

## **Ewelme C.E. (VA) Primary School Attendance Policy. Summary.**

Absence has a tangible affect on a child's progress. Children miss vital social development and due to the pace of the curriculum they may miss complete units of essential learning or core objectives.

### **Timing of a normal day**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time each day. The morning session begins at 9.00 am. and finishes at 12.15 (12pm for Foundation). The afternoon session begins at 1.00 pm and ends at 3.15 pm. If a child arrives after the register closes (at 9.05 am and 1.15 pm) he/she will be marked as 'late' for that session.

### **Parental procedure for absence**

When absence is unavoidable because of illness, parents/carers must do their best to contact the school by 9.30 am on the first day of absence. This can be done by telephone, email ([office.3752@ewelme.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3752@ewelme.oxon.sch.uk)) or in person. If the parent/guardian fails to make contact, then the school will attempt contact by telephone on the initial day. Parents/carers must also give a written explanation covering all dates of absence, usually brought in by the child on the first day back.

### **School procedure for absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. There is a coding system the school must legally use. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for illness, unavoidable causes or dates pre-arranged with the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Absences for reasons that are unacceptable to the school e.g. shopping or birthday treats
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained

### **Escalation**

Any problems with irregular attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents/carers and the child at an early stage. An initial warning letter is generated and sent to parents after 5 late marks in any one term. Initial communication between school and home is almost always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Social Worker (ESW) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the ESW can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers. In all cases, where absence has fallen below 80% in any 6 week period (under the ESW Service Agreement) the agency reserves the right to investigate all cases. If, during investigation, a genuine reason for the absences is obtained then the ESW is unlikely to take action. However, if the reason for absence cannot be adequately verified then the ESW will interview the parents. Failing resolution at this point, the ESW is required to involve the police, who will initially send a caution letter to the parents. This situation could result in a fine or a term of imprisonment.

Parents/carers 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. The most current telephone number for the ESW is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

From September 2008 the Government introduced new targets for Absence in schools. These targets cover all absence. 'Persistent absentees' are now recorded, regardless of whether their absence has been accounted for by parents.

## **Daily Procedures**

### **Lateness**

School opens at 8.50 am and begins at 9.00 am - all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 9.05 am should enter the school via the main entrance, report to the School Office and sign into the 'Late Arrival Book'. If accompanied, a parent/carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The child will then be sent to his/her classroom.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action will be taken.

### **Completing the Register**

Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupils' end of year reports. For these reasons registers have to be marked in black or blue ink and all alterations must be visible and explained.

- Black or blue diagonal line to denote presence
- Circle to denote (pending) un/authorised absence
- Circle with correct symbol recorded inside in black or blue to denote authorised absence. There should be no unmarked sessions (circle only)
- No tippex
- Weekly/termly headings completed

### **Family holidays during term time**

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of any school for such a holiday, but the school may choose to grant leave of absence on a case by case basis. When considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday, the Head Teacher will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance and the reason for the holiday. The school cannot authorise holidays during periods of assessment, especially in the summer term. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for longer, planned absence. All such cases should be discussed with the Head Teacher. A form requesting leave of absence can be obtained from the School Office. This should be completed and returned at least a week before the first day of intended absence.

### **Summary**

The school has a duty to promote good attendance and to publish its absence figures for parents/carers and the general public. Equally, parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their children attend school. At Ewelme School we are committed to working with parents in order to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.