

Birdwell Primary School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims:

- Birdwell Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.
- The school will monitor and track students' attendance and punctuality through effective systems
- Birdwell primary School will encourage parents/guardians to play the vital role of supporting the school by encouraging their child to achieve good attendance and punctuality
- The school will work in partnership with parents, to help students succeed
- The school will promote good attendance, by recognising and rewarding good and improved attendance by individuals and groups of students.

Attendance and the Law

- Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil, is an offence punishable by law (Education Act 1996 Section 444)
- Fixed penalties can be issued by Birdwell Primary School where the criteria for such a notice are met.

The Schools Expectations

From pupils:

- They will attend school regularly
- They will arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day

From parents:

- Need to fulfil their legal responsibility by ensuring their child attends school and arrives on time.
- They contact the office between 8.30am and 9.30am if their child is unable to attend, stating the reason for non attendance.
- They ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the school dress code
- They arrange holidays out of term time
- They notify the school in advance of any medical appointments.

Pupils and parents can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping
- Contact from the school on the first day of absence if no notification has been received
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend without good reason and there is a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness
- Positive measures to encourage good attendance
- A broad and balanced education that is dependent upon regular attendance.
- The support of the Attendance Worker

Positive measures to encourage good attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately at the start of each session
- Daily monitoring by class teachers and Attendance Worker.
- Regular monitoring by the Headteacher on attendance and punctuality
- Additional playtime to the class with the best weekly attendance

- Certificates to pupils with annual 100% attendance
- The Attendance Worker will liaise with parents to support them in improving their child's attendance.

Punctuality/Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their education opportunities. We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but also it shows consideration for every one else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching. The school day begins at 8.55am and children are able to come into school from 8.45. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the Attendance Worker and the Education Welfare Officer.

Responding to non-attendance and the procedure for lateness

1. If there is no note or telephone call received from parents, the school will ring the child's parent/carer during the morning.
2. With continued non-attendance or lateness the school will write to the parents/carers informing them of the attendance issues and advising the involvement of the Education Welfare Service should there be no improvement.
3. Where there is no improvement in the attendance or punctuality, the Educational Welfare Service will be informed.

Parental requests for special leave of absence during term-time

The law requires that children should attend school for 190 days of each year. This means that, unless absent through illness, children should attend school at all times excluding weekends, official school holidays and staff INSET days. Clearly it is in the best interest of the child not to miss days at school if this can possibly be avoided.

If you intend to apply for permission from the Headteacher to take your child out of school during term time, you will be required to obtain a Leave of Absence request form from the Headteacher for authorisation. Holidays are not deemed as an authorised absence.

All Leave of Absence requests must be supported by a letter explaining the reasons or a letter from the employer on headed notepaper.

- Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing on the appropriate form. They should be made by the parent/carer with details of the exceptional circumstances and stating the specific start and end dates of the leave. The request should be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance of the intended leave.

Leave of absence will not be authorised in the following periods or circumstances:

- If there are no exceptional circumstance.
- During the first half term of a new academic year as it will have a negative impact on pupil progress.
- For pupils who have internal/external examinations/assessments near or during the proposed absence
- If, on granting the request, the pupil's attendance rate falls below the schools attendance target of 96% (This is the current trigger level for issuing a Penalty Notice for poor school attendance).
- Overall attendance last academic year was unsatisfactory (any applications for leave of absence during the 1st term)
- If there has been a holiday taken during the academic year.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec 444, Education Act 1996 or Sec 36, the Children's Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate subject to statutory defences. The Education Welfare Service delivers this Local Authority responsibility.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Leave of Absence in term time, if not authorised
- Unexplained absence i.e. no reason given for absence
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed)
- Excluded pupil present in a public place during the school hours of the school where the pupil is on roll

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices one of the following criteria must apply:

- Other than in specific circumstances the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.
If a parent is capable of securing regular attendance but not willing to take responsibility or failure to engage with strategies and agencies then a penalty notice may be issued without notification
No formal warning is given in the case of leave of absence
- The deliberate taking of leave of absence in term time without or against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not / would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions.
- Excluded pupil present in a public place during the school hours of the school where the pupil is on roll without justification during the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion and other than in specific circumstances the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued after the first time a pupil is present in a public place.
- If a parent/ carer of an excluded child fails to ensure the attendance of the child at the alternative provision provided by the school or LA from the sixth day of fixed period exclusion or permanent exclusion that the parent will be liable under the truancy provisions.
- The LA will not issue a Penalty Notice if no substantiating documentation is provided by the school

Responsibility

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority. We must share our enthusiasm for education, communicate its importance to pupils and all members of the school community.

Signed _____ (Headteacher)

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors)

November 2013