

Tweedmouth West First School

Attendance and Truancy Policy

January 2019

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Tweedmouth West expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents from the very beginning of their school career.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness, and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils.

However, children should not attend school if they are unwell, and we understand that genuine illness is unavoidable.

Aims

- ♦ To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils.**
- ♦ To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.**
- ♦ To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.**
- ♦ To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.**
- ♦ To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.**

- ♦ To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- ♦ To implement a system for rewards and sanctions.
- ♦ To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies.

Communication

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out in the School Prospectus. This emphasises the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if a child is absent for any reason.

It is vital that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

At this Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time. At Tweedmouth West, we prefer that family holidays should be taken during school holidays, so that a child's education is not disrupted.

Parents are reminded that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances and must be applied for in writing in line with the policy agreed by the Berwick Partnership of schools.

The Head Teacher will consider the impact on the child's education, previous absences from school and the proximity to SATs, exams, etc. If the Headteacher does not sanction the absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised.

This may well lead to a fixed penalty fine for each absent child.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents should contact school if their child will be absent or late. This may be a phone call to school, or communication via Parentmail,

Parents may call at the school to see the class teacher to notify their child's non-attendance. The class teacher keeps these records. All information is used for Class Registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the Headteacher contacts the parent/guardian.

Registration

Tweedmouth West uses a paper registration system and the Register is completed at 9.00 in the morning and at 1.15 in the afternoon. A pupil will receive a late mark if they arrive after registration times. All pupils who are late must report to the office.

Admin staff are responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notify the Headteacher if there is any reason for concern. At the end of each term, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

The Governors monitor the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence. These figures can also be found in the Ofsted Report and the School Prospectus.

Concerns

Attendance data is examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence from school, the Headteacher will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for persistent absence. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or unpunctuality, the class teacher consults the Headteacher immediately. Details of

attendance or late percentage are extracted from the computer database. The Head teacher shows this to the parent(s) during an informal discussion. If absences or unpunctuality persist, the Headteacher contacts the Education Welfare Officer.

The Educational Welfare Officer meets the Headteacher each term to discuss attendance issues offering action, advice and support.

Absence Through Illness

Tweedmouth West will continue to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

School monitors the attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents.

Educational support, including the provision of work and materials is provided for those pupils who are absent from school, with medical conditions for more than 3 weeks. ICT is used if practicable, including the use of e-mail and the school website to access information. The teaching staff liaise with Medical Advisers and/or Home Tuition Providers, so that, during prolonged absence, pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff, including the class teacher, Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors, and Home or Hospital Tutor meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

Truancy

All staff at Tweedmouth West believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at our school, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately. If truancy is suspected, the

Headteacher and the Educational Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Headteacher is unable to talk to the parent(s), he or she will talk to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher/member of staff/other pupils.

We endeavour to discover, through discussion and questionnaires with parents and the individual pupils, classes and the School Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Pupils may receive house points for good attendance and extra playtimes for excellent whole school attendance.

- ♦ Class/Children's Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.
- ♦ Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent.
- ♦ Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration.

Rewards

- ♦ At the end of the school year the pupil(s) with 100% attendance receive a £5.00 book voucher.
- ♦ Certificates are presented to those children with full attendance and those with significantly improved attendance.

(Reviewed January 2019)