



NINE ACRES COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs E. Dyer BA Hons QTS, NPQH

Compassion

Responsibility

Justice

Courage

Integrity

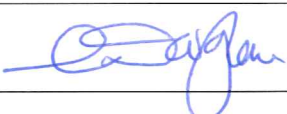
Respect

Hope

Equality

Attendance policy

Nine Acres Primary School

Approved By:	
Approval Date:	09.02.2017
Review Frequency:	3 Yearly
Next Review Due:	FEB 2020

Nine Acres Attendance Policy

Aims and Objectives

Attendance has long been recognised as being fundamental to attainment. "High rates of attendance are closely related to success in public examinations. In schools with unsatisfactory or poor results, a strong correlation with low attendance rates is discernible" (OFSTED). It has been shown that for every 5% of absence a child or young person has, s/he will drop one grade at GCSE. Therefore a child who is classed as a persistent absentee (i.e. absent for more than 15% of school days) will be at significant risk of falling behind with their studies and of not achieving the 5 A*- C grades including English and Mathematics threshold at GCSE.

Regular attendance and punctuality are top priorities with staff and Governors at Nine Acres.

We aim, within the next year, to achieve the Government's target of 96% punctual attendance for all pupils. We realise that for our pupils to achieve a good standard of academic and social success in school they need to attend school on a regular basis. We also understand that we need to work closely with Nine Acres families and outside support agencies in order that our policy is successful.

The Law

Schools have a statutory duty under Section 444 Education Act 1996 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This can only be fulfilled through effective registration systems and active, whole school monitoring of pupil absence. Only schools can authorise the absence of a registered child.

Refer to Appendix A

Roles

Families of children at Nine Acres Primary School should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time for 8.45 am, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- Ensure that their children attend every day unless they are unwell or have another authorised absence
- Ensure that the school is notified if their child is absent or is about to be absent from school and give reasons for this. This should be done on the morning of first day of absence before 10am and every day thereafter.
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours where possible
- Not take term time holidays
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues that may lead to non-attendance

The role of all school staff and governors:

- Make every effort to maximise attendance rates
- Support parents in ensuring regular and punctual attendance of pupils and respond to any issue that may lead to non-attendance
- Be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed
- Make it clear to parents that it is the school - not the parent - that authorises an absence
- Consider attendance and punctuality from a whole school perspective. The link between attendance and achievement will be monitored on a weekly basis.
- Publish information relating to levels of absence, both authorised and unauthorised
- To report any concerns regarding female genital mutilation to police and social care in line with the school's mandatory duty
- To prevent radicalisation - protecting children from radicalisation forms part of the school's safeguarding policy.
- To work closely with the education welfare officer in order to address persistent attendance issues and lateness. We will take advice from the education welfare service and arrange appropriate meetings with parents and/or carers in order to try and resolve any issues.

The role of the Class Teacher:

- Registers are completed and returned to the office punctually each morning and sent to the school office.
- To know which pupils have poor attendance and to look for any trends in non-attendance.
- To liaise with the Deputy Head Teacher when there are concerns regarding attendance of pupils.
- Certificates are given out on a Friday for weekly 100% attendance.
- The weekly attendance percentage is displayed on the class room door.
- To liaise with families in the playground in order to offer additional support if needed or signpost parents to our family support worker.
- Include in each pupil's annual report to his/her parents/carers information relating to the number of absences that the pupil has accrued during that school year. The school may also comment on levels of authorised absence where these are considered to be a cause for concern
- To discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with families at consultation meetings where appropriate.
- Reward good attendance - see below

The role of the Attendance Officer

- Maintain registers, taken twice each day - All registers are electronically recorded and are available for the Education Welfare Officer and for use in Child Protection cases.
- To contact all families who fail to notify the school of their child's absence on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.
- A record is kept of each pupil who arrives late and the reason noted.
- Will notify the EWO/Head Teacher of any concerns.
- To liaise closely with the school Education Welfare Officer who visits regularly.

