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FEDERATION OF PENNY ACRES AND WIGLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Policy

We, at the Federation of Penny Acres and Wigley Primary Schools, strive for excellence and enjoyment in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all are valued and respected as individuals. We will endeavour to enable the children to reach their full potential, by making the most of the opportunities that our school has to offer.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day when school is in session, so long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed.

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At the Federation of Penny Acres and Wigley Primary Schools we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. Our school attendance target is 97%.

Registers

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Data from the school registers is collected and reported to parents via the annual report, the child's subsequent schools, the Local Authority and Department for Education. It also forms part of the schools collective data.

Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a (half-termly and yearly basis).
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees.
- facilitate and encourage early intervention.
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism.
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy.

- report attendance matters to parents/carers.

Punctuality

It is crucial that children learn to arrive on time, both to acquire a disposition and discipline which will help them in later life, but also because lessons often begin with a teaching input/instructions for the day's lessons, which children who are late miss. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

The school day starts at 8.50 am and the morning register is completed by 9.10 am. The afternoon register is completed by 1.10 pm. If a pupil arrives after the morning or afternoon register has been completed then they will be marked as arriving 'late'. If a pupil arrives for the morning session 30 minutes after the close of register they will be marked as having an 'unauthorised absence'. Children arriving after 9.10 am or 1.10 pm **must** first report to the school office before attending class. We will let you know if we have any concerns about your child's punctuality.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence / First Day Response

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and each and every morning thereafter with the exception to this being where a specified period of absence has been agreed on the first morning e.g. 48 hours following the last episode of sickness/diarrhoea, chicken pox etc. Parents are expected to inform the school office of the nature of the illness/reason for absence when contacting the school.

Where a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. If we have not been informed of a child's absence by 9:30am, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent/carer/guardian to establish the reason for absence. A child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is given for absence or if the school considers the information received from the parent is not an acceptable reason for absence.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school office, in liaison with the relevant member of school staff will then establish contact with the parent and/or relevant external agencies, in order to check on the safety of the child in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons as we realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

- illness, medical or dental appointments.
- days of religious observance.
- exclusion.
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment.
- family bereavement.
- involvement in a public performance.
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

The school monitors attendance and if a child's attendance drops below 95% then the school may choose to talk to the parent / carer / guardian about this. If the school is not satisfied that attendance will improve, or that there is a reasonable explanation (such as a long period of illness), it may choose to involve the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer to support the child, parents and the school to enable all to work together to raise attendance levels.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, please ensure the school office is notified in advance where possible and provide school with a copy of the documentation. The child must also be returned to the school directly after the appointment.

Absence will **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).
- waiting on a delivery.
- going for a family day out.
- going shopping or for a haircut.
- because it is your child's birthday.
- sleeping in after a late night.
- parents are unwell (*call us, we can help to get your child to school*).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

School Outings / Visits / Residential Trips

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, will not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. Opportunities for children to attend these are provided; if they don't go, the children are **expected in school**, where alternative arrangements will be made for them. Governors **will not authorise** absence if the child does not attend school during this time, unless there is a valid medical reason (a bad cold is not acceptable) or medical certification is provided or there are exceptional family circumstances.

Leave of Absence / Holidays in Term Time

Under the new directive, regarding holidays in term time, from the DfE which came in to force on 1st September 2013, the Governors of The Federation of Penny Acres and Wigley Primary Schools have instructed me to only authorise term time holidays in exceptional circumstances.

As a matter of principle holidays should not be taken in school time. Where this is impossible then an application in writing should be submitted to the Headteacher at least two weeks prior to the holiday with relevant documentation attached to support the exceptional circumstances. Parents are advised only to book a holiday once a response from school has been received and only if authorised in the category of exceptional circumstance.

If the school believes that a child has been absent for a family holiday when they have been reported as ill, then the school will attempt to establish communication with the parents before treating the issue as an unauthorised absence.

Parents should be aware that where holidays are taken that have NOT been approved, this will then be classed as an unauthorised holiday and information passed to the LA and you may be issued with a fixed penalty fine. This is completely out of our hands as a school.

Exceptional Circumstance

That only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be allowed and then only up to a maximum of two weeks. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application).

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time holidays need to apply in writing well in advance and before booking: the Headteacher will consider your request and advise you of their decision, (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss) further time than allowed will be unauthorised.

No holiday requests will be granted even with exceptional circumstances for children in Year 2 and Year 6 during SATs week. Notification of the date will be given to parents as early as possible in the academic year. If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

Long Term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the relevant Local Authority support services, so that requests can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Absence for Religious Reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carers is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

Penalty Notices

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Inclement Weather or other reasons the school building may be closed

In case of inclement weather (or other reason the school building may have to close) the school will endeavour to stay open for as long as it is safe to do so. Any decisions to close the school building will be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity and the school will inform parents via the text messaging service in addition to publicising through the Derbyshire County Council website and on local radio. If you are in any doubt as to whether the school will be open or closed then please check the latest information on the Derbyshire County Council website or alternatively ring the school office.

There will be five days during the school year when the school will be closed for staff-in-service training. These dates will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity after the dates have been finalised.

Any decision to close the school building by the Headteacher or other authorised person will not have a detrimental effect on any child's attendance record.

Monitoring & Reviewing of this Policy

The Governing Body has the overall responsibility for the monitoring and reviewing of this policy.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their respective classes and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher who will review the individual's attendance and take any appropriate action in line with this policy. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every four years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Approved by the Full Governing Body of the Federation of Penny Acres and Wigley Primary Schools on 5th October 2021.

Signed:

Date:

Paul Dorward
Chair of Governors

Signed:

Date:

Dave Ratcliffe
Executive Headteacher