

DEEPLISH PRIMARY
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE
POLICY

May 2010

DEEPLISH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.
- 1.2 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and have put in place appropriate procedures to support 100% attendance. We believe that the most important factors in promoting good attendance are the development of positive attitudes towards school. We want children to be happy to come to school and we want parents/carers to be confident that we make school a rewarding and safe experience for children. We make every effort to resolve any issues that prevent children attending school on a regular basis. We reward those children whose attendance is very good. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for medical or other feasible reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.3 In Law an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which s/he is a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Rochdale Local Authority and schools work hard to raise attendance and reduce absences.
- 1.4 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps 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.

2 Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

2.1 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 of this by a parent or carer. For example, if a child is or has been unwell and a parent or carer writes a note or telephones to inform the school of this, the absence will be authorised. However too many illness absences will be followed up by the attendance co-ordinator and an appearance at an attendance panel may be requested.

Only school can make an absence authorised, parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be authorised. For example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping, this will be an unauthorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent from school without the authorisation of the Headteacher.

Examples of these are:

- (a) when the child is truanting without the knowledge of the parent/carer.
- (b) when the parent/carer condones absences which are not deemed to be justified by the school. These can be airport visits, extended holidays etc.
- (c) when the child arrives in school after the close of register (9.15am) and receives a "U" mark in the register.

3 Absence Registration Codes

- 3.1 When a child is absent, the class teacher records the absence in the register as an O with the appropriate code letter inserted. This could be M (medical appointment) or I (illness) if a viable reason has been given by a member of the child's family. If no contact has been made, the class teacher leaves the red circle blank and the Learning Mentor tries to make contact with the child's family to ascertain the reason on the first day of absence. The Learning Mentor then puts the appropriate code in the register.
- 3.2 When a child returns to school a note should be brought from the child's parent or carer to explain the absence unless a telephone call has been received and noted.

- 3.3 A note may be sent to school, a telephone call made or a message left in person by the parent/carer prior to the absence if for example a child has a medical appointment. If possible an appointment card should be shown.
- 3.4 If there is doubt about a child's absence or the validity of it, the learning mentor will make every attempt to find out the reason. If the reason does not seem valid, the Headteacher will be informed and a possible referral for further action may be made.

4 Late attendance

- 4.1 A child is deemed to be late if s/he arrives after the register has been taken by the class teacher. If a child is not in class at registration time the class teacher will put a red circle alongside the child's name in the register. If a child arrives in class before the register leaves the classroom the class teacher will insert 'L' into the red circle and will also amend the dinner register. Children arriving late must report to the school office to ensure their presence is recorded in the Late Book by office staff. The Learning Mentor refers to the Late Book and amends the pupil's registration record with 'L'. The dinner register is amended by the School Meals' Clerk.
- 4.2 If a child arrives at school after 9.15am, the register will have closed and a "U" inserted alongside the child's name. Regular letters are sent out to parents emphasising the need to arrive on time at school and to report to the school office if they are late. School needs to know for safety reasons that a child has arrived in school i.e. if there is a fire drill.

5 Requests for leave of absence

- 5.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. There are exceptional circumstances, however, when a parent/carer may request leave of absence. Parents/carers must come in to school to speak with the Headteacher to discuss this. The Headteacher does not automatically authorise such requests and each case is judged separately by a panel of governors convened as necessary to consider requests.
- 5.2 Parents should take their family holiday fully during the allocated school holiday periods.

- 5.3 Parents are advised that only one visit, during a child's primary education, will be authorised unless there are extraordinary reasons why a further visit should take place.
- 5.4 Parents do **not** have the right to withdraw their child/children for a holiday during term time. Any request should be made via an appointment with the Headteacher and a meeting with a governor panel. Appendix 1 – Application for Leave of Absence from School must be completed **before** the purchase of tickets.
- 5.5 It is important that children attend school regularly if they are to benefit from the learning opportunities available to them. Children who are absent from school due to holidays in term time will miss out on important learning. This has serious impact on opportunities later in life. Extended leave can create difficulties for pupils missing out on significant elements of the national curriculum. Pupils can fail to achieve expected grades or realise their potential in examinations. Periods of absence are likely to lead to many pupils falling behind and some never fully catch up. The greatest problems appear to occur in those children who are already underachieving in literacy and numeracy and/or those with special educational needs, particularly where extended leave may interfere with statutory assessments and external examinations processes.
- 5.6 Visits to extended family members who live overseas can offer educational and cultural rewards for pupils. Such rewards can include enhancement of self-esteem and personal and cultural identity. Pupils' knowledge of world issues and skills in their home language can also be broadened and shared experiences can be beneficial to cohort groups across various curriculum areas on their return. School tries to draw on the experiences children have.
- 5.7 The timing of the holidays, Statutory Assessment Tests, children's progress and the child's attendance record are taken in to consideration when considering applications. Parents are advised by the Headteacher, that any absence in excess of the authorised period, may lead to investigation by the Education Welfare Service and in some cases could lead to the child's name being removed from the school roll. Parents are made aware that this could happen during the initial meetings with the Headteacher and panel of Governors and both school and the parent sign to say that this has been agreed and understood.

