



Turves Green Primary School

Attendance Policy

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To be reviewed 2013**

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Headteacher**



Turves Green Primary School

Attendance Policy

Aims

- To define the legal duties for the school and parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time
- To set out roles and responsibilities for the school, parents and children
- To set out the ways in which good attendance is promoted and the link made with educational achievement
- To set out ways in which school can support parents in ensuring children attend school

Principles

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

Some children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted by the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that good attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

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 each absence is always required.

Wherever possible school will promote holidays out of term time and will distribute promotional leaflets provided by the Education Welfare Service.

Procedures

If a child is absent from school, the parent should telephone school to report the absence.

If a child is absent from school and no telephone call or note has been received, school will contact parents to find out a reason by 10.00 a.m. These reasons are then recorded in the absence book. School has to classify every half day absence as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why we always require information from parents about the reason for their child's absence.

The Headteacher, Family Support Co-ordinator and Education Social Worker monitor weekly listings of attendance since the start of the year and identify children with low attendance. Individual records are then monitored and action decided upon.

If improvements are not made:

- The Family Support Co-ordinator arranges to meet with the responsible adult either at school or home
- A joint letter from school and the ESW is sent home; then
- A letter from the ESW is sent home; then
- A visit may be made to the home; then
- Formal proceedings may be started

When improvements are made, a letter of congratulations is sent home.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the **child's** responsibility to attend school regularly and on time.

It is the **parent's** responsibility to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time. It is also their responsibility to provide school with the reason for any absence.

It is the **class teacher's** responsibility to:

- Mark the register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and then send them to the administration staff
- Promote regular attendance and make the link with educational achievement
- Raise any attendance concerns with the Headteacher or Family Support Co-ordinator

It is the responsibility of **administration staff** to:

- Carry out daily register checks for absence
- Telephone parents if no reason for absence has been received by 10.00 a.m.
- Electronically record daily attendance returns onto CMIS system
- Produce absence reports and enter reasons onto CMIS system
- Produce weekly reports for ESW

It is the **Headteacher's** responsibility to:

- Promote good attendance
- Work with families to ensure that all children are able to attend school regularly and on time
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service to ensure children attend school regularly and on time

The **Family Support Co-ordinator** will

- Support families by making home visits
- Support families when a child returns to school after a long absence
- Make visits to children in hospital who are absent with a long-term illness
- Support parents in making sure children come to school regularly and on time.

It is the **Education Welfare Service's** responsibility to:

- Support the school in promoting and supporting whole school attendance policies
- Provide advice on proven good practice
- Work together with school on programmes designed to improve attendance levels
- Undertake work with individuals
- Undertake family centred work
- Act on referrals made by school in the most appropriate way
- Initiate statutory proceedings on behalf of the Local Authority

It is important that everyone works together to make sure that all children get the most from their schooling.

Classification of Absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

There are only three grounds for authorisation:

-the child has been granted "leave of absence" by the proprietor of the school

-the child is unable to attend through sickness or other "unavoidable cause"; religious holiday, or LA has not made suitable transport arrangements where required to do so

-the child is attending another school or unit where he or she is also registered.

Leave of absence

If the child is not sick or absent for some other "unavoidable cause", the absence can only be authorised as "leave" by the school not by the parent. Leave can only be granted on certain grounds. For example:

- a. approved and licensed "performances" such as pantomimes, TV, film,

- professional sport, modelling etc. at the instruction of the LEA.
- b. family holiday leave. On application in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, a pupil may be granted "up to ten days leave per school year to go away on holiday". This is not an automatic entitlement, but will be applied if a child's attendance is above 96%.

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
- a day off for a birthday
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency e.g. bereavement or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Before 9.10am, a late mark will be given to any child who arrives in school. After this time and the registers have closed, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence. This time is half an hour after the start of the morning session.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the 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 Social Worker 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, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the ESW 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.

Holidays in term time

Holidays are not encouraged in term time. Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, and then no more than 10 days in any Key Stage, preferable wrapped around a school break. Parents wishing to apply for a holiday must complete a form available from the reception desk. The holiday will only be authorised if:

- their attendance is above 96%

- they have not exceeded their 10 day limit
- there are genuine exceptional circumstances

A reply slip will be returned to the parents prior to the requested holiday letting them know of the headteacher's decision.

A 'holidays in term-time' leaflet is regularly distributed to families.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

- weekly attendance certificates for classes
- best attending classes shown on electronic notice board
- class attendance rocket board
- termly and annual Governors' Attendance Awards
- Cool Cats scheme is used with some identified children

The target for attendance is 95% and all classes are made aware of their progress towards this target.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Information from the CMIS management system will be used to provide data relating to attendance.

Class attendance will be monitored by the Senior Management Team on a termly basis.

Attendance of specific groups of children will be monitored on a termly basis by the headteacher

Termly attendance summary reports are presented to the Governing Body.

Feedback will be given to parents through newsletters.

Evaluation of strategies used with individuals or families will be monitored and evaluated weekly by the Headteacher, Family Support Co-ordinator and ESW.

Matthew Clarke
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