

# Yorkmead Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### **1. Introduction**

Improving attendance is a major target at our school. The school and Governing Body endeavour to work closely with parents on all matters regarding attendance. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward all 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.

Our aims are:-

- To improve the level of attendance.
- To improve the level of punctuality.
- To ensure parents, carers and children see that poor attendance can result in poor achievement.
- To have a system of strategies and rewards which encourages individual children and whole classes to attend regularly and improve attendance and punctuality.
- To enable parents and carers to understand the importance of good attendance.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate the reason for an absence and, therefore, whether it is 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 and the parent/guardian has written a note to explain the absence, or the parent has called school to report an absence which has been recorded on our attendance register records.

2.2 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 for a wedding or to collect a relative from the airport, this will NOT be an authorised absence.

2.3 If parents/carers are in any doubt as to whether an absence is legitimate they should contact the school to discuss it with the Head Teacher.

#### 2.4 Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without good reason (illness), even with the support of the parents/carers.

#### 2.5 Other absences

##### Medical Appointments

Medical appointments e.g. Doctors, Dentists, Hospital etc. are normally authorised absences and often need to be made during school time, but wherever possible, to avoid disruption to children's education, parents/carers should try to make them before or after school.

When a child has a medical appointment parents/carers should provide the school with a copy of the appointment letter, card or text message. If this is not possible, a BLUE SLIP should be collected from the school office which can be taken to the appointment and stamped at the appointment. Please be aware that this is the parents/carers responsibility to provide the school with the necessary medical evidence to confirm these appointments. If this is not provided the school will not authorise a medical appointment.

##### Long Term Absence

Where a child has an illness that means they will be absent from school for an extended period, the school will contact the support services (i.e. James Brindley School) so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given appropriate tuition outside of school.

##### Religious Observance

As a school, and in line with regulations, we are permitted to grant a period of **two days** for children celebrating their religious festivities. If a child exceeds the permitted days, **any further days will be recorded s unauthorised absences.**

### **3. If a child is absent**

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence as a 'N' on the electronic register.

3.2 The office staff will contact parents/carers through 'First Day Calling' to check the child's absence and the reason for the absence. A text message will be sent in the event that no contact has been made via a telephone call.

3.3 If no message has been received from the parent, a written note explaining the absence is required. If after 2 weeks no note has been received, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

3.4 A note may be sent to school prior to the day of absence e.g. for a medical appointment.

3.5 The parents/carers are legally responsible for informing the school about any absences their children may have.

#### **4. Lateness**

4.1 Children are expected to arrive at school **before** the school bell rings. This is at 8.55 a.m. In the morning sessions, registers are opened at 8.55 a.m. and submitted at the close of registers at

9.25 a.m. Any child arriving between 8.55 a.m. and 9.25 a.m. will be marked with a 'L' code. Any child arriving after 9.25 a.m. will be marked as a late with a 'U' code and it will be deemed as an unauthorised absence even though the child may physically be in school for the rest of the morning.

The afternoon session starts at different times for each Key Stage:-

For KS1 the registers open at 1.10 p.m. and close at 1.40 p.m. Arrival within this time will be marked with the 'L' code. Arrival after 1.40 p.m. will be unauthorised and marked with a 'U' code.

For KS2 the registers are opened at 1.30 p.m. and closed at 2.00 p.m. Arrival within these times will be marked with the 'L' code and arrivals after 1.30 p.m. will be unauthorised and marked with a 'U' code.

4.2 It is the Parents/Carers responsibility to ensure their children arrive in school on time each day.

#### **5. Persistent Lateness**

If a child is persistently late for school, the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer and PSA/School Liaison Officer will contact parents/carers to discuss the situation and discuss ways in which their lateness can be improved. Parents/carers should be aware that the school runs a Breakfast Club which could be used to improve lateness problems.

#### **6. Requests for Leave of Absence**

6.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the maximum progress possible.

6.2 By Law, (Birmingham Local Authority 'Leave in Term Time' Guidance/2013 Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations), the Head Teacher may not authorise leave in term time for pupils unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.3 Leave for family holidays or visits to relatives will NOT be granted and will count as unauthorised absence. Any request for leave of absence should be submitted to the Head Teacher **before any travel arrangements have been made and at least two weeks before the start of leave.**

6.4 A Leave of Absence Request Form should be collected from the school office, completed and returned to the Head Teacher, who will make a decision whether to allow the leave of absence, or deny it. Parents/Carers will be informed of the Head Teacher's decision in writing.

6.5 If the leave is approved, the Head Teacher will specify dates and the number of days granted.

6.6 If the leave is denied and you still chose to take your child out of school during term time, it will be recorded as unauthorised and the Local Education Authority Court Advisors will be informed. This could lead to a penalty notice (fine) being issued by the Local Authority which may also result in legal action via the Court or loss of a school place. We may also inform the Children Missing Education Team (CME) who may conduct their own investigations into the whereabouts of the child and the family.

### **7. Attendance Programme – Spotlight**

Children whose unauthorised attendance falls below 85% (Persistent Absence – PA) may be put on the Spotlight programme. The aim of the programme is to work in partnership with parents/carers to improve attendance. The programme is run by the school and supported by the Court Section of the Local Authority who will take legal action to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal responsibilities regarding attendance.

### **8. Attendance Monitoring.**

We monitor attendance closely and each half term parents are informed about the level of their child's attendance. Where the level of attendance is poor or unsatisfactory, parents may be contacted and invited to a meeting with either the Head Teacher or PSA to discuss how attendance will be improved.

### **9. Rewards for good Attendance.**

9.1 Each week, the class with the best attendance in each key stage will be rewarded with half an hour golden time.

9.2 Each half term, children who have 97% and above attendance will be rewarded with an activity e.g. bouncy castle, circus activity etc.

9.3 At the end of year assembly 100% attenders will receive a book/gift voucher.

9.4 An attendance postcard may be sent to parents/carers to celebrate their child's good attendance.

## **10. Children Missing in Education**

In line with safeguarding procedures, if your child is absent for any reason from school it is vitally important that you keep in regular contact with the school. This is to ensure that we know where your child is and are informed of a likely return date.

If parents do not keep in touch, the school will attempt to contact them by phone, (inc. text) letter or home visit. If we are unable to make contact, we will inform the 'Children Missing in Education' department who will investigate to ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

## **11. Attendance Targets**

Our target, set by the Local Authority is 95%.

## **12. Monitoring and Review.**

The policy was adopted by the Governing Body in November 2015 and will be reviewed in November 2017.