The timing of the trip should be considered. Parents should be encouraged to use existing school holidays for trips abroad and to add on the least possible number of days of term-time if more time is necessary for the trip. There are particular times during a pupil's school career where it is crucial to avoid disruption:

- During transition into schooling and between phases

- During test years (Key Stage Tests, GCSEs and other examinations) and in particular just before or during test periods.
- During the process of statutory assessment for Special Educational Needs.

The pupil's attendance record should be considered. Pupils who have already had a number of absences from school, whether for reasons of extended leave of absence or otherwise may be further disadvantaged by an additional period away from school.

The pupil's attainment levels should be considered. As described above, pupils who already have delays in their learning are found to fall behind still further and may not be able to catch up during the remainder of their school career.

- 5.8 In the event of a child going on an extended visit, the school may provide work for the child to take with them. This can only be revision work and in no way is a comparable substitute for a lesson. Once a lesson has been taught in school it is not repeated. It is the responsibility of the parent to see that the work is completed.
- 5.9 Where applications are not made in advance by parents/carers and pupils are absent without school's authorisation, then the absence, by definition is **unauthorised**. These cases should be referred to the Attendance and Safeguarding Team for the consideration of a Penalty Notice issue and subsequent legal action see Appendix 2. Such cases can also be deleted from the school roll subject to the deletion regulation as per point 3.5. 'Managing Requests for Leave of Absence for Holidays in Term Time' Rochdale Local Authority Guidance for School 2010
- 5.10 Governors trust that parents will work with the school to maximise the positive effects of extended visits abroad and to minimise the negative effects upon children's educational progress.

6 Long-term Absence

- 6.1 When children have an illness and they miss school for a significant amount of time, the school will do all it can to send work home so that the child can maintain their understanding where possible.
- 6.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, school will make every effort to contact support services so that arrangements can be made for home tuition.

7 Repeated Unauthorised Absences

- 7.1 The school contacts the parent or carer of any child who has an absence which school has not authorised. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent or carer is asked to come in to school to discuss the problem. Attendance surgeries are put on at regular intervals by the school Education Welfare Officer and the Learning Mentor. The School Health Practitioner can also be invited to attend to advise on health issues.
- 7.2 If the situation does not improve further action may well be taken in the form of a complete referral to the Education Welfare Service who ensure the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation. The Local Authority reserves the right to consider legal action against parents and carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility to send their child to school on a regular basis. Penalty notices, which incur fines for each carer / parent may be issued to address poor attendance at school, see Appendix 2.
- 7.3 School works hard to ensure pupils are not disadvantaged by poor attendance which does seriously affect the learning.

8 Rewards for good attendance

- 8.1 We reward certificates to all children who have an excellent attendance record. These are awarded at the end of every term and at the end of every year.
- 8.2 Weekly attendance trophies and certificates are awarded to the classes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 who achieve the highest attendance. A weekly draw is made and a prize given to a child in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 achieving 100% attendance. Early Bird certificates are awarded weekly to the classes in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 with the least amount of late arrivals. A class achieving both the attendance and the early bird award in the same week receive a book as a class prize.

9 Attendance targets

- 9.1 The school sets challenging attendance targets each year with the School Improvement Partner. They are challenging, yet realistic and are based on the previous year's figures. They are agreed by the Headteacher, Education Welfare Service and the Local Authority.

10 Review

- 10.1 The school keeps accurate attendance records at all times which are kept on file for a minimum period of 3 years.
- 10.2 Class teachers are responsible for correctly maintaining class registers, for monitoring attendance and for following absences in the appropriate way by alerting the Learning Mentor or the Headteacher as necessary.
- 10.3 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has responsibility for this policy and ensuring it is implemented. The Learning Mentor provides a termly attendance report to the school's Governing Body as part of the Headteacher's Report.

**The Attendance Policy has been discussed and agreed by
Governors at a Full Governing Body Meeting on
_____ 10.06.10 _____ .**

Chair of Governors:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Headteacher:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Suggested Review
Date Spring 2013