

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Homepage.aspx>

- Promote good attendance and reduce absences
- Ensure pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school to attend regularly
- All pupils to be punctual to school their lessons

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent from school the absence has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. 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 good reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does 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/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties with attendance should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school or the parent/carer may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. The Education welfare department are independent from the school and they will therefore give impartial advice.

They may try to resolve the situation with the voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed. These Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute 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. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Procedures

Registration times are:

9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. each day that the school is open. Class registers are closed at 9.15 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. Pupils arriving between 9.00 and 9.15 a.m. will be registered as an unauthorised later (L). Pupils arriving after 9.15 will be registered as an unauthorised late (U). All pupils who are later for any reason must sign in, in the school office.

Pupils present will be denoted by an oblique stroke (/). Absence will be denoted by a circle in red ink. Authorised absence will be recorded by the addition of the appropriate absence code for example, I (ill), H (holiday) or M (medical) in black or blue ink inside the red circle. Unauthorised absences will be denoted by an empty red circle.

For an absence to be authorised, parents are expected to notify the school of the reason. This may be retrospective. All notes and leave of absence forms to the school office and will be retained until the end of the school year.

New rules of leave during term time holiday – holiday is now a leave of absence.

On 1st September 2013 a significant alteration in the law came into effect which changed the grounds on which a headteacher could allow a pupil to go on holiday during term time.

Prior to the change, the law stated that “a pupil may be granted leave of absence from school to go away on holiday” where the headteacher considered that there were “special circumstances relating to that application. **This section has been deleted and there is now no rule which allows for authorisation to be given for holidays.**

The replacement section states that “leave of absence shall not be granted unless the headteacher considers that there are “exceptional circumstances relating to that application”.

Unauthorised absences may result in the Local Authority taking legal action. Legal action that may be taken include:

- **Fixed penalty notice: the penalty is £60 per parent rising to £120 if the fine is not paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the fine will result in court proceedings.**
- **Prosecution: magistrates can fine each parent up to £2500 per child & cost; impose parenting orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.**

Your procedure here:

i.e. leave of absence form.

- **A letter to the headteacher explaining the exceptional circumstances.**
- **School will reply in writing on the decision.**

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.

In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.

The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notice for persistent absence

Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

Class Registers

Class registers will be closed at 9.15 a.m. and 1.15 p.m. Late arrivals will be recorded by the addition of L or U (See above).

Parents/carers must sign the Late Book in the School Office stating the reason for lateness.

If children are taken out of school for medical appointments, the Late Book must also be signed both when the child leaves school and when he/she returns to school.

After closure of the register on the last day of each week, attendances will be recorded on SIMS by the Administrative Officer against each pupil's individual record. Any discrepancies will be queried with the teacher concerned and the resolution agreed.

Staffordshire County Council collect attendance data remotely on a regular basis and at the end of each half term the official register and relevant reports are printed and retained to the School Office.

Percentage attendance figures will be reported to school governors termly in the Headteachers report.

We are legally required to report an individual pupil's attendance level which falls below 85% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Local Support Team will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

From September 2010 the Pyramid Schools (Sir Thomas Boughy High School, Wood Lane Primary School, The Richard Heathcote Primary School and Ravensmead Primary School) have been working together to provide a consistent approach towards attendance. The aim is for all pupils to attain at least 96%. A colour coded system is used (See attached) of which all parents have been informed.

Individual School Targets

Attendance targets are set and agreed at the first full Governors Meeting of the new academic year and forwarded to Staffordshire County Council.

Special Initiatives

Any child who has 100% Attendance for a whole term will be awarded a Headteacher's Certificate in assembly.

Any child who has 100% attendance for a full academic year will receive a special 100% Attendance badge, which they may keep.

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 to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy is reviewed every two years

Signed:

Gaynor Rogers - Headteacher

Signed:

John Deakin - Chair of Governors

Date:

Reviewed June 2016 – To be updated and reviewed again June 2018