

# PARLEY FIRST SCHOOL



## REGISTRATION and ATTENDANCE POLICY

*"All children and young people have a right to a primary education, which should be free. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education they are capable of"*  
Article 28 Unicef Children's Charter

### Introduction

This policy provides a framework and guidance for staff and parents to encourage pupils to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

### Relationship to other policies

The policy on attendance should be read in conjunction with the policies on admissions, PSHE and school session times, and current guidance produced by the school for staff on the registration of pupils. The home-school agreement is also pertinent.

### General Principles

Regular attendance at school is critical if children are to gain the maximum benefit from the education we provide. Parents are legally responsible for sending their children to school. Our school actively supports regular attendance: **absences and lateness are carefully monitored** by the Headteacher and the Educational Welfare Officer. Individual attendance rates are reported to parents annually in the Summer Term and are passed on to Middle School in Year 5

Parley First School expects good attendance from its pupils, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved.

### Roles and responsibilities of Headteacher, other staff, governors

#### The Headteacher will ensure that

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set and reported to the LA
- Parents or carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored regularly

- School attendance statistics are reported to the LA and governing body
- The ESWAS officer is provided with registers of attendance and supported in following up long-term absences
- Pupils absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support.

#### All teachers are expected to

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently
- Report pupil attendance and lateness daily
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and inform colleagues if there is a problem that may lead to absences

#### Pupils will be encouraged to

- Attend school regularly

#### Parents and carers will be asked to

- Ensure the child attends school regularly
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions)

#### The governing body

- Will ensure that the ESWAS is informed about the long-term absence of any pupils.

### **The School Day**

**Our school day starts at 8.40 am.** Registers are marked shortly after this. Pupils who are not present for registration will be marked as absent initially. If children arrive before 9.15 am this will be changed to present but late. Children arriving after this time will be regarded as absent for the morning session and an explanation will be requested. **Any child arriving late or leaving early will need to be signed in or out by his parent/guardian in the late arrival book in the school office.** This is a safety precaution in case of fire or other emergency.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

Our school relies upon parents to ensure that children arrive in school promptly and to keep us fully informed about the reason(s) for all absences. We would ask parents to help the school by **notifying us of all absences on the first day** if possible, and always to ensure that any absence is covered by a note on your child's return to school. Verbal messages via the children are not sufficient. Unexplained absences are always classed as unauthorised absences.

There are two types of absence:

**Authorised absence:** instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been given (e.g. medical or dental appointment which cannot be arranged outside school hours, illness, day of religious observance etc)

**Unauthorised absence:** absence without permission from the headteacher or other authorised representative of the governing body. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Absences can only be authorised by the school, a written note explaining an absence does not constitute authorisation.

### **Holiday Requests**

It is the intention of the Government and Dorset County Council to reduce amount of absence through holidays.

Holidays taken during term time are detrimental to a child's education and the Governing Body strongly discourages applications. No holiday will be agreed during the month of May due to testing.

Holidays will only be granted where in the opinion of the headteacher there are significant extenuating circumstances.

No holiday absence of more than 2 weeks in any school year will be authorised.

All requests must be submitted on the appropriate form available from the school office.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Teachers mark registers twice daily (once in the morning and once in the afternoon after lunch break.)

Teachers and the attendance officer note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers. This is then recorded in the attendance record of each child.

Concerns about absences or lateness will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher who will relay them to the Social Work and Attendance Officer. (see Appendix)

Individual attendance rates are reported to parents annually, in the Summer Term.

Each term information about the level of authorised and unauthorised absences is reported to the Department of Education.

### **Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The Headteacher will, on a termly basis, provide data on pupil attendance which will be analysed. The Headteacher and the governing body will evaluate the data and decide what, if any, further action is required.

Reviewed: Autumn 2010

Next Review Due: Autumn 2012

## **Appendix (i)**

### **Procedure for Following Up Unexplained Absence**

1. Each Monday a text message is sent to parents/carers to obtain reasons for any unexplained absences from the prior week.
2. Where no response is received from the text message, a follow up letter is sent home on a Thursday with a reply slip to be completed for the unexplained absence.
3. Where no response is received to this first letter, a second letter is sent home the following Thursday requesting that the parent/carer makes an appointment with the headteacher to discuss further.
4. Where no response is received from this final letter, the absence is marked as Unauthorised.
5. When monitoring by school and ESWAS indicates ongoing concerns, a referral may be made by the school to the ESWAS service.
6. See appendix ii for details of ESWAS protocol with regard to their issuance of any Penalty Notice.

## **Appendix (ii)**

### **EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK & ATTENDANCE SERVICE. PENALTY NOTICE PROTOCOL**

#### **1. Legal Basis:**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004.

The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1988 and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

The LEA has the prime responsibility for developing the protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate.

#### **2. Rationale:**

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service will continue to investigate cases of non-attendance from school and following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable.

In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec. 444 Education Act 1996 or Sec. 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service delivers this LEA responsibility.

#### **3. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued.**

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

The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice will be whether it can be effective in helping to get the pupil who is truanting back into school.

A Penalty Notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is considered capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

To ensure consistent and fair delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria for their use shall apply:

- No one parent will receive more than three separate Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve month period.

- However, where families contain more than one poorly attending pupil, multiple issues may occur.

#### **4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices.**

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service will issue Penalty Notices for all Dorset schools.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an on the spot action; this is to satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place and to meet Health and Safety requirements.

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service will receive requests from schools, Dorset Police and neighbouring LEAs. Requests from schools will be sent direct to the Principal Education Social Worker.

A Penalty Notice may be issued providing it does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where all criteria are met, will:

- Issue a formal warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued.
- In the same letter set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15-day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

#### **5. Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:**

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- Proof has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Protocol.

#### **6. Payment of Penalty Notices:**

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the penalty notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £50 and payment after this time but within 42 days is £100.

#### **7. Non-payment of Penalty Notices:**

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Sec. 444(1) 444(1a) Education Act 1996.

**8. Review and Evaluate:**

The Dorset Education Social Work and Attendance Service will review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the general enforcement strategy as appropriate.