



## West Rainton Primary School Attendance Policy

### 1 Introduction

1.1 We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the learners to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those learners who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### 2 Definitions

#### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a learner has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a learner has been unwell, the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Illnesses such as colds and headaches however are not deemed serious enough to miss school unless prior conversations have taken place with parents/carers in which health issues are discussed and a care plan is drawn up. Please note that these absences may go unauthorised even with a phonecall or note from parents.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a learner out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

#### 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a learner is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a learner is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### 3 If a learner is absent

3.1 When a learner is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will contact a parent or carer on the first day of absence via telephone call.

3.2 When the learner returns to school, a note should be brought, or a verbal conversation had with a parent or carer to explain the absence.

3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a learner has a medical appointment. However, no routine (non-urgent medical appointments should be scheduled during the school day.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a learner, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the learner.

#### 4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. We adhere to the Durham County Policy on term-time absence and therefore inform parents/carers that this leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 We ask all parents/carers to familiarise themselves with Durham County Guidance on term time absence as this could result in fixed penalty fines of £60 per child, per parent, per absence. Pupils are not allowed any authorised absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.

#### 5 Long-term absence

5.1 When a learner has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the learner to be given some tuition outside school.

#### 6 Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any learner who has an unauthorised absence. If a learner has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Improvement Team (AIT), one of Durham County's support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

#### 7 Rewards for good attendance

7.1 Each week in Celebration Assembly the class with the best attendance will be announced and presented with the Attendance trophy.

7.2 Each week all children who have full attendance (5 days, 10 sessions) will be issued with raffle ticket to enter into the termly attendance prize draw.

7.3 All pupils with good or outstanding attendance (96% or higher, 6 days or less absence) will receive an attendance reward at the end of the year.

7.4 All pupils who have 100% attendance in any school year will also be individually rewarded.

## 8 Attendance targets

8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors when planning for school improvement. The attendance targets are then agreed with the Local Authority School Improvement Partner as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## 9 Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request regular reports from the Head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

9.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head teacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

9.4 The headteacher monitors attendance on a daily basis and any child falling below 95% will be placed on a monitoring list and steps taken to begin working with parents/carers to ensure it doesn't fall any further.

9.4 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed: Alison McDonough Date: Jan 2021

**Covid addendum-** During the pandemic, attendance regulations have changed in that pupil absence due to covid-related illness, shielding or isolation is not included in our monitoring of concerning attendance. Due to the huge disruption to learning however, it is vital that children are in school on every day possible and that their attendance at remote lessons is treated in exactly the same way as physical school attendance. The Headteacher will monitor attendance both from home and in school and address any concerns in a timely and routine manner.