

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **MERSTONE SCHOOL**



**Reviewed: September 2015**

**Adopted by Governors: November 2015**

## **ATTENDANCE & RECORDS**

Merstone School gives a high priority to good attendance and punctuality, believing that it prepares our pupils for the world of employment and is essential to maintain progress. Parents are informed of procedure in the case of absence and the emphasis placed by the school on good attendance. We rely on parental support in order to maintain high levels of attendance and achievement.

Attendance percentages are kept by the Administrative Officer. Pupils, whose attendance is causing concern, are brought to the attention of the Principal and the Education Welfare Service. The Administrative Officer monitors these pupils particularly closely.

Pupils arriving late for school are registered in the office and marked 'late' – class staff then collect pupil from reception.

When a pupil is absent, the parent should contact the school at the start of the day, giving the reason for absence. If this does not happen, office staff promptly try to contact parents, the same day to establish a reason for the absence. This is recorded on the weekly class attendance record.

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

National legislation was passed in 2013 in relation to requests to take children out of school for a holiday. From September 2013, it became unlawful for pupils to be granted holiday from school during term time and as such Principals are unable to give permission.

In very rare circumstances, the Principal can consider requests made by parents in advance for a Leave of Absence from school in circumstances, which would not usually include holidays. Should you believe your request would fall into this very rare category of Exceptional Circumstances you will need to make a request for Leave of Absence in writing directly to the Principal.

If a pupil has registered 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised Leave of Absence, Education Welfare will be notified and the issue of a penalty notice will be considered. Parents and carers can be fined up to £120 per parent, per child for taking holidays in term time. A full copy of the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for Solihull is available online at:

[http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/o/schools%20and%20learning/leave of absence requests.pdf](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/portals/o/schools%20and%20learning/leave%20of%20absence%20requests.pdf)

### **Procedure for requesting a planned absence**

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carers should complete an absence request form



(Appendix 1) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 1). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator.
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (*appendix 2 : model pro forma*)
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 3) must be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Welfare Service for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to

sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register.

## REGISTERS

- Registration is at 9.10 a.m.
- Pupils arriving after the register has closed and before 9.30 a.m. will be given a mark, entered in the Late Book and give a reason for the late arrival.
- Pupils arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be entered in the Late Book and give a reason for the late arrival. They will not be given a mark as per guidance received from the DfES.
- Registers are sent to the main office by 9.15 a.m.
- Any pupil who arrives at school after the register has been sent to the main office must be entered in the late book and give a reason for the late arrival.
- At 1.15 p.m. afternoon registration is taken. Registers are taken to the main office by 1.25 p.m.
- Parents/carers should contact school as soon as possible on the first day of a pupil's absence to give the reason. If no reason is received, office staff will attempt to contact parents/carers to find out the reason.
- Class teachers/tutors should contact the office when they have been informed or know the reason for a pupil's absence.
- When a pupil returns to school after a period of absence a letter from the parent/carer should be given to the class teacher/tutor, who **will date and sign it** and place it in the register.
- A letter is sent to parents for any absence for which a reason has not been given.