



Notley Green Primary School

Notley Green Primary School and Cann Hall Primary School
form the CHANGE Schools Partnership Multi-Academy Trust

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Date of Policy: Autumn 2014
Date Adopted: Autumn 2014
Date for Review: Autumn 2015

Our Vision

Aiming High; Changing Lives

Our Values

- HOPE
- TRUST
- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- COURAGE
- PERSISTENCE



Introduction

At Notley Green Primary School we are committed to working closely with parents and carers, to ensure that children attend school regularly. This will ensure that all children have the maximum benefit from the high quality education they receive at our school and this will help them achieve their full potential. Attendance is closely monitored by the school, governors and the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Absence from School

If a child is absent from school, parents must inform the school by telephone (01376) 343485, or in person stating why their child will not be in school. If we do not hear from parents half an hour after registration has closed, parents will be contacted immediately by text followed by a telephone call. These procedures have been put in place so that the whereabouts of all children are accounted for at all times. Wherever possible, appointments for doctors, dentists, etc. should be made outside of school times. If a child has to attend an appointment during the school day parents are asked to inform the school in writing prior to the appointment day. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

The Educational Welfare Officer/PSCO may make visits to homes where the parents have not notified the school of their child's absence to ensure that the pupil is safe.

Guidance on time off for illness is given in our Parent Handbook available on the school's website. Medical evidence may be requested.

Punctuality

It is important that a child is punctual for school in order to get off to a good start with their learning and not disrupt the rest of the class. If a child is late for school, the parent or carer is required to bring them into school to sign in the Late Register and give a reason for the child's late arrival at school. Arrival at school after 9:20am will be marked in the register as an unauthorised absence.

If a child is late for school on a regular basis, the Headteacher will send a formal letter to the parents/carers who maybe requested to attend a meeting in school to discuss how the situation can be improved (See Appendix 1). Where issues remain unresolved, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

Leave of Absence for a Term Time Holiday

Parents are not permitted to take their children on holiday during term time as this interrupts their education and is not allowed except in very exceptional circumstances.

As of 1st September 2013, new government regulations mean that the school is unable to grant pupils any leave of absence from school during term time except for 'exceptional circumstances', as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013. Holidays are not counted as exceptional circumstances and the school cannot, therefore, grant any holiday leave.

As a school, we interpret the term “exceptional circumstances” to encompass the following:

- close family funeral
- close family wedding (but not an extended holiday)
- emergency situation
- service personnel on leave for limited period outside of school holidays
- situations that affect the child that cannot be avoided during term time

The list is not considered exhaustive and ultimately the Headteacher has the right of judgement in each individual case.

If a parent should want to request a Leave of Absence the attached form (Appendix 2) has to be completed and returned to the Headteacher with a letter outlining the reason for the need to take the leave of absence in term time. The Headteacher will consider the special circumstances that have necessitated the child being removed from school for a leave of absence.

If the Headteacher agrees that the circumstances fall into the category of ‘exceptional circumstances’ as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013, then the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers authorising leave of absence from school during term time. (Appendix 3)

If the leave of absence is not agreed a letter is sent to inform the parents/carers (Appendix 4).

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a penalty notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child/£60 if paid within 21 days). If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 136A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Educational Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Absence Concerns

The school’s Education Welfare Officer works closely with the school and visits the school regularly to discuss any attendance issues and follow up on any unauthorised absences. An alert letter is sent out to all parents/carers whose child’s attendance is in danger of falling below 90%. (Appendix 5) They are informed that if their child’s attendance continues to be a cause for concern further action will be taken.

Continued absences will be marked as unauthorised unless parents/carers can confirm why their child is absent from school. If the child’s attendance does not improve then the parents/carers will receive a letter from the school inviting them to a School Based Meeting with the Pastoral Care Manager/Head of School/Headteacher (Appendix 6).

If after this meeting there is still no improvement made, and attendance falls below 85% in the preceding 6 weeks and includes 10 or more unauthorised absences, then the School will make a formal referral to the EWS requesting a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) with the Education Welfare Officer present. Here legal requirements for school attendance will be discussed, and strategies put in place in an action plan in order to improve attendance. During the meeting the Education Welfare Officer will advise the parents that evidence is being gathered and any further absences could result in a penalty notice, they are also handed a legal warning letter. Parents/carers are provided with two opportunities to attend a SAM. If parents/carers do not attend the second SAM, the meeting will continue and a realistic action plan written and sent to the parents, together with a warning letter advising that at the next unauthorised absence a penalty notice will be issued.

Following the SAM, the Education Welfare Officer will monitor the case for up to 12 school weeks. If there is a further unauthorised absence during this period, the Education Welfare Officer will discuss the case with their manager, and, if appropriate and meets the code of conduct, a penalty notice will be issued. If, at the end of the twelve week period there have been no further unauthorised absences, the case will be closed. The school will continue to work with the family and refer again if appropriate. If the penalty notice is not paid, the school will need to make a further referral to the EWS, the Education Welfare Officer will complete a home visit to carry out an assessment and make a recommendation to County EWS Legal Panel as to whether a prosecution should be sought.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

- In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs, the curriculum is regularly reviewed.
- Attendance statistics are collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.
- Expectations are made clear to parents with regards to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and Parent Handbook.
- Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports are used.
- The Attendance and Punctuality policy is available via the school website and summarised in the Parent Handbook
- Parents are kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time are re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.
- All issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties are promptly investigated by the School.
- The School has regular meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer, in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Additional Support

We continue to strive to work closely with every family to ensure that all the children attend school regularly and punctually every day as this helps them to make the most of their education and reach their full potential. The school's Pastoral Care Manager is available to work with parents/carers and pupils if there are any underlying reasons for poor attendance, or an appointment can be arranged with the school nurse for any medical queries.

Rewarding Excellent Attendance

The school, in an effort to focus the children on the importance of attending school, has focused rewards for children with excellent attendance. In particular certificates for those having achieved 100% are awarded.

Policy agreed by Governors – September 2014

Review Date – Autumn 2015

APPENDIX 1

Punctuality Letter



Dear *[parent's/carer's name]*

[Child's Name]

[Class]

Punctuality Concerns

We are concerned that *[name]* is persistently late in arrival at school. It is your responsibility as parent/carer to ensure that *[name]* attends school regularly and punctually.

We have to inform you that if *[name's]* punctuality record does not improve with immediate effect it will be necessary to ask you to attend a meeting in school to discuss the matter. Following this it may be necessary to refer your child to the school's Education Welfare Officer for further attention.

If you require any support or advice, do feel free to contact our Pastoral Care Manager, Mrs Breen at the school.

I look forward to your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Head of School

APPENDIX 2



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR TERM TIME HOLIDAY

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

*As from 1st September 2013, new government regulations mean that the School is no longer permitted to grant pupils **ANY** leave of absence from school during term time except for 'exceptional circumstances' as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 (e.g. if a parent is employed by the Armed Forces and is on leave from a foreign posting). Holidays are not counted as exceptional circumstances and we **cannot**, therefore, grant **ANY** holiday leave.*

Parents should be aware that, if authorisation is not granted and they still proceed to take their child(ren) out of school, the School is legally bound to notify the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS may then issue a penalty notice to each of the child(ren)'s parents of £60 per child which must be paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days (as of 1st Sep. 2013). Court proceedings may follow for unpaid penalties under Section 444 of the Education Act 1966 for failing to ensure your child(ren) attends school regularly. For further clarification please refer to - <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Name of Child(ren):	
Date of Birth:	
Class:	

Date of First Day of Absence: _____ **Date of Return:** _____

Number of Days Requested: _____

Please attach a letter outlining 'exceptional circumstances' which may require a term time absence. As described above, the School has very limited scope for authorising such absences.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

School/Office use only:

Attendance percentage preceding 12 weeks:			
Number of sessions absence this academic year:	Authorised	Unauthorised	Total

Authorised:
Unauthorised. Reason for not authorising:

APPENDIX 3

Authorised Leave of Absence Letter



Dear [parent's/carer's name]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL TERM

I refer to your application for leave of absence for your children [CHILD/REN NAME/S] during the school term, namely from the [DATE] to the [DATE].

As from 1st September 2013, new government regulations mean that the school is no longer permitted to grant pupils any leave of absence from school during term time, except for 'exceptional circumstances', as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013.

The school considers your application to be an 'exceptional circumstance' under these Regulations and is therefore able to authorise the request.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Head of School

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

A term time holiday will only be authorised by the school if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013).

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 which must be paid within 42 days (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence Letter



Dear [parent's/carer's name]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL TERM

I refer to your application for leave of absence for your children [CHILD/REN NAME/S] during the school term, namely from the [DATE] to the [DATE].

As from 1st September 2013, new government regulations mean that the school is no longer permitted to grant pupils any leave of absence from school during term time, except for 'exceptional circumstances', as outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013. The school does not consider your application to be an exceptional circumstance and is therefore unable to authorise the request.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Head of School

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress.

A term time holiday will only be authorised by the school if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013).

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 which must be paid within 42 days (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

APPENDIX 5

Attendance Concern Letter (Under 95%)



Dear [parent's/carer's name]

[Child's Name]

[Class]

Attendance Concerns

I am enclosing an attendance sheet for [name] as we are concerned about [his/her] attendance level of []%. This letter is to remind you of the importance of your child attending school, and to give you the opportunity to address this matter. Good attendance is deemed to be at least 96% and above but even at this level a child will have lost 37.5 learning hours.

Alternatively, Mrs Breen, our Pastoral Care Manager is always available if you have any concerns that you would prefer to discuss with her, or an appointment can be arranged with our school nurse for any medical queries.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Head of School

School Based Meeting Letter



Dear [parent's/carer's name]

[Child's Name]

[Class]

School Based Attendance Meeting

I refer to my letter dated [date], where I wrote to you highlighting the school's concern about [name's] attendance level of []%. Unfortunately, since that letter, [name's] attendance has now fallen to []%; therefore I am inviting you to attend a meeting on [date] at [time] to discuss this further.

If this appointment is not suitable, please contact the school office to rearrange.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher/Head of School