ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed/Adopted:	November 2017
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Review Frequency:	Two years
Reviewed By:	S and C

CURBAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the DfE and Derbyshire County Council guidance and in consultation with school governors.

1.0 Rationale

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Curbar Primary School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their time with us. Children who miss out on education are at an immediate disadvantage relative to their peers and at a great cost to themselves and the community as a whole. By working together with families, we can keep absence at school to the lowest possible figure. This will ensure that children get the absolute most from their education at school. The young child, however, is dependent upon the adults in his/her life to get them to school regularly and on time. The focus in both Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is to establish good habits and work with parent/carers to ensure attendance and punctuality is consistently good. In Key Stage 2 we continue to work with parent/carers and start to develop 'self' responsibility in the children. The school operates within a framework of local schools, including the linked secondary school (Lady Manners) in encouraging and supporting good attendance and punctuality at school. We are, therefore, committed to a 'Cluster Schools' approach to attendance and punctuality and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

2.0 Aims

- Ensure that our school maintains good standards of work and behaviour in a positive, welcoming environment to ensure that our pupils wish to attend regularly
- Ensure that parents/carers understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Create an ethos in which good attendance is the norm
- Maintain an effective partnership between home and school, the Multi Agency Teams (MAT), police, social services and other agencies in addressing attendance issues
- Recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year
- Ensure all staff and governors understand the procedures and promote and monitor good attendance and punctuality with support from school leadership
- Ensure parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encourage them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance
- School target of at least 97% attendance during the year
- School target of 100% punctuality during the year

3.0 The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act of 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) To age, ability and aptitude and
(b) To any special education needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

4.0 The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

5.0 Expectations

5.1 What parents/carers and pupils can expect of the school and its governors:

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance and punctuality at school
- The encouragement and celebration of good attendance through certificates and prizes. Children will receive an attendance certificate each half term for 100% attendance and punctuality. There will be regular 'Early Bird' days to promote punctuality. Each child who has arrived on time will be rewarded with a raffle ticket and be entered into a prize draw in assembly. The class with the best weekly attendance will receive five minutes extra play time
- Efficient and accurate recordings of attendances and punctuality
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school and hasn't given valid reason for absence. The school will make every effort to contact parents before 11.00am by either telephone or parent mail to establish the whereabouts and safety of the pupil
- School will work with parents/carers to support attendance and punctuality
- Close liaison with the attendance team (Multi Agency Team) and other agencies to assist and support families where needed
- When a pupil's attendance falls below 95% without known cause, parents/carers will be contacted by the school's Senior Leadership Team for an informal discussion. If there is no improvement in attendance within two weeks, parents will be sent a letter saying that their child's attendance is of concern and support will be offered to improve attendance. It will also state that failure to attend school regularly and on time could result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act and Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003. If there continues to be no improvement parents/carers will be required to attend a meeting with the school SLT and MAT

5.2 What the school expects of the parents/carers:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time
- For parents/carers to inform the school of any reason that will prevent their children from attending or being on time. They should contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend or is late (by email at enquiries@curbar.derbyshire.sch.uk or telephone on 01433630266) and give a valid reason for absence or lateness before 9:00am
- Ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day. The school doors open at 8:50am for prompt registration at 9am. We recommend that the pupils goes into class no later than 8.55am. The school gate will be locked at 9am and only the main entrance will be available to enter school after this time
- Contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Inform the school of any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day
- Provide medical evidence for absences more than 4 days
- Where appointments are booked for say 11 a.m. pupils must attend school first
- If the appointment is for say 9:30 a.m. the pupil needs to return to school, where possible
- If a pupil leaves the school premises for any reason during the school day, parents/carers will need to sign the pupil out of school (together with signing back in if they return) in the register in the school office to comply with Health & Safety Regulations
- Failing to provide a reason for any absence will result in your child receiving an unauthorised mark on the register
- Ensure the continuity of all children's education, taking holidays during the school holiday period is expected. Only in exceptional circumstances will request of leave in term time be granted
- Provide the school with up to date contact and emergency contact details
- Collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. The school day ends at 3:10pm (KS1) and 3.30pm (KS2) and children should be collected on time by an authorised adult. Please inform the

school if your child is to be collected by someone else as we cannot let the child leave the premises without prior authorisation from a parent/carer

- If for any reason you are unable to collect your child on time you should contact the school office so that staff can be informed. If children are consistently picked up late, staff will record this and it will be reviewed by the safeguarding and inclusion team
- Responding to Lateness (Punctuality): When pupils are late for school they are late for learning. Late arriving pupils also can disrupt lessons and that can cause embarrassment that can also encourage future absence. Pupils arriving after morning (9am) or afternoon (1pm) registration will report to the school office, where the late records will be completed with the time and reason for the lateness as well as a signature from the parent/carer (if parent/carer is not present a phone call will be made about the lateness). After three recordings of lateness within a half term, a member of the SLT will request an informal discussion with the parent/carer. After five recordings of lateness within a half term, parents/carers will be requested to attend a meeting in school

