

# **NORTHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Introduction and Background**

Northcote Community Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and children's attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and it underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every child has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that children succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Full time education means attendance on 190 days (equivalent to 380 sessions) during the school year from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August).

This policy has been developed using the Department of Education guidelines on attendance, with support from the Education Welfare service and in consultation with parents, staff and the Governors of Northcote Community Primary School.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, children and all members of the school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:

- Give our parents/carers details on attendance at the end of each school half term. We will do this by reporting each child's individual attendance.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance show signs of beginning to fall below 97% to offer guidance and support to improve attendance.
- Use 'First Day Response' and keep records of this to inform teachers why children in their classes are absent.
- Work in close partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor patterns of attendance and non-attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements on school notice boards and within each classroom.
- Celebrate good attendance on Newsletters and reward high attending children with Termly treats.
- Have an end of year reward trip, funded by the school, for children with 98% attendance and above.
- Celebrate attendance during weekly assemblies with 'Class of the Week' reward boxes for highest attending class in KS1, highest attending class in LKS2 and highest attending class in UKS2.
- Enable children with appropriate attendance patterns/an increasing attendance to attend extra-curricular clubs and eventually graduate from Children's University.

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observances which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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/or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping their children off school unnecessarily e.g. not returning to school after a medical/dental appointment

- 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
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Not providing medical evidence of illness (required for children whose attendance is below 92%)

NO holidays requested during school time will be authorised by the school. If children are absent from school due to holidays their absence will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence.

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/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we work with the family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help us with this such as the School Nurse or the Parent Support Advisor.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This also applies to children who are absent for 10% of their school time during the first half term of any school year. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking.

Any child who reaches the PA mark i.e. have missed 10% of their schooling or who is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority for intervention and support by the school and the Education Welfare Officer. This may also involve other agencies e.g. School Nurse.

### **Absence Procedures and Punctuality**

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/Carers should:

- Follow our Home/School agreement and ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time – 8:55am.
- Contact the school (by telephone or in person) by 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence.

- Send a written note (detailing the reason for absence) when their child returns to school.
- Call into school and report the absence to the reception staff.

School will:

- Keep a register of attendance at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session, recording absence using the Department of Education's Attendance Codes.
- Give a 'late code' (L) to children who arrive after class registration – 9.10am – and ask the adult bringing the child to school to sign our 'late book' giving the reason for the lateness. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
- Give an unauthorised code (U) to children who arrive after 9.30am when no valid reason for lateness/absence has been provided.
- Contact families (First day Response) when no reason for absence has been received by the school. If no contact can be made then an unauthorised code (O) will be given
- Monitor absence/attendance closely and inform parents/carers when there is a concern.
- Use incentives to promote high attendance, such as a range of extra-curricular activities for children that enable them to graduate from Children's University. Parents will be warned if their child's attendance decreases that their child will not be able to take part if their attendance does not show an improving picture in two weeks. This is then monitored two weeks later.
- Make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when a child's attendance falls below 92%.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to offer support to families in overcoming barriers to good attendance and punctuality.

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Visit school twice a week to monitor attendance (two half days a week).
- Work in partnership with school staff to support families by making home visits when there is a serious cause for concern over attendance.
- Implement sanctions such as Penalty Notices (after 10 unauthorised days) or prosecutions in Court when unauthorised absences persist as under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act of 1996.

The classroom teacher will:

- Ensure all children are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support children with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other children in their class. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

### **Attendance Targets**

Our aim is for all children to achieve at least 97% attendance i.e. no more than 5 days of absence over the school year. It is recognised that not all children will be able to achieve this for valid reasons.

However we will strive for as many children as possible to achieve or exceed this target because we know that good attendance is a key to successful schooling.

We aim to improve attendance for all children and have as few children as possible listed as Persistent Absentees.

Northcote Community Primary School promotes good attendance by:

- Celebrating good attendance during our weekly Celebration assemblies and keeping the Attendance and Punctuality boards displayed in the foyer, corridors and classrooms up to date.
- The class with the best Attendance and Punctuality at the end of each term has a reward, free of charge, somewhere in the local area/in the school hall.
- At the end of term Celebration Assemblies certificates are awarded for excellent attendance.
- At the end of the year children with attendance of 98% and above are able to attend a school reward trip, funded by the school, to places such as Apple Jacks and Splash World.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and responsibility**

This policy was compiled by Miss Gore, Deputy Head Teacher

The Headteacher and Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Member of staff responsible :**

**Mr Morgan**

**Date Policy written:**

**December 2016**

**Date to be reviewed:**

**December 2017**

**Date approved by Governors:**

**Signature of Chair of Governors:**