



Committee: lead curriculum	February 2016
Review dates:	2019

Alphington Primary School Policy Statement on Attendance

Rationale

Our school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from the education we offer and to have a successful school career, 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.

We 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 that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Objectives

- ❖ to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- ❖ to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- ❖ to minimise its occurrence
- ❖ to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- ❖ to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools have responsibility for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance. Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

Definitions

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 do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents 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. Persistent medical absence may require proof in order to be authorised.

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.

Procedures

- ❖ The school day begins at 9.00 a.m. Children are allowed into the playground from 8.40 a.m. and should be there to enter the classroom when the whistle goes at 8:50am. Registers are taken at 9am, after which time the register is sent to the office.
- ❖ Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. are sent to the office staff, who will mark the register to show the child is late. Children arriving after 9.10 a.m. are registered as absent for that session. Between these times arrivals are recorded as late.
- ❖ The afternoon session starts at 1:25pm. At 1:35pm registers are sent to the office, children arriving later than 1:40pm receive an absent mark. Between these times arrivals are recorded as late.
- ❖ The administrator assistant is responsible for storage and checking registers and making first day absence phone call. These should be made by 10am at the latest.
- ❖ Teachers have responsibility for ensuring registers are completed accurately. Each children receives a herringbone style mark and registers are totalled by the teacher.
- ❖ All absences are questioned and reasons sought. Parents/carers are asked to phone the school on the first day of absence and to send a written note of explanation when the child returns. Registers are coded accordingly. Unexplained absences are followed up by office staff, by telephone and/or by letter. If an explanation is still not provided, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.
- ❖ Parents/carers are discouraged from taking their children out of school for holidays or family events during term time. Parents are informed, in newsletters and in the prospectus, that they do not have an automatic right to holiday absence. The school may authorise absence under exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers are required to complete the school's absence request form to request absence for their child. Parents/carers taking their children out of school when this has not been authorised will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer, who may take appropriate action.
- ❖ The school sets an attendance target each year and this is shared with parents and children.
- ❖ At the end of each year, children with 100% attendance are presented with a certificate during an assembly.
- ❖ Each child's attendance information for the whole academic year is sent to parents/carers.
- ❖ The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school regularly to check registers and discuss any patterns of absence or lateness with the Headteacher. If a child is causing concern, the EWO will contact the family to ascertain the reason for absence and offer support if required. Parents/carers who do not respond proceed to more formal contact.
- ❖ In the case of illness children are encourage to come to school and if necessary the school will send them home.
- ❖ Children who are absence through illness which is 5 or more days will be required to provide medical evidence, a doctors note, prescription, appointment card etc. This is to safeguard to the welfare of children and ensure those who need medical assistance receive it.
- ❖ Where absence through the year is more than 20 sessions (10 days) caused through medical absence the school may request that medical evidence is provided for any

further absence to be authorised, on each and every subsequent occasion that the child is absent through ill health.

Monitoring

The attendance policy and its impact is monitored by the head and EWO and where necessary planned work is identified and included within the school improvement plan.