



Tonwell St Mary's CE Primary School

Child Attendance Policy

Date ratified: February 2017
Date for review: February 2018

Matthew 19:14

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Introduction

We expect all children to attend every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present during the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LEA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

Approved Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities will be recorded as taking part in an approved educational activity. For statistical purposes such pupils will be counted as present even though they are physically absent. A pupil should be recorded as approved education activity if, in the judgement of the Headteacher, he / she is on:

- a field trip or educational visit
- a sporting or musical activity
- receiving tuition at another school
- taking an examination

Registration

Registers will be called between 8:55-9am and 1.15pm. Children arriving after this time are marked late.

Monitoring attendance and responding to absence

Registers are taken electronically using the SIMS database.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

- Children marked absent are identified and messages checked to ensure the school has been informed
- Unexplained absences are identified
- A telephone call is made to all children whose absence is not explained
- A letter is expected when children return to school

The class teacher will make parents aware of each child's % attendance at parent consultation evenings and in the end of year report.

The Headteacher works closely with the local Attendance Officer and will write a formal letter to alert parents of any concerns about absence. This may be followed by letters from the Attendance Officer and in the most serious cases, a fixed penalty may follow.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request attendance data from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school data dashboard.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the admin assistant, who will contact the parents, guardian or carer.

Children missing from education

Local Authority guidance is followed to ensure that procedures are in place to keep children safe when transferring to our school or from our school and for children who may be missing from education.