

## WEST TYNE FEDERATION

### Attendance & Truancy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
June 2015	June 2017	J Reay	

Our Vision..... “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much” Helen Keller Our Mission.....

Our mission is founded on Christian beliefs and values to serve our local communities and wider community through providing the best possible education in the West Tyne Federation.

Our schools are committed to the personal development of all involved and aim to provide life- long learning.

We aim to provide extended facilities in our four schools in order to support each child on their learning journey.

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)

## **WEST TYNE FEDERATION**

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel pupils are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a pupil only in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will take into account the child's attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that parents face by taking holidays in school holiday time.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

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We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

### **Aims**

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

### **Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure**

### **Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- comply with pupil registration regulations;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- set the attendance targets for the year;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress towards these targets;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in the development, approval, implementation and review of this policy;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- nominated a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and the First Day Contact Supervisor and to report back to the Governing Body;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

## Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- work with the School Council to develop this policy;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the First Day Contact Supervisor by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- send to parents at the end of each half term a detailed attendance report on their child;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- attend termly meetings with the EWO;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with parents if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance awards to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- improve teaching in order to improve pupil engagement;
- work closely with the link governor and First Day Contact Supervisor;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
  - monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data

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- achieving results above the national average
- looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

### **Role of the School Office Staff**

The office personnel are responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Head informed of attendance figures and trends;
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's truancy;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- compiling attendance data reports for the Head, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date

### **Role of the First Day Contact Supervisor**

The First Day Contact Supervisor is responsible for:

- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m.;
- sending a letter if no contact is made;
- continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- informing the Head of trends in absence

### **Role of the Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service will:

- appoint education welfare officers (EWO) who will promote good attendance in schools;
- establish effective working relationships with schools;

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- ensure pupils attend school regularly;
- investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance;
- provide support and counselling for children and their families;
- work with disaffected pupils;
- work with pupils who may be excluded;
- find alternative educational provision for excluded pupils;
- support schools at Common Assessment Framework meetings;
- undertake truancy watch patrols with the local police.

### **Role of School Personnel**

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations

### **Role of the Nominated Governor**

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Headteacher and the coordinator;
- ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- attend training related to this policy;
- report to the Governing Body every term;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

## Role of Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- complying with this policy;
- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- informing the school on the first day of absence;
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collecting their children on time
- taking part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- not taking holidays in term time;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

## Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities

## Role of the School Council

The School Council will be involved in:

- determining this policy with the Governing Body;

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- discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
- organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
- reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body

### **Role of Pupils**

Pupils are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- arriving at school on time;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- accepting sanctions if they are caught playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys

### **Dealing with Trends in Attendance**

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Headteacher and EWO to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then the EWO will take the appropriate action.

### **Dealing with Lateness**

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- the Head of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

## Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- a programme of monitoring and support

The Police must be informed immediately if a pupil leaves school without prior permission.

## Absence

**Holidays during term time** – parents are encouraged to take a family holiday not in term time. Leave of absence only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission to take their child on holiday.

**Religious Observance** – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

## Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events

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- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main school entrance

### Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
  - the importance of good attendance and punctuality
  - all aspects of this policy
  - the use and understanding of attendance codes
  - authorised and unauthorised attendance
  - looking at trends and patterns
  - bullying
  - the needs of vulnerable groups
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

### Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

### Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy


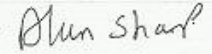
The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

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A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement. (See Policy Evaluation)

### Linked Policies

▪ Behaviour	▪ Home School Agreement
▪ Inclusion	▪ Anti-bullying
▪ Troubled and Vulnerable Children	▪ Outside Agencies

<b>Headteacher:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	1.6.15
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	1.6.15