



Milecastle Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

January 2017



MILECASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs she/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Milecastle Primary takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

AIMS

1. To ensure that staff know the reasons for a child's authorised absences.
2. To ensure that children with unauthorised absences are quickly identified.
3. To ascertain why certain children have frequent absences, long periods of absence or a developing pattern of absence and to overcome the problem.
4. To ensure that parents and support agencies are alerted to any pupil lateness and absences which give cause for concern.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements.
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

STATEMENTS OF EXPECTATIONS

PUPILS

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

What is expected of the pupils:

- To respect themselves and others.
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied.
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy.

PARENTS

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

What is expected of the parents/carers:

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or before 9 am on the first day of absence.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and Attendance Officer to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special/exceptional circumstances.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regard to attendance during important academic times such as SATS.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

THE SCHOOL

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

A late book is situated in the office and requires a parental signature when a child arrives or is collected late. This is monitored by staff.

What is expected of the school:

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- To meet the legal requirements.
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance.
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the Attendance Officer
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children and to provide support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

GOVERNORS

Governors will receive information about attendance in school (no individual pupils will be named) in the headteacher's termly reports.

Governors will agree annual targets for attendance with the school's Achievement Partner.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

RECORDING

1. Registers will be kept accurately and closed at 9 am and at 1.05 pm. Attendances are recorded electronically.
2. Authorised absence will be recorded in each class register by the finance and admin officer.
3. Parents are encouraged to telephone, e mail or write a note explaining the absence of their child as unexplained absences give cause for concern and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. Staff will inform the headteacher if anyone is absent for more than one week without a known reason and where frequent or patterns of absence occur.

5. The headteacher will contact parents to ask about the absence or concerns over punctuality before deciding whether a referral to the school's attached Attendance Officer or Family Welfare and Support Officer.
6. The headteacher will contact school's attached Attendance Officer or FWSO and supply a print out of the child's attendance. The head will discuss any concerns with the AO or FWSO.
7. Staff will be given information about the reason for the absence once the Attendance Officer/FWSO has reported back.
8. Children who return to school after a long period of absence should be warmly welcomed and closely supported in the classroom to enable the transition period to be as smooth as possible.

ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR ABSENCE

The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.

The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith

The child has an authorised absence in exceptional circumstances. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason and after a three week process will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

ATTENDANCE CODES

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Code School Meaning

/ Present (AM)

\ Present (PM)

B Educated off site (Not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G Family holiday (not agreed)

- H Family holiday (agreed)
- I Illness (not med/dental etc. appointments)
- J Interview
- L Late (before reg closed)
- M Medical/Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence
- P Approved sporting activity
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registers closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- X Non-compulsory school age absence

MONITORING

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.

The Attendance Officer will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support his/her role.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to write to the headteacher or complete an absence notification form. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will not be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special/exceptional circumstances.

STRATEGIES USED TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.

School has a weekly 'Milecastle Attendance Challenge' as part of Monday's awards assembly. Each class's attendance is entered on the challenge chart and a 'treat' awarded for the best half termly attendance. 100% attendance certificates are also awarded to classes.

Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.

Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.

Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.

CONCLUSION

Through the consistent application of this policy we aim to ensure that children attend school punctually and regularly. This will support the early identification of children whose attendance is causing concern and steps quickly taken to remedy it. Children will then have full access to all teaching and learning and make consistent progress.