



*WE CARE about Excellence*

# *Attendance Policy*

*WE CARE about each other, learning and our school*



## **School Statement**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

Attenborough School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from MOD Schools (DCYP).

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning. A child whose attendance drops below 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
  - Create a culture in our school in which excellent attendance and punctuality are celebrated and seen to be valued by all.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to pupils in the Foundation Stage 2 in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff, BFSWS and other agencies so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming culture in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in all pupils a sense of taking responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance. We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **Definition of Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. The Headteacher may authorise known advance absences up to a maximum of **10 school days**, and will deal with every case on its merits. When a parent requests term time absence which **exceeds 10 school days**, Garrison Welfare will be asked to support the request in writing addressed to the Headteacher. This will also be the case if attendance stands on the date of the request below the 90% threshold.

As a school, we do not authorise absence for holidays during term time. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority, consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Post-Operative Tour Leave (POTL) also entitles parents to a further 10 days of authorised absence to recognise the importance of re-establishing the family unit after prolonged active duty. All requests for term time exceptional leave absence are stored by school to monitor the total number of approved days within any given academic year.

### **Definition of Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### **Procedures to promote good levels of attendance and punctuality**

Our school will undertake to engage in the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Welfare support and if necessary BFSWS any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to DCYP when requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher
- Reporting on attendance in all Transition and End of Year Pupil Reports.
- Celebrate good collective and individual attendance in weekly Achievement Assemblies and through our fortnightly school newsletter.
- Robustly monitor and challenge any attendance which falls under the 90% threshold.

**Parents Parents/Carers are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office by 0915hrs on the first morning of any given absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

**Registration Procedures**

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.

## **Lateness**

Any pupil who comes into school after the register has been taken will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late will have the absence recorded as a medical absence. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the issue. If lateness persists they will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on Integris. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

## **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they may be away from school for a significant period, the school will attempt to provide suitable learning material to be completed at home (if appropriate), to support children keeping up with their learning. Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school may write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 95%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their learning journey. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via a telephone call or a letter which is sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support given by the school with the aim to improve attendance in a stated improvement period. Where a child's attendance record does not improve during the period of time stated, then the school may consider making a referral to Welfare Service to attempt to address the poor attendance.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Our administrative team have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the INTEGRIS attendance software. On a weekly basis, the Headteacher will analyse collective and class attendance and take appropriate actions if required in line with this policy statement. Individual attendance is monitored daily by class teachers who should report any concerns directly to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will conduct half-termly individual attendance analysis and take appropriate action should attendance fall below the 90% threshold. This may be a phone call or letter sent to parents or meetings arranged in school to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Reviewed October 2019

To be reviewed in line with DCYP directives and guidance