

WHITCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

1. To maximise the time that children spend in school
2. To minimise disruption to teachers' plans through the need to assist children who have missed lessons
3. To minimise disruption to classes through late arrivals

2. Introduction

1.1 Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/guardian.

1.2 Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be discussed between the school, the parents and the child.

1.3 Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (NOT by parents) as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of absence must therefore be provided, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are periods away from school for good reasons such as illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which are not satisfactorily explained
- Children who arrive too late at school to be marked as present

1.4 Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and 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 (EWO) of the Local Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

1.5 Parents 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 contact details are available from the school office and the Local Authority.

3. Procedures

3.1 The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Parents are required to inform the school either in writing, email or by phone if a child is, or will be, absent.
- Absences for illness and medical appointments will be authorised and for occasions when the school is unable to open, or access to the school is

exceptionally difficult (e.g. at times of heavy snow). Absences will also be authorised for exceptional circumstances such as bereavement of a close relative, though it is stressed that discussion with the Head Teacher is appropriate in such circumstances.

- Family holidays should be taken during school holidays, dates for which are published well in advance. When that is not possible the school may, but is not obliged to, agree to authorise up to 10 days per school year for family holidays. Application for this must be made by completion of a holiday form, copies of which are available from the school office. An appointment to discuss the absence with the Head Teacher must also be made. Repeated applications over several years for additional holiday time are discouraged.
- Before authorising holidays the School will review the child's current attendance level: authorisation will not be given where attendance is already low.
- All other absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless special permission has been sought from the Head Teacher.

3.2 Lateness will also be recorded as unauthorised unless the school has been informed of, and agreed to authorise the reasons given. All late arrivals must report to the school office.

3.3 The school will maintain records of individual and collective attendance/punctuality to provide internal and external evaluation of performance.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Head Teacher and the School Administrator.

5. Review

5.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years.

Status of this Policy: APPROVED

Date approved by Governing Body: 24 January 2011

Lead contributions from:

Staff: Dawn Chesters

Governors: Curriculum Committee