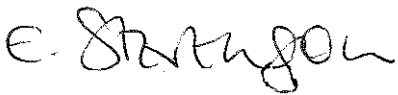




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## PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Date this policy was formally reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body of Carr Hill Community Primary School:	
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body by:	Liz Stevenson
Signature:	
Date:	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
Date of next review:	January 2020

## **WHY DO WE NEED A POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE?**

In order for a child to fulfil their potential in education, they need to attend school regularly and punctually. Government legislation states that:

*“Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise” (section 7 Education Act 1996).*

On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the Supreme Court handed down their judgement as to the meaning of ‘regularly’ in section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which reads:

*‘If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.’*

They unanimously declared that the word ‘regularly’ means ‘in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school’

The rules prescribed by Carr Hill Community Primary School are that parent/carers share the expectation that pupils aim for 100% attendance. Any shortfall in this should be for authorised absence reasons only and not holidays taken during term time.

If a child is on our school roll, we are required to monitor and review their attendance and act on any concerns that we have both quickly and efficiently.

## **WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?**

- To maintain 100% attendance by the vast majority of our pupils.
- To focus upon those individual pupils and identify families of pupils who are regularly absent from school or who are regularly late for school.
- To work together to provide support for children and their parents to improve attendance and punctuality.
- To increase the achievement of all of our pupils through regular and punctual attendance.

## **WHAT DO WE EXPECT?**

- Our pupils to attend school 100% of the time.
- All pupils to attend school for 8.50am and be present in their classroom before registration close at 9.05am.
- Parents/carers to inform school, before 8:50am, if their child will be absent from school.

## **WHAT PROCEDURES DO WE FOLLOW?**

When a child is absent we implement “First Day Response”:-

- if parent/carer has not contacted us to advise the reason for their child’s absence, we attempt to contact them;
- if contact is not successful and the child is absent on subsequent days, we continue to try and contact parent/carer to find out why their child is not in school.

- if contact is not successful, when the child returns to school, we expect parent/carer to let us know the reason for absence;
- if we have safeguarding concerns regarding a child and who has been absent for consecutive days with no contact made or reason given, our Family Support Worker will do a home visit to ensure the child/family are ok or in need of support.

Where there is a concern relating to frequent absences or a pattern of absences, a staged response is adopted, after “First Day Response” to try and improve attendance:-

- A letter is sent to parent/carer, together with a print out of the pupil’s attendance, advising of our concerns. Our Family Support Worker may also make a phone call or meet with parent/carer to identify support the family may need.
- If attendance does not improve, parent/carers are invited in to school to discuss attendance concerns with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.
- If attendance remains an issue parent/carer are invited in to school to meet with a member of our Governing Body, and the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher, to outline the schools concerns, discuss the child’s attainment and reiterate the importance of good attendance/punctuality.
- If attendance is 90% or lower, the child is classed by the Department for Education as a Persistent Absentee. Parent/carer is advised that if attendance remains a concern the next step will be referral to the Local Authority for legal intervention.
- If the above steps do not improve the child’s attendance within 4 weeks, the referral is made to the Local Authority’s Legal Intervention Team to commence legal action (*see Gateshead Council’s “Referrals for Legal Intervention – Non School Attendance” guidance at Appendix 1.*)

## **LATE ARRIVALS**

Good school attendance includes being in school on time. The habit of good punctuality in primary school will help your child throughout their education and on into adult life and the workplace.

Being on time for school gets every child’s day off to a good start and puts them in a positive frame of mind so that they can make the most of their learning.

- The school day starts at 8.50am and pupils are expected to be present in the yard for this time, to then enter school with their teachers.
- Children who arrive after 8.50am must report to the school office to sign in as late, with their parent/carer, and advise the Administrative Assistant of the reason they are late as well as the child’s dinner choice that day.
- Teachers will ‘close’ their registration at 9.05am and if a child arrives later than this time they will receive an ‘L’ for late mark on the register.
- If a child arrives after 9.05am they will receive a ‘U’ for late after registration mark on the register – this counts as an unauthorised absence and will affect the child’s percentage attendance. Persistent lates, after the register closes at 9.05am can result in prosecution under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.
- If punctuality remains a concern for any pupil or family of pupils then the procedures for absence concerns (as detailed above) will be implemented.

## **REPORTING ATTENDANCE**

- Class weekly attendance is published on our website and presented to the full school assembly on a Friday afternoon.
- Governors receive an attendance update within the Headteacher's report for each full Governing Body meeting.
- Attendance of individual pupils is recorded on their end of academic year progress report and this is compared to the school average for comparative purposes.
- Persistent absences are reported to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher termly.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

- The government and schools realise that it can be more expensive to go on holiday during the school holiday period compared to other times in the year. However, it is the view of the DfE that children should be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time in whatever form are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances. Cheap holidays are not a good enough reason for a child to miss out on vital education.
- If children are taken away for a two week holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then by the time they leave school at sixteen they will have missed a year of school!
- Regulations passed by the Government in 2013 abolished the right for Headteachers to authorise leave of absence during term time, unless the absence is considered as being a "one-off exceptional circumstance" which outweighs the harm caused to a pupil's education by missing school.
- While leave of absence may be granted during term time for one-off exceptional circumstances, it is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governing Body and is not a parental right.
- If the request for a leave of absence is refused by the Headteacher but the parent takes their child away, the absence will be classed as an unauthorised absence. It may also result in a referral to the Local Authority to request a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence. The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

## **CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION**

- As well as parents having a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable education, schools have a responsibility for the safeguarding of their pupils.
- If we think that a child/children have left the Gateshead area, and we have been unable to contact family or any agencies involved with the family to establish the whereabouts of the child/children then we must make a "Child Missing in Education" Referral to Gateshead Council's Legal Intervention Team.
- If we have been able to trace the child/children but parent/carer is making no attempt to secure a school place in the new area, then again we must make a "Child Missing in Education" Referral to Gateshead Council's Legal Intervention Team.