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Academy Attendance Policy

Principles

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children.

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result succeed and thrive.

We endeavour for children to take responsibility for their own attendance, recognising the link between attendance and good learning.

Legal Requirements

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized.

The Government expects:

- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Schools to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Schools to act early to address patterns of absence.

Promoting Good Attendance

The Trust acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded.

Perry Hall Primary School

- Weekly Class Attendance – each week the three classes with the best attendance are reported in the school newsletter. Classes with 100% attendance are allowed to wear their own clothes on the following Friday.
- Termly Individual Attendance – at the end of each school term pupils with 100% attendance are awarded with a small gift and a certificate.

Berrybrook Primary School

- Weekly Class Attendance – each week the class with the best attendance receives a trophy and ten minutes golden time on a Friday. Termly Individual

Attendance – at the end of each school term pupils with 100% attendance are awarded with a small gift and a certificate.

Dunstall Hill Primary School

- Weekly Class Attendance – each week the class with the best attendance from Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are awarded a trophy during praise assembly.
- Termly Individual Attendance – at the end of each school term pupils with 100% attendance are awarded with a small gift and a certificate.
- Individual children are also awarded certificates and gifts for improved attendance or timekeeping.
- (In the future we would also like to send a letter to parents thanking them for their support when their children's attendance or timekeeping has improved).

Birds Bush Primary School

- Termly Individual Attendance – at the end of each school term pupils with 100% attendance are awarded with a small gift and a certificate.
- A letter or text is sent to parents thanking them for their support when their children's attendance or timekeeping has improved, especially when attendance has been a concern and parents are working closely with the school to improve this.

Notifying Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 9.15 am on the first school day of his/her child's absence from school. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues - or is likely to continue - for more than 3 days, medical evidence should be obtained and submitted to the school e.g. prescription, medicine, doctor's note, appointment card.

If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the school office will ring the child's parent/carer. If contact cannot be made the office will try and contact the parent by another means such as text or email. Telephone calls will continue on subsequent days until contact is made.

If contact cannot be made after a number of days, or if there are concerns about a child, the Educational and Family Engagement Officer will be asked to make an education welfare visit. The Educational and Family Engagement Officer may then begin legal proceedings by issuing a fixed penalty notice if deemed necessary. Schools may also carry out a home visit if there has been no contact has been made.

Authorised Absences

Examples of authorised absences are:

- Illness;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs;
- medical appointments
- exclusions
- extreme family emergencies/ occasions (bereavements, house fires etc)

Unauthorised Absences

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9.30 am)
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school

Leave of Absence / Holidays During Term Time

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Executive Headteachers or headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

Our schools will only authorise leave of absence in line with these regulations. All applications for leave of absence in term time will be considered by the school's Governing Bodies. Exceptional circumstances will only be agreed very rarely.

Parents should apply using the form **Appendix 1** if they are considering a leave of absence in term time at least 2 weeks before the event. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.

If you take your child out of school on a holiday the Local Authority will be notified who will issue a penalty notice to you.

A penalty notice of £60 will be imposed per child and per parent. If this is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice the cost rises to £120 which must be paid between 21 and 28 days of receipt of the notice. All penalty notices will be delivered by hand or first class post.

Persistent Absenteeism

Each school will continuously monitor each child's attendance record.

The school office will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 90% every three weeks. In most cases, the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns (Appendix 2)

If a child's attendance level has not improved, or has fallen further, the parent/carer will be contacted to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher/Head of School. At this point, a parenting contact may be drawn up between the School and the parent/carer, which will also identify any additional support required.

In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve then the school will refer the matter to the local authority. Action which may then be taken can include court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an education supervision order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The school day starts at 8.45am and all children are expected to be in class at this time. The school gates are closed at 8:55am. Any children arriving after this time must report to the school office to be marked in. At 9.30am the registers are closed. If a child arrives after this time (for reasons not considered acceptable by the school) they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence and will affect their attendance record.

Persistent Lateness

When a child is considered to be persistently late then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns (Appendix 3).

If a child continues to be persistently late the school will request a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help. At this point a parenting contract may be drawn up.

Monitoring

The Trustees are responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

[Appendix 1: Application for leave of absence from school]



Leave of absence (Holiday in Term Time) Request Form

Child's/Childrens's Details

Full Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Class: _____

Parent/Carers Details

Parent/Carer 1

Full Name: _____
Relationship: _____
Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Carers Details

Parent/Carer 2

Full Name: _____
Relationship: _____
Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Details of Absence Request

From Date: _____ To Date: _____

Length of Absence (school days): _____

Please state the reason for taking your child/children out of school:

Parents/Carer 1 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents/Carer 2 Signature: _____ Date: _____

(signature required from parent/parents who live with child or who has day to day care of the child/children)

For office use only

Holiday Request received by _____ Date _____

Percentage attendance for child/children _____

Holiday Request GRANTED/NOT GRANTED

Signed by Headteacher _____ Date _____

[Appendix 2: Sample letter re: below 90% attendance]

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

As you are aware we monitor attendance very closely at SCHOOL NAME in order to ensure it doesn't impact on your child's academic progress and social development. Unfortunately, your child's attendance has now dropped below 90% which is below the national expectation of 94.5%.

If your child's attendance continues to drop or does not improve then our next step will be to liaise with our Education and Family Engagement Officer, who may contact you.

We understand that there may be many reasons for a child to not attend school and it is important that you inform us of the reasons for any absence, if you haven't already done so. If there is anyway the school can support you with improving your child's attendance then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

[Appendix X Sample late letter]

Dear

Date:

Re: Child Name

We are concerned at the number of times your child has been late for school. NAME has been late X times this school year. We are aware that there may be various genuine reasons for lateness such as medical appointments, however your child's poor punctuality is below what is acceptable by Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust.

Where lateness persists, we are required by law to involve the Education Welfare Service.

Please do all you can to work with school in ensuring that your child maintains a high level of attendance. We also ask that you contact the school Education and Family Engagement Officer to discuss this matter, who may be able to offer support to improve the situation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher