

THE GATEWAY FEDERATION

Attendance Policy – Nov 2015

Rationale:

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law.

Home/School Partnership:

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education, (section 36, 1944 Education Act). In most cases children attend school and therefore parents should ensure that their children attend and stay at school.

At our Federation the staff and governors endeavour to support parents in this responsibility by:

- a) providing a comprehensive induction programme for new entrants and parents to help children come to school willingly with a positive attitude.
- b) Encouraging parents to discuss any attendance related problems with the class teacher/Headteacher
- c) Aiming to ensure that the school is bright, clean, warm and welcoming.
- d) Teachers/classroom assistants available from 8.50am in classrooms/cloakroom areas to greet/help settle the children
- e) Informing parents of any changes in the school routine by newsletter e.g. school trips, church services etc.
- f) Rewarding pupils yearly for 100% attendance at school

Reporting Absences:

It is parents responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible.

Parents are expected to contact the school office on the first day of absence giving as much information as is available at the time. If the absence is prolonged, interim information would be appreciated, so that the school can help with homework or other necessary arrangements.

On their return to school children should bring a letter from their parents confirming the reason for their absence and giving any other appropriate information.

In the event of no contact having been made regarding a child's absence by 10am on the first day of absence, the school will endeavour to contact parents to make them aware that their child is not in school. If unexplained absence continues, or the school is concerned regarding irregular attendance the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be enlisted.

Registration:

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Regulations also require us to state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The session times for Bratton Fleming School are:

Morning Session: 9.00am – 12.30pm

Afternoon Session: 1.30pm – 3.15pm

The session times for Holywell School are:

Morning Session: 9.00am – 12.00pm

Afternoon Session: 1.00pm – 3.15pm

Educational Welfare Officer

If the school has concerns over a child's pattern or level of attendance, they may ask the Educational Welfare Officer to become involved.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence;

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The DfES provides guidance to schools to distinguish between the two. Details of some of this guidance is included.

- a) **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** – If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be authorised where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by telephone), or production of an appointments card. A book is maintained in reception to record pupils leaving or returning to the site during school hours.
- b) **Lateness** – The school policy is to encourage punctuality but we actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. If, however, a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher/Headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory conclusion. **Late before registers close (authorised absence) is between 9.00am – 9.20am. Registers close at 9.20am - arrival after this time will result in being marked as unauthorised absence.**
- c) **Exceptional Circumstances** – It is for schools to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not: much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally the rule should be that only truly exceptional occasions should be sanctioned through authorised absence after discussion with the Headteacher. Often, the headteacher asks

the parents to attend a meeting where the reasons for the exceptional circumstances are discussed in detail and the outcome of this meeting recorded on a separate form. Circumstances such as appointments for haircuts, going shopping, minding the house, keeping children off unnecessarily i.e. non-pupil day at siblings school and unexplained absences are considered unauthorised.

- d) Family Bereavements** – The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.
- e) Family Holidays** – The law (Educational Act 1996) does not grant parents automatic rights to take their children out of school during term time- these have to be 'exceptional circumstances' and normally, days out and holidays are NOT seen to be exceptional. If you need to remove your child from school, please if possible, make an appointment to see the Executive Headteacher, who will then ask you to fill in for S2 Absence Request Form. (There is no 'holiday form' – the S2 is the only form available.) If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be liable for a £50* penalty notice per parent, per child.
- f) Days of Religious Observance** – Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as an authorised absence.
- g) Educational visits/sporting activities** - Children are marked as present when taking part in visits, sporting events etc that are organised by the school but require the children to attend a different venue.

Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

If the school has concerns over a child's pattern of attendance, they may ask for the EWO to become involved. Parents who are experiencing difficulties getting their children to attend school may also request help from the EWO through the school. The EWO will come into school on a regular basis to review pupil attendance, they may also initiate contact parents if they have concerns.