- To contact EWO by telephone where there are significant on-going concerns.
- To give fortnightly attendance data to the Deputy Head teacher for monitoring purposes.
- To notify the safeguarding team of absences of vulnerable pupils on a daily basis
- To provide half termly attendance lists to all class teachers for monitoring purposes.
- To produce weekly class certificates for celebration of attendance in the whole school assembly
- To send out letters each term to families whose children's attendance falls below 95%.
- Proforma letters are sent to families whose child has had an unauthorised absence or persistent lateness.
- record and monitor lateness
- All significant absences are followed up by either the Child and Family Worker or the Education Welfare Officer either by letter or visit.
- complete any attendance data required by the Local Authority
- reward good attendance - see below

The role of the Governing Body

- The policy is reviewed annually.
- Attendance and Punctuality is a school priority
- Appoint an Attendance Lead who will monitor attendance regularly in the school.

The role of the head teacher

- Inform families at school induction meetings of the importance of regular punctual attendance.
- Inform families in the school prospectus of the need to attend regularly and of the requirement to contact the school by letter in the case of previously known absences and by telephoning by 10am before the start of school for other absences.
- Ensure that school procedures follow local authority guidance and policies.
- Reward good attendance - see below
- Ensure that all personnel are trained on Safeguarding, the Prevent Strategy and other relevant training to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.

The Responsibilities of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service works in close partnership with Nine Acres Primary School. We have an allocated Education Welfare Officer who visits the school on a fortnightly basis.

When the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school he/she will:

- identify pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties; this will include the regular examination of attendance registers
- agree on a focused, time-limited action that needs to be taken by the school and/or the Education Welfare Service (before accepting a referral the school will have first undertaken some preliminary work themselves)

Refer to Appendix B

Absence Procedures

Authorised Absence

Absence will be treated as authorised if:

- the pupil is ill (medical evidence required for 4 days or more) or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause

- the pupil is attending a medical/dental appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours
- the absence occurs on a day set aside for religious observance; if extended days are taken these will be unauthorised and liaison may be necessary with the Education Welfare officer.
- the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance or sporting activity which are not deemed detrimental to the child's education
- the pupil has been temporarily excluded from school

Please see appendix C for more guidance

The School does not grant leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will be treated as unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming from the parent
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is absent for an unexceptional special occasion
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday

The Policy on Leave

'Leave' in relation to a school means leave granted by any person authorised to do so (the Head Teacher or Governing Body).

The Head Teacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance by completing a **Request for Leave of Absence During Term Time** form and where s/he is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. Requests will not be granted for the purposes of a holiday.

Leave of absence will be granted sparingly if there are special considerations and will not normally be granted for more than 3 days per school year for any pupil.

Refer to Appendix C

Sanctions for an Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5-16) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (The parent can choose to educate their child at home). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, the LA can apply for a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

The Educational Welfare Service on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council has the power to take legal action against parents / carers either in the Magistrates Court or the Family Proceedings Court if their children do not attend school regularly and all interventions to improve attendance have been unsuccessful. In addition under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 EWS can impose Fixed Penalty Notices and Parenting Orders. Parenting Contracts are recommended as a means of supporting parents and avoiding the need for legal action. (This is pending a decision around holidays during term time under the supreme court - February 2017).

Child Missing from Education

Where a child is not attending school and no contact has been made with parent or where a school believes the child may have moved and has not received notification from a parent a school must act immediately to discover the child's whereabouts and ascertain they are safe. Head Teachers and agencies involved with the school or Page | 12 young person must make every effort to gain information at the earliest opportunity. Factors in assessing risk are length of absence, level of concern and level of perceived risk to the pupil. Even without specific concerns the school **MUST** contact the Education Welfare Service (EWS) if a child's whereabouts are not known. EWS will make further contacts with other agencies such as Social Care, Local Housing Offices and Education Welfare Offices in possible destination location. It may be appropriate for agencies to approach possible sources of information such as relatives or neighbours. In cases where concern is specific, action to gain information and alert agencies and/or police must be swift in order to protect vulnerable parties.

Punctuality

We insist on punctuality at school as we want to support the development of good timekeeping habits. Persistent lateness does not constitute full school attendance (Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996). The school day begins at 8:45am and pupils are required to be in school by then. The morning Register is closed at 9am. Children arriving after the opening of the register up to and including the 30th minute will be marked as being 'late' and those arriving after the 31st minute will receive an unauthorised absence. All pupils arriving late have to sign in.

Both the School and the EWO monitor punctuality. The EWO may undertake a 'late sweep' with agreement of the Head Teacher.

