



## **Attendance Policy**

### **Aims**

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At The Emmaus Federation, we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

The Federation is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The Federation believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the Federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

### **Types of Absence**

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly 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**

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.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- 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.

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

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays.

### **Leave of Absence**

**There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.**

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 5 days will be asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher/ Chair of Governors to explain the circumstances. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation penalty notices will be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

**Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:**

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at School, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence;

## **Penalty Notices**

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. We expect our authorised attendance to be above 95% and any unauthorised attendance to be above 90%.

## **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').

## **Expectations:**

Primary schools generally have more day-to-day contact with parents than secondary schools. This can mean that many parents are easily contactable which may help to resolve problems and concerns quickly. Conversely, it may make it more difficult for teachers to question parents about absences or to refer to other agencies when the parent is well known to the school. Good practice should include inviting parents to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter and discussing with them the reasons why a referral is being made on to the Education Welfare Service or another agency and the expectation that this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

## **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

For example:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

## **We expect the following from parents**

For example:

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.

- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

For example:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- A quality education

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone
- If there is no response by 12 noon Lincolnshire Education Welfare Services will be contacted for further guidance. This may include action to inform the police to seek assurance that the child and family are safe and well. The school will act under the guidance received.
- Pupil attendance records will be monitored informally on an ongoing basis with mechanisms in place for schools staff to raise their concerns about individual pupils to school leadership. Pupil attendance record data will be analysed at the end of each calendar month and at the end of each school term, looking for patterns and individuals of concern.
- In cases of repeated poor attendance a record will be started for each case recording steps taken and outcomes.
- Parents may be invited in for an informal chat, a letter may be issued or a Pupil Attendance Panel may be convened.
- Where Non Attendance continues a referral will be made to the EWO and the school will continue to work with the family under their guidance

### **Responding to Persistent Lateness**

- All children who enter the school after 9am will have to enter through the main front door past the school office
- All children who enter the school after the registers have closed must register with the office and will sign a late record.
- The late records will be checked weekly by the Headteacher
- The headteacher will contact and work with the parents of identified persistent late arrivers to resolve the issue.
- Should this not result in improved punctuality Lincolnshire Education Welfare Services will be

involved.

### **Reintegration:**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notices/daily briefings.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

#### **Head Teacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the EWO

#### **Head of School (with responsibility for Pupil Support)**

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO.

## **Class Teacher**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To have a classroom display showing information on attendance.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

## **Governors:**

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

## **Parents:**

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

## **Education Welfare Service:**

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the "attendance enforcement arm" of most local authorities (DES 1991) which complements the role of the school.

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves.

In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures we can support schools in a variety of ways:

- We will liaise with identified school staff
- Where a referral is accepted, we will undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Through group work with identified groups of pupils.
- Where necessary we will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.

- We will accept referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria, initiate contact with parents or carers and undertake assessments.
- We will plan and review casework.
- We will provide feedback to schools.
- We can offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.
- We will support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- We will support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

### **Office Staff:**

School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information, OMR sheets.
- Telephone absence slips to be put in registers.
- Maintain a late book.

### **Liaising with External Agencies**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

**Other Agencies** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

### **Procedure for late collection of Children**

If a child is to be collected late from school parents are requested to inform the school by telephone at their earliest convenience. If it is not possible for the child to go home with an alternative agreed adult then provision will be made within school to keep the child safe. This provision will involve no less than two members of staff.

In the event of persistent late collection the parents would be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher. Should further late collections persist without good cause the issue would be regarded as a matter for Child Protection investigation.

**Procedure for the management of missing children**

In the event of suspecting a missing children, senior management would be alerted and an immiate seach made of the school and surrounding area. If this did not locate the child a register would be taken of all children and a further search made. If this did not locate the child the police would be called and the parents informed.

**Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

**Date of Next Review:**

Signed .....

Mrs CV Collett

Executive Headteacher

July 2015

Signed .....

Mrs E Woods

Chair of Governors