5.3 What the school expects of the pupils:

- To attend regularly and punctually
- To arrive by 8.55am, appropriately prepared for the day e.g. coat, PE kit, musical instrument, homework etc.
- To be in the class and be ready for registration and learning by 9am
- To report to the office when late (after 9am) with parent/carer to be signed in
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school or from being on time

6.0 Understanding Different Types of Absence

Each day counts for two (am/pm) marks of attendance or absence. Only school can authorise absence as authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required to ensure a pupil's attendance is correctly categorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason. For example: illness and/or medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in the school day, emergencies or other unavoidable reasons. The fact that a parent/carer has sent a note or other notification (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a child's absence does not mean that the absence is automatically coded as authorised. If your child has a medical appointment within the school day medical evidence may be required e.g. appointment letter/ card or confirmation of appointment on a mobile phone.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been given by the Headteacher. This type of absence can lead to a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution. This includes:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absence that has never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive in school too late to receive their mark (after 9.30am)
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, extended leave and holidays during term time

Please remember it is the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure the attendance and punctuality of a child. Any child may be off school because they are ill; sometimes they can be

reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please approach your child's class teacher who will look at ways of supporting regular attendance at school. When necessary we will engage the support of other agencies such as the Multi Agency Team (M.A.T.)

6.1 Term time absence:

Legally there is no entitlement for parents to take their child on holiday or on extended leave during term time.

Updated guidance from the local authority states:-

The 2013 Pupil Registration Regulations states that Headteachers are still required to determine whether a request for absence is authorised on the grounds of exceptional circumstances or not. Each request should be taken on its own merits and based on the information provided by the parent. Head teachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Where a child is absent with no reason provided and the Headteacher has grounds to believe that the child is on holiday, the Headteacher may wish to challenge this absence and apply for a penalty notice to be issued. As part of the decision making process Headteachers are required to consider the following:

- The information provided on the parental application, particularly who is taking the child on holiday.
- Who should the penalty notice be issued against? (This should take into consideration parental responsibility in relation to education law balanced against the dynamics and makeup of the family).
- Is this decision consistent with the school's policy?
- Is this decision fair?

In April, 2017 a Supreme Court judgement determined that, 'in section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, "regularly" (to attend regularly) means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

If a child has unauthorised absence of three or more consecutive days then the school will pass this information to the Local Authority who will respond in accordance with the current legislation. This could lead to a fixed penalty notice. This is regardless of a child's 'wider school attendance'. Please note that it is also at the discretion of the Headteacher to decide whether **any period** of unauthorised absence (even if it less than 3 consecutive days) could result in a fixed penalty notice being issued e.g. a child who is regularly absent on a Friday and/or Monday; at the end or beginning of a half term. This approach is consistent with Lady Manners School and all of its primary cluster schools.

6.2 Request for leave of absence

Head teachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence to pupils in *exceptional circumstances.* Department for Education guidelines are clear that taking term-time holidays or extended leave will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

All applications for leave of absence should be made as far in advance as possible, to allow sufficient time for the request to be considered. The request must be made in writing (letter or email) by the parent/carer using the 'Leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances' form that can be

collected from the school office. One form per child per request should be completed. . In making a decision the Headteacher, together with the Governing Body, will consider the circumstances of each application individually. A response will be made in writing once a decision has been made.

If a leave of absence request is declined by the school, yet parents or carers still remove their child for a period of 3 or more consecutive days, then this would be classed as unauthorised absence for which a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution could be pursued.

Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave' for a period of 3 or more consecutive days may be liable for a fixed penalty notice and/or prosecution.

7.0 Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Failing to attend this school on a regular basis must be considered as a safeguarding matter.

8.0 Children Missing from Education

The school leadership and administration team are nominated to liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

9.0 Children Looked After

The nominated Looked After Children member of school staff liaises with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Looked After Team. Looked After Children will be set up as a discrete attendance group on the school monitoring system and individual attendance checked each half term.

10.0 Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The Headteacher, or staff delegated by him / her will be responsible for analysis of attendance data and for the administration of procedures deemed necessary following any unusual trends in attendance. If possible data should be used in a positive way to help form class or whole school targets. Wherever possible positive action will be taken by the school to improve a pupil's attendance and investigate and address any underlying cause of problems before considering whether to get support from external agencies or make a referral to the Local Authority.