



# West Byfleet Infant School

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY SEPTEMBER 2016**

### **Commitment to Attendance**

The staff of West Byfleet Infant School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community are proud.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

### **Expectations**

All pupils must:

- attend school regularly,
- attend school punctually,

All parents will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere,
- provide a safe learning environment,



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- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns,
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality,
- monitor individual pupil's attendance and punctuality,
- contact parents when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence,
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition,
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all students,
- make initial enquiries regarding students who are not attending regularly,
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that whenever possible, students are consulted in all the decisions that relate to them.

## **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the pupil is being collected or will make their own way to their destination.
- pupils must sign out on leaving the school and sign back in on their return.



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- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

## **Punctuality/Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's tutor is important. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

- Registration takes place at 9am and pupils who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded as late for school – coded 'L' on the registration certificate.
- Registers close at (half an hour after the register opens) 9:30am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence – 'U' on the registration certificate - and can be subject to referral to the Education Welfare Officer and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

## **Leave of absence**

- The school holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance.
- Leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Where absence in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence application form must be requested from the school



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office or website and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and liable to a penalty notice.

- ***The Government have changed the regulations which permitted headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year or to grant extended leave of more than ten days in exceptional circumstances. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. (The amendment has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' and therefore Headteacher/Governing Body will be responsible for deciding what they consider to be 'exceptional circumstances')***
- This new legislation (**Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**) means that if an application is not “*made in advance to the Head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the Head teacher does not consider that leave of absence should be granted due to the “**exceptional circumstances**” relating to that application*”, then it will not be authorised. **We will therefore not authorise any holidays.**
- If you take your child out of school without the approval of the school, you may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice from Surrey County Council for failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance.
- Holidays in school time **will not be authorised. Guidelines from the local authority are that they may issue a Penalty Notice (with a fine) to parents**, when pupils are taken out of school during term for 10 days or more over 190 sessions (half a school year) and if this absence is recorded as unauthorised by the school (e.g. a holiday).

## **Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence:**



- In line with the guidance from the DfE, leave of absence during GCSE, SATS, Mocks and other external exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- The Head Teacher can now request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more day's leave of absence without school authorisation.

### **Penalty Notices**

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave of absence, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a student is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Education Welfare Manager if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- **£60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Truancy Patrol**

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the student's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 schooldays, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent/carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school and Education Welfare Officers. Before a



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Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding half-term. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration.