PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Longford Park School

Prepared: February 2006
Reviewed: December 2014, January 2017
Approved by Governing Body: _____________________

Author: Andrew Taylor
Next Review: July 2020
Date: __________
Introduction
The Governors, Headteacher and Staff are keen to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible in order that they fulfil their potential. To this purpose, parents will be informed of the school policy and encouraged to understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

The school uses the SIMS Attendance register, this system assists the monitoring of attendance and it stores securely, admission data, registration data and contact details for all pupils on roll. Our parents/carers are encouraged to keep the school informed of any changes to contact details and information is checked routinely by our administrational staff.

The school has a duty of care to ensure all children are safe and receive suitable education, we endeavour to work with the local authority, parents, multi-agencies and all stakeholders, ensuring effective information sharing so all children attain educational provision. The school recognises that there are significant risks associated for those children missing from education. All absences are monitored and parents/carers are supported so pupils can return to school quickly. During times of transition Longford Park School will take all reasonable steps to establish what future provision is in place and fully report to the Local Authority. For any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or if there are any other concerns the school would report directly to the Local Authority and immediately implement its Safeguarding Procedures.

Philosophy

“Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in some pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.”

(Source: School attendance policy and practice on categorisation of absence DfEE 1994)

Longford Park School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education good attendance is crucial. As a school we will organise and do anything we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

It is the policy of the School to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our School will actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our School will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil’s attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve the problem as soon as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.
Rationale
To recognise:-
- All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place and should be used for any absence concerns.
- The support that is available to Parents/Carers to maximise their child's attendance.
- Regular and punctual school attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the opportunities which this school offers them.
- That the opportunity to access all areas of the curriculum is an important factor in the continuity and progression of the learning process.
- Children who develop poor patterns of attendance and punctuality at Primary school tend to continue in this pattern throughout their school life and beyond
- Poor attendance and punctuality can have detrimental effects on social development.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)
At Longford Park School, we class a pupil as a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s education and we need parent’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may refer the child to an Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office.

OUR DUTY OF CARE

Pupils who are absent without permission for 10 days or more and Persistent absentees/irregular attenders
The proprietor of every school should send their local authority a return at the end of each half-term giving the full name and address of every registered pupil of compulsory school age who –

(a) fails to attend the school regularly; or

(b) has been absent from the school, where the absence has not been treated as authorised in accordance with regulation 6(2), for a continuous period of not less than ten school days, and specifying the cause of absence if known to the proprietor.

Schools should follow safeguarding procedures for any pupil whose absence is a cause for concern and can contact the MARAT Education Officer for advice.
Holidays
Legislation states clearly that Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time. The Headteacher will decide whether or not an absence should be authorised. The Headteacher will only authorise absence in term time when there are exceptional reasons for a child to miss school.

Absence in term time will not usually be authorised under the following circumstances:
- during national or school tests or examinations;
- when a child’s attendance is below 90%, or lower than their previously agreed individual target;
- for more than 10 days during term-time in any school year.

Absence in term time will only be authorised if parents/carers make a request to the school in advance on the appropriate form and can show that there are exceptional circumstances why the absence has to be during term time. The cost, convenience or availability, of a particular holiday will not be taken into consideration.

Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the Headteacher but will not exceed 2 days in any school year.

Parents/carers who repeatedly take their children out of school without permission will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer linked to the school.
Absence Procedures

PARENTS
If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.30. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.
- Or if contact cannot be made via phone, a letter explaining the absence should be received from the child on the day of their return to school

SCHOOL
If a child is absent we will:

- All absences will be noted initially in the school register by the class teacher and formally entered onto the SIMS system by the administrative staff.
- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Should no such reason be received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Invite parents to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90% or if on-going concerns persist.

School registers will be inspected regularly by the Headteacher and office staff and parents contacted in the event of:

a) unauthorised absence
b) frequent short absences, particularly where a pattern emerges; e.g. every Friday
c) persistent lateness.

- Contact will be made by:

a) a letter sent by the office informing parents of the school’s concern
b) a letter or telephone call inviting parents to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the problem.
c) reference to the school Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school regularly.

A record of all concerns, correspondence and meetings will be kept in the pupil files.

A record of attendance can be accessed for each child from the SIMS Attendance Module.
LEGAL FRAMEWORK
The Education Act 1996, Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause to receive efficient full time education suitable-

(a) to his age, ability, and aptitude, and

(b) to any special needs he may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

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

The 1995 Education (pupil registration) Regulations (Statutory instrument number 2089) states:
All schools (except for independent boarding schools) must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.

We will encourage attendance in the following ways:

- By accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- By making the school environment as welcoming as possible.
- By promoting positive staff relations with pupils at all times.
- By supporting pupils positively during extra-curricular activities (breaks and lunch).
- By expecting good attendance.
- By keeping good records of attendance.
- By providing certificates for pupils with high levels of attendance, maintenance of high attendance, and improvements in attendance.

policy has been created using the relevant guidelines of: -

DfE, Keeping Children Safe In Education Sept 2016

HM Government, March 2015 Working together to safeguard children