

UPPER WHARFEDALE PRIMARY FEDERATION

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

In the Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, we believe that attendance at school is important for children to make good progress and reach their full potential. Absence can lead to poor progress and poor attainment thereby preventing children from achieving their full potential.

By law every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that their child attends full-time education (section 7 of the Education Act 1996). The aim of this policy is to outline how we will:-

- Support all children to achieve their maximum attendance;
- Ensure the safety of all children by recording attendance and lateness;
- Work closely with parents and other agencies such as the Education Welfare Service to promote attendance.

School will promote and support children's attendance by:-

- Ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum that provides children with the best possible learning opportunities and experiences;
- Providing a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each child is valued and supported;
- Building and maintaining effective partnerships between the school and its parents, external support agencies and the wider community.
- Completing registers accurately at the start of each session.
- Daily monitoring children's attendance and reasons for absence.
- Regular monitoring by the Headteacher on attendance, punctuality and reasons for absence.
- Presenting certificates to children with termly and annual 100% attendance and children who have achieved 98% or above attendances in an academic year.

Children should support their own attendance by:

- Attending school regularly;
- Arriving on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day;
- Respecting themselves and others;
Informing a trusted adult if they feel that they are worried about anything or are being bullied;
- Being happy and encouraging others to feel happy.

Parents should support child attendance by:

- Encouraging their children to attend school regularly and arrive on time;
- Contacting the school office as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend and send a note to the teacher on return;
- Ensuring their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of the school dress code;
- Ensuring their child arrives in school on time well prepared for the school day with homework completed;
- Keeping health appointments out of school hours wherever possible.
- Not taking holidays during term-time.

PROCEDURES

Arrival at School

- a) Children should arrive at school at the times and in accordance with the procedures applicable in the individual schools.
- b) The school staff are responsible for the children from an agreed time onwards. Before that time, care of the children remains the responsibility of parents.
- c) Children travelling to school on the dedicated school bus or taxi will be supervised by school staff upon their arrival at school.
- d) A member of staff will welcome children in to school following the procedures applicable in the individual schools.
- e) If parents have an exceptionally early appointment and need the school's support, the school will do its best to make an arrangement with them.
- f) It is very important that staff have time to prepare for lessons so that children can enter the classroom and be on task immediately.

Registration

- a) The register is taken twice a day – at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- b) At registration, there are 3 basic categories of attendance or absence:-
 - i. Present – the child is in school or is taking part in an approved educational activity (AEA), e.g. an educational visit.
 - ii. Authorised absence – the child is absent from school for a permissible reason, e.g. illness, medical appointment.
 - iii. Unauthorised absence – the child is absent from school for a reason that has not been authorised, or when no reason has been given. This includes holidays in term-time, family “days out”.
- c) When morning registration starts, the school door will be closed. If a child arrives after the door is closed he/she will be marked in as Late (L code). The register closes 20 minutes later. If a child arrives after the register closes he/she will be marked in as an Unauthorised Absence, using the applicable code.
- d) It is very important that children are punctual and arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it also shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

Procedures for non-attendance and lateness

- a) Parents should inform the school office before 9.20am of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence. A letter from parents confirming the reason for absence is required on the child's return.
- b) If the parents do not make contact with the school by 9.20 am regarding a child's absence, the school will make contact by telephone to establish the child's safety.

Medical appointments and arriving and leaving school outside normal hours

- a) Parents should make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. Medical appointments will be recorded as “authorised absence” in the register.

- c) It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent outside the normal hours (e.g. due to medical appointments) are signed in or out from the office. The Absence Register in the office is used in the case of fire.
- d) If a child has a medical condition which affects their attendance, parents should provide the school with appropriate medical evidence

Parental Requests for Holidays during Term Time

- a) Families taking holidays during term time is a cause of absence which has been highlighted nationally as a disruptive factor in child's education.
- b) Schools are required to implement government regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time. The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.
- c) Parents who feel there are exceptional circumstances for their child being absent from school, must obtain the school's permission before making any arrangements for leave, otherwise the absence will be recorded as "unauthorised".
- d) Headteachers are not expected to class any term-time holiday as "exceptional", and hence there is a presumption that if a child is absent from school due to a holiday taken during term-time, it will be recorded as "unauthorised absence".
- e) The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':
 - Service personnel returning from active deployment
 - Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
 - When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice.
- f) No parent can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually by the school.
- g) A form (available from the school office or via the school website) requesting leave of absence should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and preferably at least 6 weeks before the first date of the period of leave being requested.
- h) Taking a child on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.
- i) The decision of the Headteacher is final.

Penalty Notices

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

- a) Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences. Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents, the size of the fine being the applicable rate at the time of issue.
- b) They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.
- c) Penalties can be used where the child's absence has not been authorised by the school.

MONITORING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

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 children and all members of the school community.

- a) Class teachers and school administrators will monitor children's attendance and absence.
- b) They will report any concerns about any absence (e.g. persistent absent, recurring patterns of absence, frequent lateness, on-going attendance which falls below 90%) to the Base Leader and Executive Headteacher.
- c) The Executive Headteacher will contact the child's parents to discuss the circumstances of the child's absences, and the school's concerns.
- d) When necessary, the Executive Headteacher may seek advice and guidance from appropriate personnel in the Local Authority.
- e) The school will submit termly attendance and absence returns through School Census.
- f) Termly and annual attendance and absence reports will be submitted by the Executive Headteacher to the Governing Board for its consideration.
- g) Each child's attendance and absence figures will be included in his/her annual reports to parents.

NOTES:-

- a) The word "parent" is used throughout this policy to include all adults with parental responsibility for a child. If a child is in the care of foster parents or the local authority, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.
- b) The success of this policy in promoting and enabling high rates of attendance will be monitored by the Executive Headteacher and the Governing Board, and will be amended when necessary in the light of experience.
- c) Formal policy reviews will take place every three years.

Policy agreed February 2019

Policy review due February 2022