



CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Riverside Community Primary School

(Primary and Nursery)



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ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

**Adopted by the Curriculum/Premises and Health and Safety
Committee on 20 January 2009**

Reviewed 22 June 2016

Annual review due Spring Term 2017

Signed Chair

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

Children should attend school every day of the school year. Curriculum work is progressive ie what is taught today builds upon what was taught yesterday and what is taught tomorrow will build upon what is taught today. It follows, therefore, that if a child misses school when this could be avoided, he/she will be missing some of the building blocks of knowledge.

The school sets targets for attendance each academic year. **2015-16 Target: 95.7% 2016-17 target 96%**

Guidelines

A child should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable". Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law (and parents can be fined). Every half-day absence from school has to be classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Deciding whether the absence is authorised is the school's responsibility, not the parents'. This is the reason that information about the cause of each absence is always required.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES ARE MORNINGS OR AFTERNOONS AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR A GOOD REASON - ILLNESS OR OTHER UNAVOIDABLE CAUSES.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

- Truancy
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive after the register has been closed and who therefore do not get a mark
- Children taking any holiday in school time.

Providing a note may not be sufficient to qualify for authorisation if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Children should never be kept off school for trivial reasons such as:

- Shopping
- Minding the house/brothers/sisters etc
- As a treat

The school's Education Welfare Officer regularly monitors attendance. Patterns of absence may be identified and the school will contact the parent to discuss the reasons for this.

If problems cannot be sorted out by the school, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. The EWO will monitor any child who's attendance falls below 90% or those who have 10 or more unauthorised absences. He or she will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents of children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for advice. The EWO's are independent of the school, and their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority (307400).

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents should make every effort to contact the school **by 8:30am on the first day**, in person, by telephone, or via a note with another child. When the child returns to school he or she must have telephoned the school or bring a written note, signed by a parent, for each period of absence.

Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

- The school usually makes first day phone calls to parents we haven't heard from.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (eg bereavement) or for medical appointments, taken in school time, provided a written explanation and supporting evidence is received.

Medical Evidence

Evidence by way of a Doctor's note or appointment card may be requested for any pupil whose attendance falls below 90%. This is in line with the Department of Education guidelines which now classify those pupils as persistent absentees.

Holidays

Holidays will **not** be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances (details of which are available from the school office) and then only at the discretion of the head teacher. If a child is still taken on holiday when an absence request is refused, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. If their attendance is below the **90%** threshold for persistent absenteeism you will be subject to a penalty fine (details are available from the school office or on the website).

Lateness

Registration is at 9:00 am. Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. **Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration**. All children who are late must go to the school office to have their name entered into the late book. This ensures their attendance and their lunch choice are both recorded. The class registers are closed at **9:30am** and all children arriving after this time will receive an unauthorised absence mark for that session. 10 unauthorised absence marks will lead to an EWO referral.

How the school will follow up absence

- Child is absent
- Record absence in register
- Parents contact school
- If the parents have not already contacted the school the office will phone home
- If a satisfactory explanation is given, record the absence as authorised
- If the child is going to be legitimately absent for a long period of time (2 weeks or more), ensure that the school provides work and maintains contact
- If no satisfactory explanation for the absence is given, record the absence as unauthorised and make contact with the parents to discuss the problem
- If this is unsuccessful in resolving the problem, consult with other relevant agencies eg Nurse EWO, Educational Psychologists.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Parents will receive information in your child's report with details of his/her attendance. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school is committed to working with parents, as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The guidelines in this policy statement are consistent with the good practice recorded in the Home School Agreement.