



## Allendale Primary School Attendance Policy

### **Rationale:**

Allendale Primary School, in line with the legal responsibilities of parents, actively encourages full attendance by its pupils whenever possible, recognising that it is an important contributor to children's achievement and social development.

### **The Law and Regulations:**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and that they remain in school for the total extent of the school day. Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays. Leave of absence must be applied for; a Headteacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. (Statutory Instrument 2006, No. 1751, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

If a parent chooses to take their child out of school, where leave of absence has not been granted, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence, i.e. it has not been agreed with school, (also known as truancy). Northumberland Local Authority, (LA) Guidelines state that:

*"If the school does not agree the absence and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence should be categorised as unauthorised. The school should then write to the parent to give a warning that further formal action would be taken if this were to happen again. The Education Welfare Service should also be notified."*

We would only notify the Education Welfare Officer if this were a regular occurrence resulting in a child's attendance falling below the accepted threshold. If this was repeated, formal action may entail prosecution, resulting in a fine, (Fines range from £120 to £5000), or court action where an Education Supervision Order may be issued or even imprisonment. This shows how serious an issue school attendance is.

### **Absence Procedure:**

We operate a first day notification of absence procedure. Parents are asked to phone school on this day and report the reasons for their child's absence. If no

contact is made by the end of registration a member of staff will contact the parents / carers. This is particularly important as we need to account for the safety of all children, whether they arrive on County transport or are brought directly to school by parents, adult carer or older sibling.

The register must be taken each morning. If a child has not arrived by 9.10 a.m. he / she will be marked absent. If a child arrives after this time, the parent / carer must complete the late book, stating the reason for late arrival. The late book is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and parents / carers contacted if this is a regular occurrence.

The register must also be taken during the afternoon session. When completing the register, the statutory attendance codes must be entered. These can be found at the front of each class register.

Under special circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher, parents may request in advance that their child is absent for part of the school day. Wherever possible, this request should be made in writing. Such circumstances will only be authorised on an occasional basis and **cannot** be a regular arrangement. These may include:

- Medical appointments
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Adverse weather conditions

### **Attendance Targets:**

We aim for all our children to have at least 96% attendance in a school year. If a child has a two week holiday within term time, their maximum attendance is 94.7%. (Source DfES, August 2006). Northumberland LA has implemented a traffic light system for individual pupil attendance.

- Green - Attendance is 95% or above
- Amber - Attendance is between 90% - 94.9%. A letter may be sent to parents, highlighting that their child's attendance is falling below what is expected.
- Red - Attendance is below 90%. The Education Welfare Officer will be informed if any child's attendance falls below 90%. This will result in a visit to parents and action taken from there.

All cases will be treated on an individual basis.

Schools are now legally required to record any absence either taken with or without authorisation of any kind.

### **Term Time Holidays:**

The vast majority of school days lost to absence occur because parents wish to take a holiday in term time. We understand that family circumstances vary and we do not wish to issue a blanket ban on holidays in term time. However, we wish to reduce learning time lost as we believe that this can seriously disrupt the continuity of a child's education and that of other members of the class, as valuable teacher and support staff time is spent enabling the child to catch up on missed work and re-adjust to school routines.

When a request is received for leave of absence, each case will be considered individually. The child's attendance record will be considered. If this has fallen below 95%, it is highly unlikely that a request for leave of absence will be granted.

The Headteacher has the discretion to agree to a term time holiday if there are exceptional circumstances. These would include:

- A family gathering for a special celebration
- Bereavement
- Forces personnel on leave from foreign posting
- Parent returning home from employment abroad
- Where evidence is provided by an employer that leave cannot be accommodated during those times when the school is closed without significant consequence

A child's attendance record will be considered when a request for holiday time is made. If the request is not agreed to and a parent / carer decides to go ahead and take their child out of school without permission, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence and action taken as stated previously under ' the Law and Regulations'.

If leave of absence has been agreed to and the child does not return to school on the agreed date, procedures for notification of absence are applied.

It is vital that all parents / carers are aware of this policy and the importance the school places on full attendance. It will be brought to the attention of new parents in our school information booklet. It will also be available on the Allendale Primary School website.

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