



Attendance Policy

Rationale

Peel Hall Primary School believes that the regular education of all children, irrespective of age, gender, race or ability is crucial to each and every pupil. All members of our community, children, staff, parents, governors and friends work in partnership towards love, tolerance and justice. Therefore, we aim to develop their particular talents and needs, thus allowing them to achieve their full potential.

The regular attendance of children at Peel Hall Primary School is a key responsibility of all parents/guardians, in conjunction with the school and EWO Service who work together with parents. Without regular attendance our pupils cannot make the progress we want for them. The accurate keeping of registers and persistence in chasing up reasons for absence are crucial if we are to maintain a course of improvement.

Many of our pupils come from homes where the adults are not in employment and where attending the school and being punctual are not family priorities. We must be sensitive to this but at the same time encourage the children to adopt good attendance and punctuality habits. It is better that a child attends school late rather than not attend at all. This requires knowledge of the pupil's circumstances and sensitivity.

From the age of 5 children are required by law to attend school for 190 days of the year, unless the child is ill or because of other extenuating circumstances. It is the parent's duty to see the child is sent to school, arrives on time, in correct clothing, and in a condition to learn e.g. not too tired.

Introduction

Children of school-age who are registered at a school must attend school every day. For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring that your child makes the most of the educational opportunities in order to achieve well. However, we accept that there may be occasions when a child has to miss school, e.g. because of illness.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we can achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is Important

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

During the course of a year, attendance percentages equate as follows: -

10 days absent - 95%

19 days absent - 90%

29 days absent - 85%

38 days absent - 80%

47 days absent - 75%

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

Understanding Types of Absence

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

Authorised Absence – An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason, e.g. if a child has been unwell and the parent notifies school to explain the absence. Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence.

The Head teacher may authorise absence if: -

a) A child is ill;

b) The child is attending a doctor or dentist's surgery or a hospital;

c) Religious observance;

d) A death in the family;

The head teacher may request evidence to support absence from school for any of the above.

Unauthorised Absence – Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes -

- ☒ Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- ☒ Absences that have never been properly explained;
- ☒ Shopping, looking after other children or birthday trips;
- ☒ Holidays in term time not agreed.
- ☒ Children who arrive at school after registers have closed;
- ☒ Persistent lateness;

This type of absence can lead to the Local Education Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings, e.g. Penalty Notices.

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions in any term before being issued with a Penalty Notice.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee (PA)' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem worsening.

Prior to engagement of the Education Welfare Officer, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and improvement in levels of attendance will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

We monitor all absence 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 you will be informed of this immediately.

All PA cases are automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must

- ☒ Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of the absence either by phone or by calling to the Reception at school;
- ☒ Give a valid reason for the absence, stating the nature of the illness if the absence is health related;

- ☒ If your child is absent for more than 3 consecutive days, you may be asked to provide a Doctor's note stating the nature of the illness and the amount of days your child will be absent from school

If your child is absent we will

- ☒ Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- ☒ Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer;
- ☒ Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Parents are encouraged to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important information and news for the day. Reading and writing starts at 9.00am PROMPT. Children can enter their classrooms from 8.45 am. It is vital that your child is in class for the start of the lesson. They also miss social time with their friends before lessons start. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. It can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school gates open at 8.30am and the doors to classes open at 8.45am. We expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 8.55am. Lessons start at 9.00am PROMPT. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Inclusion Coordinator to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The Governors have agreed that holidays may be authorised as long as a child's percentage attendance is 96% or greater. Any absence of children whose attendance is below this figure will be unauthorised.

Other requests for leave will only be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. All requests for a holiday/absence in term time should be made in writing by completing an Absence Notification Form which is available from the school office.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Where an unauthorised holiday is taken, the school is required to notify the Local Authority on the first day of absence and a fixed penalty fine will be issued.

Unauthorised holidays taken will be followed by an application to the Local Education Authority for the implementation of a Fixed Penalty Fine. This constitutes a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. The fine will apply to each parent of each child who fails to attend school. Both Penalty Notices must be paid. If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer will be prosecuted for the non-attendance and will be summonsed to appear in Court.

By adhering to this course of action, the school is working in the best interest of the child in that absence from school has a negative impact on educational achievement. All schools have to report on absences and children with 10% or more absence from school are classified as persistent absentees by the Department for Education.

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

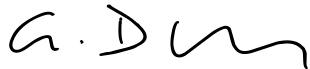
The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96%. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful education. Please do not let your child miss out. Please support our school in providing your child with the education they deserve.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

June 2019

Mrs G Dunkley- Headteacher

Mrs L Ayre – Inclusion Co-Ordinator

Handwritten signature of G. Dunkley in black ink.

(Headteacher)

Signed Date: 06/09/21

Handwritten signature of Sheila Dawnell in black ink.

(Chair of Governors)

Signed Date: 06/09/21

To be reviewed July 2022