

Battle Hill Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all children can fulfill their potential and we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education.

We do all we can to encourage our children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is excellent. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason are prevented from coming to school.

All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. Regularly taking time off school for family holidays and events can have a significant impact on a child's achievement. The law requires that all schools have an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. National codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way that complies with regulations.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been notified by a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. It is expected that the parent will contact the school before 9 o'clock on the morning their child is ill and failure to do so will result in the school contacting the parent or carer to seek an explanation for the absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If your child is regularly ill, the school may ask for a doctor's note or the Headteacher can choose not to authorise these absences. There are a number of other reasons a Headteacher might not authorise your child's absence, these include:

- Taking your child on shopping trips or keeping them off on their birthday
- Arriving late for school (after the register has closed)
- Taking your child on a day trips or holidays not agreed by the Headteacher in advance.

Attendance is monitored closely in school and parents are informed in writing when their child's attendance is unsatisfactory. A daily text message is sent to inform parents/carers, when a child's attendance falls below 96% or 90%. Equally, a daily text message is sent to inform parents/carers of any improvement taking their child's attendance above 96% or above 90%.

We monitor attendance closely and regularly; if your child misses more than 10% of their time in school for any reason they are known as 'Persistently Absent'; this level is set by the government. If your child's attendance is a cause for concern (below 95%) or they are persistently absent (90% or below) we will be working with you to look at how this can be improved. In most cases you will be invited into school to discuss your child's absence and we will develop an action plan with you to look at the reasons why your child is absent and put support in place to look at any problems there may be. It is important that you do work with us to avoid the Headteacher asking The Attendance and Placement Team (APT) to get involved, who will:

1. Issue a Penalty Warning notice and ask the school to monitor your child's attendance for 4 weeks.
2. If your child's attendance does not improve, the school will inform the APT and they will Issue a Penalty Notice fine, in North Tyneside this is £60 per parent per child (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days).
3. If the fine is not paid North Tyneside will pursue the matter to the courts. 4. If your child's attendance does not improve over the next 4 weeks you can be taken to court even if you have paid the initial fine for what is called an 'Aggravated Offence' and fines are then significantly larger and there is a chance of a prison sentence.

We want to avoid this at all costs, so if your child has a problem with coming to school, please let us know so that we can support you and your child and stop the problem getting worse.

Lateness

Every minute in school is very important, at school name learning starts immediately. Children arriving late in school are often anxious about what they have missed and this may lead to them not wanting to come to school. The school day starts at 8.55am here, we need your child to be in class by then; arriving after this will result in a late mark.

Lateness will be monitored in the same way as general attendance. Repeated lateness will be noted and contact with either the parent/carer or Attendance and Placement Service will be made where appropriate.

If getting your child to school on time is a struggle, please tell us, we are here to listen and help!

Requests for Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the law around holidays in term-time changed; the law now makes it clear that a Headteacher cannot agree to a child being absent from school for a holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is up to you to provide the school with evidence of exceptional circumstances, but only the Headteacher can decide if the reason you have given can be considered exceptional and agree the holiday if the Headteacher doesn't give permission and you choose to go anyway, this will be recorded as unauthorised. At Battle Hill Primary School, we have a policy of not authorising any holidays during term time. The school will request that the Attendance and Placement Team issue a Penalty Notice fine, in North Tyneside this is £60 per parent per child (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days). If you fail to pay your fine North Tyneside Council's policy is ALWAYS to pursue payment through the courts, this can lead to a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a prison sentence.

How to request leave of absence

- Forms to request leave of absence are available from the school office.
- A parent requesting a leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance.
- The Headteacher will speak to parents to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education.
- The school will reply to all applications in writing stating whether or not the absence has been agreed.
- If the leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, as well as the possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.

- It the parent removes their child from school without requesting a leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parent will be informed in writing that a referral is being made to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.
- A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.
- Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

Long-term Absence

When a child is absent from school for an extended period of time, through illness or exclusion, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Rewards for Good Attendance

At Battle Hill Primary School, we promote the intrinsic - learning from a member of staff how proud a child is of their attendance or how much their work has improved because they have been in school more is very powerful.

However, we also know how extrinsic rewards can help.

- All children who have 100% attendance in any half term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of that half term.

There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year.

- Each week the three classes who have the best attendance in school win a trophy to display in their classroom for the week.
- Pupils with excellent attendance are regularly put into raffles for special prizes, such as NUFC tickets.

Whilst this feat is certainly worth celebrating, it does exclude children with a genuine reason for absence. Therefore at Battle Hill Primary School, rewarding improving attendance alongside excellent and good attendance catches those who may have had genuine absence and helps target those whose attendance is a concern who may struggle to reach the good or excellent categories.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Administration staff, working in conjunction with the Headteacher, are responsible for monitoring attendance in the school and following up absences in the appropriate ways. If an absence is unexplained, they will contact the parent or carer to find out the reason. Patterns of absence are analysed, and the Attendance and Placement Service will be contacted if it is deemed necessary.

Signature: Miss R Jobey

Date: November 2021

