

# **Brockley Primary School** **Attendance Policy**

**September 2016**

## **Information for Parents** ***“Attendance matters .....*”**

Brockley Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a crucial factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a problem about attendance. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with pupils and parents to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **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

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Providing the school with appointment cards and/or letters explaining absence which is medical related.
- Never taking holidays in term time.

### **Attendance Target**

Each year the head and Governing body have to set a realistic but challenging target for attendance. This must be in line with the Governments target and based on the previous years achievement. School will liaise regularly with the EWO service on attendance matters.

## **We shall:**

### **Response to absence**

If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the office will contact the parent/carer on the first morning. If there is no initial contact made Mrs Rodgers will call again after lunch.

If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a few days, then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a phone call.

If the child continues to be absent, then details will be passed to the Headteacher who will either write to the parent/carer or consider a referral to the Education Welfare Officer or the School Nurse/Doctor.

If a child is away from school for a considerable amount of time (serious illness/operation) the school will provide work/activities that can be undertaken at home to prevent the child from falling behind. This may be done in conjunction with the employment of a Home Tutor.

Whenever the school is unable to contact a parent or carer because of inaccurate or outdated contact details, a letter will be written inviting the parent or carer into school to meet informally with the Headteacher and a member of the Governing Body to discuss the situation. The school will offer to support any parent/carer in an agreed strategy in order for all our children to attend as regularly as possible.

Where children have persistent attendance problems, the Headteacher will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting. If attendance falls below 90% then a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made. We are adopting the DCSF and Local Authority model on fast-track to attendance guidelines.

### **Authorised Absence**

If a child is absent from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been informed e.g. Illness then the absence will be authorised.

Not all reported absences will be authorised e.g Shopping trips!

### **Unauthorised Absence**

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- When an illness lasts for more than 7 days then a doctor's note will be required.
- Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service (Education Welfare Officer) may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences or the number of authorised absence falls significantly below our target.
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Unapproved Holidays

### **Punctuality**

- School opens at 8:40am. School Morning registration is at 8.50am. This is the time your child must be in the line on the playground/or in the classroom.

- 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.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. **We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.**
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DCSF guidance.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality
- Late collection of pupils will also be recorded by staff
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety (the Office) where parents will need to collect them from.

### **Lateness**

The school has a 'Late Book' which is located in the reception area and parents are asked to provide a reason for their child being late. This is monitored monthly. Where children have persistent lateness problems, the Headteacher will invite the parents into school to a formal meeting with herself and the EWO.

School starts at 8.50am after which the school doors will be shut. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school between 8.50am and 9.30am. After 9.30am this will be classed as Arriving after Registration has Closed and will carry an unauthorised absence for that session.

To ensure the safety of children, all children arriving after 8.50am must report to the office and sign in the late book, explaining their lateness. Children will be rewarded for their punctuality with a sticker; children who get 5 stickers in a week will be rewarded on Fridays.

### **Holidays**

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1<sup>st</sup> September 2013**. These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. As a consequence of these changes the Headteacher will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively. This documentation is forwarded to Derbyshire County Council who have the final decision on issuing a penalty fine. Parents are reminded that this is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service if attendance drops below 90%. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

**Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupils are in the classroom.**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

School has the responsibility to keep accurate records of attendance and supply the relevant information to all interested parties including EWO, Governors and parents and carers.

Throughout the year, parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through consultations, website, information, flyers and newsletters.

The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance. These include:

- Termly school newsletters
- Governors end of term rewards
- 100% attendance Governor page of fame posters are displayed around school.
- First day calls to parents when pupils are absent.
- Chasing of persistent absenteeism by letter or phone call.
- Children signing out log which is completed when a child is taken out of school during the normal school day.
- Daily punctuation 'Be On Time' stickers.
- Unexplained pupil attendance is followed up by a letter to the Parent/Carer
- Liaison with the Education Welfare Officer over attendance and punctuality issues.

### **Monthly**

Weekly class updates on attendance are displayed in the School Hall.

### **Procedures**

- Electronic registers of all classes are kept and monitored daily by the Office Staff.
- A log is kept of children who arrive late
- A daily log is kept of all first day phone calls that are made to parents of children that are absent with no notification by 9.30am and a reason for the absence is recorded. A record is also kept when a message has been left on a Parents/Carers mobile or home phone.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing body has the overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance. Reports of absence will be submitted at each Governor meeting, with a final report at the end of the school year. Governors have the responsibility to ensure this policy is adhered to and try to keep attendance figures as high as possible. The Governing Body, supported by the LA reserve the right to take legal action against parents or carers who repeatedly fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

### **Lateness and attendance figures scrutinised on a monthly basis**

- After four episodes of lateness in a month, a letter will be sent to parents by the school, with the aim of addressing the situation. If the situation does not improve, the parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the Headteacher and member of the Governing Body.
- Any child with an absence of under 90% will have their records examined and if need be drawn to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer.
- Children with absence between 80% and 90% will have their reasons for absence monitored.

Attendance figures to be analysed monthly by Class, Year Group, Whole School, Gender and Vulnerable Groups. These figures will then be monitored by the Governing Body at their termly meetings. The school will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss figures. Attendance issues will be monitored as part of School's commitment to safeguarding.

All practices and this policy will be reviewed annually.

**Review Date February 2018**