If there is persistent lateness and there is no reasonable reason or explanation from parents, the Deputy Head Teacher and the Family support Worker will carry out home visits in order to get some clarification from parents and/or carers. If the child is well and there are no reasons why they should not be in school, then the Deputy Head Teacher and the family support worker will escort the pupil back to school so that they can access the learning they should be having. This will be reported to the education welfare officer.

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Consideration for Late Arrivals

- Adverse weather and/or travel conditions
- Delay by a school bus/local authority

This policy should be read in conjunction with '**Keeping children safe in education, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges July 2016**' and **all the school's safeguarding policies and procedures**

Appendix A

Education Act 1996, Section 444 as amended by Section 82 and 109 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006

444 Offence: failure to secure regular school attendance of registered pupil

(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.

(1a) If in the circumstance mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause the child to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence.

(1b) It is a defence for the person charged with an offence under subsection (1a) to prove that there was a reasonable justification for their failure to cause the child to attend regularly at school

(2) Subsections (2a) to (6) below apply in proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of a child who is not a boarder at the school at which they are a registered pupil.

(2a) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of the absence from the school at any time if the parent/carer proves that at that time the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

(3) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of their absence from the school

(a) with leave, or

(b) any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belongs.

Appendix B

Role of the Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to enforce regular attendance of registered pupils at school, which is carried out by the EWS working with schools. Data on attendance is collected termly by the Research and Data Team and it is the responsibility of the EWS to audit pupils who fall below target levels.

The work of the service can be broadly divided into three categories:

Strategic Policy

- Analysing Local authority data and identifying trends and areas of action and need.
- Developing policy initiatives and ensuring co-ordination and consistency across the borough
- Liaising with DfES and other external bodies to ensure that government initiatives and best practice exemplars are communicated to schools.
- Developing a strategic role that encourages a consistent approach between nursery, primary and secondary levels.

School Action

- Working closely with schools to analyse school level data and trends.
- Devising action plans with Heads to meet the specific needs of individual schools by, for example contributing to school assemblies, attending parents' evenings and undertaking late gates.
- Monitoring action taken by schools to improve attendance and reviewing school targets at half termly intervals.
- Ensuring effective and regular liaison between the EWS, school management teams and other key agencies or organisations.

Direct Intervention with Pupils and /or Parents and Carers

Providing direct intervention with pupils who fall below target levels of attendance and devising strategies to improve their attendance in partnership with schools.

Ensuring that Local Authority and school policies on attendance are implemented appropriately in each individual case including the use of legal action against parents where they are failing to fulfil their child's regular school attendance.

Working closely with schools at transition stages to ensure that identified vulnerable children are provided with all possible support to reduce the likelihood of increased non-attendance, where necessary working and liaising with partner agencies.

Appendix C

Exceptional Circumstances and Special Considerations for Leave

- The Head Teacher cannot forego his/her discretionary powers, however the following will be considered for leave:
- The death of a close family member.
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the L.A. The EWS will advise schools on individual circumstances.
- Time off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, which is subject to a licence being issued by EWS.
- Religious observance subject to a maximum number of 3 days. Pilgrimages (for example, Lourdes, Mecca, Rome or Jerusalem) are not religious observance that require absence during school term time.

Specific Circumstances not Included on the List

- Illness of a relative-leave will not be granted for the illness of a relative unless the Head Teacher is convinced that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Prison visits - most prison visits can be achieved during weekends and holidays, but there may be exceptions when for example a parent is held in a prison a long way from home and when a head believes there is a justification to grant a day's leave.
- Weddings of parents and siblings- If the Head Teacher is convinced that there is a persuasive reason as to why a wedding cannot be held out of school time 1 day's leave will be granted.

Where the Head Teacher is exercising discretion, a maximum number of 3 days is permitted.

Appendix D

Rewards & Incentives for Punctuality & Regular Attendance

1. Weekly recognition - during assembly, all those classes who have good attendance have their attendance percentage read out and good attendance is rewarded with a certificate.
2. Attendance Posters are displayed on classroom doors.
3. Children who achieve 100% receive a certificate in a special assembly.
4. Children who arrive on time will receive an on-time stamp. If the child collects ten stamps, they will be entered into a prize draw for the end of the half term, the more stamps collected the increased chance of having lots of entries into the prize draw.
5. Those children that are never late for school will be entered into a grand prize draw at the end of the school year to win a prize for their family. This could include a whole family day out!