

## **West Pennard Church of England Primary School**

### **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

#### ***United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)***

*Article 28: Every child has the right to an education*

*Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full*

We believe that in order for pupils to fully benefit from their education, regular attendance is crucial and that the school, pupils and parents need to work together to enable this to happen. Any problems with attendance need to be identified and acted on quickly. Our aim is to facilitate regular and sustained attendance at school so that children can achieve their full learning potential.

#### **Responsibilities:**

*The School will ensure:*

- Accurate recording of attendance using electronic systems
- Early contact with parents/carers when a child fails to attend school
- Prompt and confidential action on any identified problems
- Rewards to promote good attendance
- Provision of full time education appropriate to the child's needs and developmental stage (Education Act 1996)

*We expect parents/carers to ensure:*

- Their child attends school
- They contact the school early on the first day of absence, unless previously notified, advising as to the reasons for absence
- Their child is punctual, properly dressed and equipped for the day
- That they notify the school if there are any problems affecting their child's attendance or learning
- Their child receives a full time education (Education Act 1996)

*We expect pupils to:*

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time
- Be prepared to learn

#### **Registration and Monitoring Attendance**

Registration occurs at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registration is at 8.50 in the morning. A child arriving after this time is 'late' and their time of arrival is noted in the 'late' book although the register does not close until 9.00. A child arriving after 9.30 in the morning will be designated 'late after register closed' and this will be classed as an unauthorised absence. Afternoon registration is at 1.15. Pupils arriving late seriously disrupt their work and that of others and pupils may miss key parts of the lesson. Children who are late should report to the school office. The school also accepts and understands that there are situations where lateness is unavoidable, for example, traffic or transport problems.

Class teachers and office staff have responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils in class, for collecting notes explaining absence, for discussing attendance with parents/carers and for maintaining accurate electronic registers using attendance codes.

All absence records are recorded electronically and therefore retained for the duration of the child being on roll at the school.

### **Absence**

Parents are expected to notify the school early on the first day of absence from school. If there has been no contact from home, office staff will contact parents or carers, as soon as is possible, to confirm the reason for absence and expected date of return to school.

If a child is absent for **more than three days**, and no contact has been made, then a letter or text will be sent by the school office requesting the reason for absence and expected date of return to school. Unless there is a satisfactory and prompt response the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. The school may request medical evidence if illness is given as a reason.

If a pupil returns to school **within three days** and no reason is given for absence when requested a follow up letter or text is sent by the school office. If no reason for absence is given within two weeks the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

### **Term Time Leave**

Amendments to the 2006 Education Regulations came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. The amendments make it clear that Headteachers can only grant leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. All references to a holiday and/or extended leave, including the threshold of ten school days has been removed. Any request for leave must be made in writing for the attention of the Headteacher in advance.

Exceptional leave may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service, Emergency services staff who have been told when they can and cannot take leave
- If a significant close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if a family member lived overseas
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period

Somerset County Council is fully supportive of the new regulations:

‘Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class. Teachers have to spend time helping children to catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays for the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open for 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for a holiday’

If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child’s record. If the leave is not authorised parents could be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution. Penalty notices may be issued if a pupil has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 12 weeks (equivalent to 5 days).

If you wish to obtain a copy of attendance codes or need further details on Fixed Penalty Notices please contact the office.

### **The Role of the Education Attendance Officer (EAO)**

The School works closely with our EAO in monitoring attendance, setting targets for attendance and applying the Local Authority policy on attendance in school. Any queries concerning authorising absence can be directed at the EAO, Dee Edwards on 01749

822800. As part of her role the EAO visits the school to follow up issues on attendance and decide on actions regarding unauthorised absences or poor attendance.

### **Attendance Concerns**

Where the school has concerns over attendance a letter will be sent to parents detailing concerns, unless there is an exceptional reason the school is aware of why attendance is relatively poor. This would normally be triggered by attendance less than 95%. (the school's target is 96+% attendance). This audit of attendance will occur half termly. If there is no improvement a further letter will be sent requesting a meeting to discuss any issues impacting on a child's attendance and to set targets for the future. If there is still no improvement following this meeting, then a third letter would be sent warning of the impending involvement of the EAO. Should problems persist then the EAO would become involved and a plan to improve attendance agreed and monitored. The school may require medical evidence if there are concerns over too many absences due to illness.

Persistent lateness is also deemed a concern and a letter would also be sent home. If there was still no improvement a second letter will be sent requesting a meeting with parents/carers in order to set targets for the future.

### **Reporting to Parents**

The end of year report has a comment box where the child's attendance is reported together with a comment and if there are concerns then these are noted. The report also has a copy of next year's term dates for reference.

During the spring term parents' evening teachers will discuss attendance concerns if applicable.

### **Rewards and Targets**

West Pennard School seeks to reward good attendance through the following means:

- Issuing attendance certificates for 100% attendance: Bronze award for half-term, Silver award for whole term and Gold award for whole year 100% attendance. Children who attend for a whole year also receive a metal pin badge.
- Issuing certificates for children who achieve their attendance and punctuality targets.
- Using assembly to celebrate good attendance, awarding certificates, etc.
- Featuring attendance in newsletters, sharing targets with parents

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Educational Attendance Officer, with termly reports to Governors.

This policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2017.

H Burchell  
September 16

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body.....date.....