

# Nunney First School

## Attendance Policy



### Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support children and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality
- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- enable children to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

### Promoting Regular Attendance

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

Parents/carers and school staff should work in partnership to make education a success and to ensure that all children have full and equal access to all that the school offers. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and promptly acted on. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that children arrive at school and return home safely.

### Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- discuss promptly with the class teacher or School Office, any problems that may affect their child's school attendance
- ensure that they **contact the school on each day that their child is unable to attend school**, providing a reason for the absence
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

If a child is absent for more than 4 days due to illness, a parent will need to provide Medical Evidence before the illness is marked as authorised. This may be an appointment ticket or card for a medical centre or similar.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to concerns raised by a child or parent
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor each individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long-term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a doctor or other relevant body may be requested
- regularly inform parents/carers of the percentage attendance of children whose attendance is falling below thresholds
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not regularly attending school
- meet regularly with a member of Somerset County Council's Education Attendance Service (EAS) and Education Welfare Services (South West) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the EAS or Education Welfare Services (South West) - failure by the family to comply with planned support put in place by the EAS may result in further actions such as the issuing of a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

**Types Of Absence**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

<p><b>Authorised absences</b> are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• genuine illness</li> <li>• medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time</li> <li>• days of significant religious observance</li> <li>• exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement</li> <li>• approved sporting activity</li> <li>• approved educational activity such as examinations, educational visits, visiting a new school.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unauthorised absences</b> are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parents/carers unnecessarily keeping children off school</li> <li>• truancy during the school day</li> <li>• absences which have never been properly explained</li> <li>• children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (details provided later in this policy)</li> </ul>
---	---

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shopping, looking after other children or birthdays</li> <li>• day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the cause of the problem. We can use outside agencies such as the Parent and Family Support Adviser (PFSA), School Nurse, Education Welfare Officers or the Education Attendance Service to help with this.

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality when attending school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. Therefore, it is really important that all children arrive at school on time. The school doors are open from 8.30 am until 8.50 am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child.
- Registration takes place at 8.45 am and children who arrive after 8.50 am will be recorded as late.
- Registers close at 9.00 am; after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15 pm.
- Persistent lateness by a child will be dealt with through a letter home to parents/carers and a discussion with the child's parent/carer. If this does not secure the required improvement, the Executive Headteacher may refer the family to Education Welfare Officers employed by the School to support improved attendance, or to the Local Authority's Education Attendance Service.
- Each child's attendance is reported to parents/carers at least once each academic year. It will also be passed on to future schools as necessary.

### **Children Leaving During the School Day**

School staff must know where the children are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected time of return.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the School Office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the children as a missing person.

## **Leave of Absence**

School holidays and INSET days are published as soon as the school has agreed these, although they may be subject to change. Holidays should be taken during these times.

In line with Government amendments to the 2006 regulations (Appendix 1), term time leave for holiday purposes will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governing Body have determined that:

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the School Office and submitted for consideration by the Executive Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the child's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Education Attendance Service will be notified.

## **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a child is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

### Penalty Notices for Holidays

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Executive Headteacher can now request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice to parents/carers when children are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the Local Authority is obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer, for each child.

## **Truancy Patrol**

- When a child comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the child's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 3 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer, for each child.
- If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows: £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

- The Education Attendance Service can also instigate legal proceeding against parents /carers under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an Education Supervision Order to secure regular attendance.

### **Failure To Ensure Regular School Attendance**

- The school regularly reviews the attendance of each pupil. If a child's attendance is identified as a cause of concern, a letter is sent to advise parents/carers. Should this not bring about the required improvement, the Headteacher will refer the family to Education Welfare Offices employed by Education Welfare Services (South West), a company contracted by the School to support improved attendance. Parents/carers will be invited to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and will be expected to work with Education Welfare Officers to improve their child's attendance.
- If, following this initial support, attendance remains a concern then a referral will be made to Somerset County Council's Education Attendance Service.
- The Education Attendance Service may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their children's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents/carers will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Changing Schools**

- If a family decides to send their child to a different school it is important that this decision is shared with Nunney First School as soon as possible.
- A child will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:
  - the date the child will be leaving the school and starting the next
  - name and address of the new school
  - a new home address if appropriate.

The child's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the School has not been informed of the above information, the child will be registered as Missing from Education and the Local Authority will be notified.

### **Summary**

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

### **Policy Implementation, Monitoring And Review**

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the day to day implementation of this policy. The review and monitoring of the policy is carried out by the Local Governing Body.

**Date adopted by the Local Governing Body: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**To be reviewed: July 2019**

Signed: *Hilary Allen* Chair of Governors

## APPENDIX ONE

### **The Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Child Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

#### Term-time holiday

Previously, the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents/carers must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents/carers must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.