telephone the child's home to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school before 9am on the first day of absence.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 80% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the EWO during one of their regular visits.

## **Holidays**

At the full Governing Body meeting of Broadacre Primary School held on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011 it was agreed unanimously that pupil holidays in term time will no longer be considered as authorised. Parents are encouraged to avoid term time and take annual leave during the thirteen weeks statutory holidays.

A referral penalty notice will be issued to families taking their children out of school in term time for an unauthorised holiday in term time.

The Head Teacher may use their discretion in very exceptional circumstances to authorise a holiday.

## **Punctuality**

The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. when the register will be taken. Children should be coming through the school gate by 8.50am. Children may come in and work on quiet classroom tasks after 8.45 a.m. Children arriving after 8.55 am must report to the school office via the front door as all other doors will be locked for security.

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. Late arrivals disrupt the whole class.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class.

If a child arrives more than half an hour late with no reason given by their parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety (entrance hall) until a responsible person can collect them.

## **Medical Appointments**

The administrative staff must sign pupils out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

## **Legal Note**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

## **Monitoring**

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The Headteacher has meetings with the EWO each half term to discuss concerns and review absence data.

The Administrative Staff meet once per fortnight with the EWO to review absence data.

**Reviewed March 2011**

**L Neill**