

Lewes District Schools' Joint Attendance Policy

*Priory School, Rodmell CE Primary,
South Malling CE Primary, Southover CE Primary,
St. Pancras RC Primary,
Wallands Primary, Western Road Primary*

November 2017

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy has been agreed by all the schools in the Lewes District and reflects the vision and aims of those schools:

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority.

The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Reporting an absence

Parents are requested to report the reason for a child's absence by telephoning the school office **before 8.45am** and by sending a note to the teacher on the first day of the child's return.

If a child has not arrived at school by 9.30am the administrative assistant (or school secretary) will contact the child's parent/carer. Should contact not be made with the parent/carer by 10.30am the administrative assistant will endeavour to ring the emergency telephone numbers on the child's record card.

An alphabetical list of parents' addresses and telephone numbers has been compiled in order to enable the school to contact parents at home or work in an emergency. Parents should ensure that the school is kept informed of any changes.

Lateness

Pupils arriving late after the close of the register (after 8.55am) must report to the school office to be registered. A reason for late arrival must be given to the office which will be logged for reference.

Request for removal from learning

Parents requesting removal from learning for either unavoidable or exceptional reasons should complete an absence request form available from the school office or information stand and return to school at least 10 days before the requested absence date.

The outcome of this request will be notified to parents within 5 days of application.

The school will follow ESCC's Code of Conduct (Sept 2016). This may result in a request from the school to East Sussex to issue penalties to parents for periods of unauthorised absence.

Exceptional or unavoidable circumstances do not include:

- the availability of cheap holidays;
- an absence or holiday paid for, or booked, by someone else
- an overlap with beginning/end of term.
- a mix-up in term dates
- birthdays, relatives visiting, trips to festivals (this list is not exhaustive)

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- 96% attendance for all children

Persons responsible for attendance matters:

Head teacher: Debbie Collis
School Secretary: Maddy Corn
Receptionist : Lisa Joseph

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. (September 2017)

Review date: September 2018 (or earlier if necessary)