



## PORTFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date	Review Date	Co-ordinator
September 2018	September 2019	Vikki Pegg

### Introduction

We are a successful primary school and your child plays their part in making it so. We create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they are punctual and attend school regularly, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

This policy is a guide to attendance matters and sets out how we will endeavour to achieve improvements in attendance working in partnership with our parents.

### The importance of regular attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. A pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and may therefore affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and can result in prosecution.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March. If they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August, they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31st December. We promote and expect that all children in Early Years attend at or above our 96% target in order to set the standard for years to come.

### Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents, pupils and the school. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you annually on how your child is performing in school and raise concerns at parental consultation meetings where attendance and punctuality is affecting attainment and progress
- send parents a series of warning letters where attendance is causing a concern
- celebrate good class attendance in our Portfields' Stars assemblies
- celebrate good individual attendance with certificates at the end of the academic year

## Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- contact school by 8.50am on each day of absence (01908 616060)
- if you do not inform the school of your child's absence, we will attempt to contact you by phone. In line with our safeguarding responsibilities, in the event that we are unable to reach you, we may carry out a home visit and / or contact the Police.

## Holidays in term time

Headteachers may ***not*** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you feel that you have 'exceptional circumstances' then a written submission must be made to the Headteacher (Leave of Absence request form).

## Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school with a good reason.

Examples of authorised absences include:

- illness
- medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time
- educational appointments off-site e.g. attending examinations
- emergencies or other unavoidable incidents.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unreasonably
- truancy
- absences which have not been properly explained
- extended visits to see family without exceptional circumstances
- looking after others
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable 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 usually makes things worse. As a school, we have a number of strategies to support children and families who may be experiencing problems of this nature.

## School targets and attendance trends

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The current target is to achieve a whole school percentage higher than 97.0% (in line with national average).

The school uses the following scale to judge attendance:

97 – 100%	very good
90 – 96%	good but with room for improvement
86 – 90%	poor (risk of persistent absenteeism)
85% or less	very poor (persistent absenteeism)

If a parent/carer wishes to know the current attendance percentage of their child/ren, the school office will be able to provide this information.

## Risk of Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes 'at risk of Persistent Absence' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason** (attendance less than 90%). Absence at this level is detrimental to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. You will be informed by letter if your child's absence is a particular cause for concern and we will then monitor your child's attendance using Flowchart Number 2 (Appendix B).

### EXAMPLE - Children with an attendance percentage of 90%

Children who have attendance figures of 90% are missing approximately half a day each week. This equates to 19 full days (nearly four weeks) each school year. If this pattern continues through a child's time at primary school, this equates to a total of 28 weeks lost (from EYFS to Year 6). This is only 10 weeks short of a full year missed from their education before they reach secondary school.

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason (attendance less than 85%). Absence at this level is considerably detrimental to any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absenteeism level is given priority and you will be informed of this via the school's warning letters. We will then monitor your child's attendance using Flowchart Number 3 (Appendix C). The school will refer parents/carers to the Local Authority where persistent absenteeism is not eradicated (including holidays taken in term time). In such cases, the Local Authority can fine parents/carers by issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). In extreme circumstances, the Local Authority can instigate court proceedings where there is evidence of persistent absence from school.

A Fixed Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 in the first instance rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days and can be issued for 'late after the register closes' and 'unauthorised' absences. Court Prosecution carries a fine of up to £2500 and 3 months in prison.

## EXAMPLE - Children with an attendance percentage of 80%

Children who have attendance figures of 80% are missing a full day each week. This equates to 38 full days (nearly eight weeks) each school year. If this pattern continues through a child's time at primary school, this equates to a total of 56 weeks lost (from EYFS to Year 6. This is one and a half years missed from their education before they reach secondary school.

## Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child is late at the start of the morning or afternoon session they will miss valuable time with their class teacher and important information as well as part of a lesson. Pupils who arrive late often disrupt lessons for other children. The school day begins promptly at 8.50am when morning registration takes place. Any child arriving after this time must report to reception and will be recorded as late ('L' code used in the register). If your child arrives after 9.00am they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site ('U' code used), but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration takes place at 12.45pm for EYFS / Key Stage 1 and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2.

In accordance with Local Authority regulations, we will monitor any children who are persistently late for school using Flowchart Number 1 (Appendix A). This will mean that you face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

## Taking a child off the school register

If we are unable to establish the reason for absence or make contact with parents/carers, we will take a child off the school register following 20 consecutive days of unauthorised absence. You will be informed in writing before the removal takes place. Any child removed from the register in this way will be classed as a 'missing child'. The Local Authority will be informed immediately when we suspect a child is missing.