

NEW PASTURES PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and come to school on time. Where this is not the case, staff follows a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

Together with parents, who are the first educators we aim to create an environment where children can develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and morally and reach their full potential.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to provide all our pupils with the maximum opportunities our curriculum provides. In order to achieve this we aim to maximise the attendance of our pupils, therefore they must attend regularly and be punctual.

At New Pastures Primary School we recognise that excellent attendance is the key to achievement at school. While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance, where it occurs, is clearly "excellent". On the other hand, attendance, which falls below 95%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances, is poor and gives us cause for concern.

Partnership between parents and the school

At New Pastures Primary School we recognise that attendance is the responsibility of pupils, parents and all school staff, who work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance so that pupils reach their potential.

Matters pertaining to attendance will be explained and discussed with parents / carers, the school community and agreed upon. Our high expectations regarding attendance will be explained and reinforced in a variety of ways i.e.

- Within the home-school agreement;
- At admission / induction meetings;
- In the governors' annual report to parents;
- In school newsletters
- In annual Attendance Letter to Parents / Carers
- The school prospectus
- 1 - 1 meetings with parents as necessary

The whole school approach to attendance recognises the important roles of all members of the school community, including support staff and governors.

School responsibilities to improve attendance

In order to achieve excellent attendance our school will adhere to our role as directed in the home / school agreements. This includes:

- A high quality curriculum so that pupils enjoy learning and want to come to school;
- Providing for the needs of all pupils, offering an inclusive environment where all can achieve success;

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- Following up all unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents;
- A school pastoral system to support pupils experiencing difficulties.

Parents' responsibilities

In order to achieve excellent attendance at New Pastures Primary School we ask the parents to try to adhere to their role as directed in the home / school agreements.

- Parents and carers should contact the school at the start of the day by telephone and give a reason for the absence. The school should be informed again if absence is likely to continue past 3 days.
- Parents should notify the school as soon as possible of when their child will return to school. This will allow for any necessary preparations on the part of the school if appropriate i.e. - pupils that have had an accident / suffered broken bones etc.
- The office manager and head teacher can authorise absence from New Pastures Primary School, and parents should apply in advance for permission for any exceptional absence i.e. holiday in term time.

Parents are advised that it is not acceptable for pupils to be absent for the following examples and similar occasions:

- To travel for family or friends;
- To spend a long weekend away from home;
- To stay at home for a delivery or an electricity or gas company;
- To go shopping;
- To go to the airport;
- To visit relatives;
- To look after siblings;

Absence from school affects the child's educational / social and personal attainment. The school therefore expects family holidays to be taken during school holiday periods.

Pupil's responsibilities

Pupils should:

- Attend school regularly;
- Arrive for school on time. Persistence lateness will result in action, such as referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- Take full advantage of all opportunities offered;
- Bring any difficulties such as bullying to the attention of the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff

Registration

- As a legal document, registers are kept on the premises at all times.
- Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session every day. The register is returned to the office at the end of registration in the morning and in the afternoon.

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- Any child arriving late comes through the office and the office staff give the pupil their mark
- There will be a same day follow up of absence. Parents know they are expected to contact school before 9.30am if their child is going to be absent.
- After 9.30am a member of the office staff will contact any parents that have not informed school of their child's absence. First day contact sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important.
- Letters and messages received from parents are dated and / or recorded and filed
- We aim to ensure that school registers are kept accurately, and that the criteria by which we judge absences as authorised or not are common and known to the school community.

Incentives and rewards

The school will recognise good and improved attendance, for example through:

- Stickers / positive praise
- Certificates
- Letters to parents;
- In school newsletters;
- Annual reports to parents / carers;
- Half term celebration assembly
- Termly prizes
- Weekly 'Attendance Cup' awarded to the best class
- Information / photographs displayed round school to show each classes attendance (usually outside the classroom door)

Monitoring and support

Poor attendance will be monitored by the Head Teacher. Class teachers have responsibility for expecting good attendance and punctuality from the children in their care. Should concerns persist, the Office Manager informs the Head Teacher who will arrange a meeting with the parents / carers to discuss how the school can help and support improved attendance. An Attendance Plan is agreed and signed by both parties. If there is little or no improved attendance the school will refer the matter to the EWO. The EWO may recommend the involvement of other agencies (e.g. school nurse), or a formal referral. If this happens primary responsibility for the case concerned passes over to the EWO, although of course the school is fully involved with consequent developments.

Also:

- Individual pupil attendance will be monitored on a daily basis
- Classes are monitored each week.
- The attendance rates will be communicated throughout the school community, including to governors and parents as appropriate.
- Parents and carers will be contacted about all unexplained absences
- Reasons for absences or lateness are recorded on SIMs

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- The school works with the LA and uses suggested formats and documents provided to schools (September 2013)
- In addition we are obliged to make our attendance figures known to legitimate agencies (e.g. the DFE and the LA) by completing appropriate returns.

Absence which causes concern: e.g.

- Any unexplained absence or
- Attendance below 95% in a half-term

- Will be referred to the Head Teacher, who will consider what action to take including referral the Education Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Officer requires schools to refer pupils whose attendance and punctuality falls beneath certain standards. The school will notify the EWO of these pupils and will discuss other pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and for whom in-school strategies have been unsuccessful.

Holidays in term time

The school discourages parents from taking holidays during term time. As Government Policy, no holiday will be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. These are as follows:

1. Where it is company/organisational policy for an employee to take leave at a specific time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday in school holidays. This must be evidenced by a production of the policy document of the organisation.
2. Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
3. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided.

Monitoring and support continued

Where appropriate, further advice may be sought from the Educational Psychology Service, Social Services or other outside agencies.

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