

Carr Hill Primary School

Policy on Attendance

June 2015

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. Our school motto is 'a happy atmosphere with high standards'. We will reward 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.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 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 notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- 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 during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional

circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence. We expect parents and carers to put this request in writing to the school at least 28 days in advance.

- 4.2 The school will not authorise any holidays taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is responsible for deciding whether a holiday absence is authorised or unauthorised based upon the reason being an exceptional one. Parents / carers requesting an absence due to exceptional reasons will receive a letter from the head teacher explaining whether the request has been granted or not.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
- 6.3 The following thresholds will be used as guidance;
- Once a child has reached 6 sessions (equal to 3 days) of unauthorised absence over a rolling 6 week period, the Local Authority can issue a warning letter. This letter will make it clear that any further absence may result in the issuing of an Educational Penalty Notice to each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies.
 - The duration of the warning letter will last 12 weeks from the day of issue.
 - If the unauthorised absence rises to 10 sessions (equal to 5 days) over a rolling 6 week period, then the Local Authority can issue Educational Penalty Notices and subsequent fines to the parents of the child or children in question.
 - In these cases, the Local Authority will also consider what services or measures may be required to prevent or reduce further unauthorised absence.
- 6.4 Holidays during School Term Time
- If the school has evidence that a parent has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is above 6 sessions (equal to 3 days) in total over a rolling 6 week period, then the Local Authority can issue Educational Penalty Notices and subsequent fines to the parents.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in a year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance and a prize, awarded at the last assembly of the term.
- 7.2 Each class's weekly attendance record is presented in Good Work assembly every Friday and the winning class receives the Attendance Trophy and a class prize. All classes with 98% and above will receive a prize.

- 7.3 Half-termly, children with 100% attendance, will receive a prize as recognition of their achievement.
- 7.4 An additional reward will be awarded to those children achieving 100% over a whole term.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the School Performance Table accessed via the school's website.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.5 This policy takes account of the DfE guidance, 'School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities published in October 2014. It will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed:

Date: