

# Poplar Street Primary School



## Attendance Policy

All children benefit from attending school regularly. As well as educating children, schools provide opportunities for making friends and learning how to get on with people. Children are also encouraged to develop any talents or skills they may have, as well as essential skills of reading, writing and number work. Children who do not attend school miss out on these opportunities.

The Education Act states, it is a parental responsibility to ensure their child is receiving an education.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, either parents, or carer with whom the child resides. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for the individual, but the class as a whole. Where there is a concern, attendance is discussed with each parent at consultation evenings. The current percentage attendance is reported on annual school reports. Attendance letters are sent out on a regular basis informing parents of any attendance concerns. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full-time education. This is achieved by regular attendance at school. When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. The school dojo system should not be used to inform school of a child's absence

### **Arrival and registration**

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school from 8.45 am each day. The register is taken immediately after the 9 o'clock bell. The register is taken twice a day and therefore a day counts as 2 sessions. Morning registration ends at 9.00am. If a child arrives after the registration period, he/she must enter and be registered by the parent/guardian at the main Reception desk stating the reason for being late and will be marked in the register as Late. Arrival later than 9.30am will automatically be classed as an unauthorised late mark, unless previously discussed and agreed with the attendance lead or headteacher.

The afternoon register is taken at:

12.15pm in Nursery,

12.30pm in Reception,

12.55pm in Year 1,

1.00pm in Year 2

1.15pm from Years 3-6.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out by the parent/guardian at the Reception office. The signing in/out system in the reception office is used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers. Audits are undertaken regularly by the Education Welfare Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

### **Arrangements for absence**

If a child is going to be absent the Parent/Guardian should contact the school's office staff via phone before 9.00am to inform of the reason for absence on the first day and any subsequent days of absence, to discuss any relevant issues and possible date for return. The Headteacher determines whether an absence is authorised. Poplar Street Primary School adheres to the Department for

Education (DFE) guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged. Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised, given evidence can be provided where possible:

Illness (school may request medical evidence to authorise this)

Religious observance (subject to school's discretion)

Attendance at medical appointments (which cannot be made outside school hours)

### **Leave of Absence (Holidays in term time)**

Parents have no legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of such leave. Leave in special circumstances must be requested in writing to the Headteacher using a request for leave. A decision will then be made and advised in writing by the Headteacher.

### **Medical appointments**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. You should bring a copy of the appointment letter or card to the Reception Office where it will be photocopied and placed on your child's file. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, it is expected that the child should attend school before an appointment and be returned to school directly after the appointment in order to obtain the relevant attendance mark. Medical appointments that do not need to be made during the school day may not be authorised, such as opticians and routine doctor's/dentist appointments.

### **Family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:**

It is accepted that sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances at the time of absence so that the appropriate code can be written in the register. It is a parental responsibility to work with school so that the child can return as soon as possible. When it has become necessary to make a referral to the Attendance Lead/ Education Welfare Officer [EWO], all further absences will be unauthorised pending investigation. All calls from parents regarding absence are logged. After registration, checks are made to ensure that all children are accounted for. Telephone calls and emails are made to parents of children who are not in school to ensure that children are safe; this forms part of our Safeguarding procedure, and to ascertain the reason for absence.

### **Penalty Notices**

Under the Education Act 1996, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance for the following reasons:

- If their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once.
- If they go on holiday in term time without school's permission or are late returning from an extended holiday.
- If a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during school hours

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

### **Penalty Notice Warning for Non- school attendance:**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The amendments to the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to family holidays for extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 Amendments have been made to the 2013 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These came into force on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

For the first offence committed, the rate of a Penalty Notice is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

For the second offence committed, the rate of a Penalty Notice is £160 with no option for the second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

There is a limit of 2 Penalty Notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. If there is a third offence committed within this timeframe, another tool will be considered such as prosecution to answer an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996: failure to ensure regular attendance. Conviction of an offence under section 444(1) may result in a fine of £1000. Under section 444(1A), convictions may result in a fine of £2,500, a community order, electronic tagging or a custodial sentence and a criminal conviction recorded **School Responsibility**

The Senior Management Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Lead. Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution. Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the Arbor Attendance module. It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session. Attendance Reports for each pupil are sent out twice yearly to inform Parents how well their child is attending, or if there is any cause for concern

### **Rewards**

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured. Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. As a school we will recognise where pupils attend regularly or make significant improvements. This will be acknowledged in a variety of ways including:

- Children will be award a certificate every term when they have an attendance at 100%
- At the end of each half term the class with the highest attendance from KS2 and Early Year/KS1 will receive a gingerbread man treat.

- End of each school year - 100% Attendance certificates are awarded to children
- At the end of the year the children with 100% attendance will be placed in a draw to win a £100 gift card. There will be 2 winners. One from EY/KS1 and the other from KS2

### **Equality**

This policy is linked to our Equality Policy which, in part, states that: At our school we will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability. The school will work actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

This we will do by:

- treating all those within the school community (e.g. pupils, staff, governors, parents and the outside community) as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges attitudes and backgrounds
- maintaining a school ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and challenges, myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices
- encouraging everyone in our school community to gain a positive self-image and high esteem
- having high expectations of everyone involved with the whole school community
- promoting mutual respect and valuing each other's similarities and differences and facing equality issues openly and honestly
- identifying, challenging and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are discriminatory and replacing them with practices that are fair to all
- monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all the above to secure continuous improvement in all that we do

### **Safeguarding**

Poplar Street Primary School will always work to:

- Protect our children from maltreatment
- Prevent impairment of our children's health or development
- Ensure that our children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertake that role so as to enable our children and young people to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

(Children's Act 2014)

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It is a preventative agenda that helps children and young people achieve their full potential, regardless of negative factors such

as poverty or social exclusion, by providing services and support to overcome barriers to achievement. It also includes issues relating to:

- health and safety
- bullying
- racist abuse
- harassment and discrimination use of physical intervention
- meeting the needs of children and young people with medical needs
- providing first aid
- drug and substance misuse educational visits
- internet safety
- site security

### **Appendices attached**

Appendix ii - Procedure for absence

Appendix ii - Penalty Notice Letter to Parents

### **Appendix i**

#### **Procedure for absence**

First day and Subsequent days of absence

The Parent/Guardian should contact the school's office staff via telephone on 0161 336 4136 or email on Arbor to inform of the reason for absence. This should be done before 9.00am on the first day and any subsequent days of absence, to discuss any relevant issues and possible date for return.

#### **IF NO MESSAGE IS RECEIVED FROM PARENT/GUARDIAN –**

The Attendance Officer/Safeguarding Officer will contact the Parent/Guardian by telephone/text message regarding the pupil's absence. If no reason is given the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a home visit may be made.

#### **Late arrival**

- All pupils arriving after the doors are locked at 9.00am should enter school by the Main entrance.
- All late arrivals must be signed in by the parent/guardian at the Reception desk.
- Any pupil's arriving 30 minutes after Registers have been completed will receive a late arrival mark (U).

#### **Notification of Absence letter**

We check attendance levels weekly and always strive to be at the National Attendance level of 97%.

Where school have concerns regarding attendance, Parents/Guardians will receive an email explaining the concerns

### **Ongoing absence**

Parent/Guardian will be requested to attend an Attendance Improvement Plan meeting at school with the Attendance Officer or appropriate other to raise concerns again, discuss any barriers to regular attendance, suggest strategies and agree an action plan. If a Parent/Guardian is unable to attend the meeting the plan will be drawn up and sent to your home address

### **Attendance below 95%**

Parent/Guardian may be advised by email that any further absence from school will be classed as unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.

Meeting / Home visit to be undertaken to discuss attendance issues, identify and implement plan of action. (May involve referral to Local Authority E.W.O.) During a period of school intervention, a number of strategies may be used including: -

- Written communication
- Information to Parents/Guardians of the impact absence has on achievement, and legal requirements and obligations of carers.
- Face to face contact with Parent/Guardian via meetings within school.
- Home visits
- Provision of support from school e.g. Pastoral and Child Protection Manager intervention
- Referral to other support groups or agencies
- Implement an Attendance Agreement
- Implement a Punctuality Agreement
- Meeting involving Senior Leader Attendance /Education Welfare Officer.
- Legal interventions, including instigation of Penalty Notices and Court action.

### **Appendix ii**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Penalty Notices for Non- school attendance – Information Letter

#### **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

The amendments to the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove reference to family holidays for extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

#### **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024**

Amendments have been made to the 2013 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These came into force on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

For the first offence committed, the rate of a Penalty Notice is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

For the second offence committed, the rate of a Penalty Notice is £160 with no option for the second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

There is a limit of 2 Penalty Notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. If there is a third offence committed within this timeframe, another tool will be considered such as prosecution to answer an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996: failure to ensure regular attendance. Conviction of an offence under section 444(1) may result in a fine of £1000. Under section 444(1A), convictions may result in a fine of £2,500, a community order, electronic tagging or a custodial sentence and a criminal conviction recorded. In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance for the following reasons:

- If their child is stopped on a truancy sweep more than once
- If they go on holiday in term time without school's permission or are late returning from an extended holiday,
- If they have not co-operated with the Education Welfare Service following a referral from school after they have taken steps to address the absences with the parent/carers and pupil.
- If their child fails to return to school following a fixed term exclusion. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued in relation to this matter.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, contact your school and ask for help. Support is also available from the Education Welfare Service on telephone number 0161 342 2290.