

## Priory Rise Attendance Policy – October 2013

Every day a child spends in school is important; if children do not attend school regularly this presents as a significant barrier to their learning. Priory Rise School therefore takes a robust approach to supporting good attendance and punctuality as we believe that this is vital to enabling children to maximise their potential to learn and thrive in school.

### Registration Procedure

All children should arrive in time for the 8:55 am start for school. Registers are taken punctually at the beginning of the day and then again for the afternoon session. As soon as the register is completed it is sent to the school office and the official end of registration is 9:00 am – therefore any children arriving after this time are recorded as 'late after registration'. The school also records the time children arrive late and the reason for their late arrival. Registers are completed manually during the week and then transferred 'electronically' on Friday onto the school's data base.

### Non Attendance

We ask parents to report their child's absence as soon as possible in the morning if they are unwell and unable to attend school. There is an absence reporting recorded message service on the telephone which enables parents to telephone the school early in the morning and leave a message. Any children absent without notification from parents are noted and the school administrator telephones the parent as soon as possible in the morning. If a child has been diagnosed with a particular illness that means they will be absent for several days, we ask that the school is informed of this. Where parents are not certain how long their child will be off school, we ask that parents telephone each day. In addition, when a child returns to school from a period of illness we ask parents to provide a written note explaining why their child has been absent. If we have received no notification from parents explaining why their child is absent then the absence will automatically be recorded as unauthorised. Where children have had a tummy bug, they should not return to school until 36-48 hours after their last bout of sickness: this is to prevent cross contamination/infection as even once the symptoms have alleviated the children may still be at risk of infecting others.

### Leave of Absence for Holidays

The school is **unable** to consider or grant any authorised leave of absence for holidays or days out.

### Leave of Absence Requests for Exceptional Circumstances

Absences when a **child is sick** or has a medical or dental appointment which cannot be arranged out of school hours will be **authorised**. However, if the absence concerns a medical or dental issue related to another member of the family, the school will not usually be **able to authorise** this absence.

Any Exceptional Circumstance Leave of Absence Requests must normally be received at least 10 school days in advance. It is important that parents make any exceptional circumstance requests in plenty of time to enable the school to have **time to consider the request and respond appropriately**. The governing body has discussed and agreed the exceptional circumstances under which absences may be authorised. However, parents need to be aware that authorisation for these events is at the **discretion of the headteacher**; it is **not guaranteed**. The headteacher will consider each request individually and will also take into account the child's attendance and punctuality record for previous years and up to the date the request is made. For special/exceptional circumstance events, **1 day's absence only** will usually be authorised unless the event is some considerable distance away, in which case the headteacher will take into account travelling arrangements.

Examples of Reasons for Exceptional Leave	Notes
A visit to another school which the child will soon be joining	
Taking the entrance examination for another school	
Sitting an award bearing music or dance exam or attending a residential visit organised by the Milton Keynes Music Centre	Residential visits occurring in the period during or prior to the assessment period in May will not be authorised
Taking part in an exceptional sporting event	For example playing in a county or regional fixture
Taking part in a theatre performance licensed by a Local Education Authority	
Attending the marriage/civil ceremony of the child's parents or a close family member	
Attending the funeral of a close family member	
A religious observance	
Compassionate leave	For example following a close family bereavement

\*Please note that children in nursery are not of statutory school age and therefore the regulations regarding leave of absence and holiday leave do not apply.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

Attendance registers are monitored each week and if there are any immediate concerns the headteacher contacts parents to discuss their child's attendance. At the end of each month a full summary of each child's attendance and punctuality is reviewed more fully and if the school has any concerns about a child's attendance the parents are contacted by letter.

Where there are significant concerns and a child is 'persistently absent' or there have been a number of unauthorised absences, the school may issue formal warning letters and the school will consider a referral to the local authority. The local authority may in turn issue a fixed penalty notice: this is in exceptional cases where a child's absence is particularly concerning and a child is persistently absent or where a child has a high % of unauthorised absence.

- 95%+ - the expected level of attendance over a school year
- Less than 90% - is a concern (this is equivalent to a child missing a half a day each week of the school year)
- Less than 85% - a child is considered to be 'persistently absent'

## **Summary**

We hope the school's approach to attendance is clear and that it sets out for parents the school's position on leave of absence and the importance the school places on good attendance.