



Attendance Policy

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School Aims

- To raise pupil achievement
- To improve pupils' attendance to at least meet the annual target set (target above national attendance)
- To reduce all absence- authorised and unauthorised
- To reduce lateness
- To clarify procedures and expectations for staff, parents and pupils regarding attendance and dealing with absence from school
- To encourage a genuine 'partnership' with parents/carers

Expectations

Children

At Tidemill School we expect pupils to attend every day and to arrive on time so that they do not miss registration and valuable learning time. We also expect parents/carers to let staff know if there is any problem that might prevent them from attending school.

Parents

At Tidemill, we have high expectations of parents in relation to attendance and in line with Government and Local Authority we expect them to:-

- Support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their child through full attendance at school;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn;
- Ensure their child attends school every day;
- Book medical and other appointments outside school hours wherever possible and to bring in a copy of the medical appointment cards if this has been unavoidable;
- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence;
- Take all holidays and trips during school holiday periods;
- Work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance;
- Sign the Home School Agreement agreeing to the above.

The School will:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of;
- Meet the legal requirements set out by Government to ensure efficient and accurate registration of pupils;
- Ensure parents/carers are made aware of the schools attendance policy and their roles and responsibilities relating to attendance;
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance making immediate contact with parents/carers if a child fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation;
- Continue with procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention;
- Consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance of the 1996 education act;
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance;
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school;

- Develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees;
- Develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO;
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality (including significant improvement) with certificates, letters home, etc.

Registration Procedures

The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity offsite or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The registers will be completed by the class teacher between 9:00 and 9:10 a.m. This is done electronically using the Wauton Samuels on-line system. If a pupil is not present when his/her name is called an absence is recorded. If the child arrives before the end of the time set aside for registration the time of arrival is noted and the child can be credited with an (L) attendance and counted as present.

Any children arriving at school after the register has closed and has been submitted to the office will be asked to register at the office if they have not already done so. Pupils arriving between 9.10 - 9.30 will be marked as present but their time of late arrival will be noted. Pupils arriving after 9.30 will be marked as an unauthorised absence. A final check is made by a member of the office team who visits every classroom to ensure there are no anomalies in the registration data.

Absence

- Contact on the first day of absence is the central part of our attendance policy.
- A text is sent to all parents/carers alerting them that their child has been marked as absent. This is done before 10am to make parents aware that their child has not arrived at school. When the parent calls the school a decision will be made as to whether an authorised or an unauthorised mark will be given. If the parent is unaware of their child's whereabouts the police will be informed immediately.
- Unexplained absences are followed-up by a telephone call to request a reason for any such absence. If still no reason is given the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- An "authorised" absence will be considered if the parents/carers provide an acceptable explanation by telephone, email and letter or in person. The specific reason for an absence will be recorded on the on-line register alongside the child's name. (For example, "unwell" is not specific enough).
- The Attendance Officer will review the registers on a weekly basis looking for persistent absences and trends. If a child is developing a pattern of lateness the school will invite the parent/carers in to discuss what support can be offered. This may include referral to the Family Liaison Officer. If the parents/carers fail to respond to the school's requests to improve a pupil's lateness the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Attendance Officer/Family Liaison Officer will review the registers with the EWO on a two weekly basis:

- To pick up patterns of absence
- To pick up patterns of lateness
- To ensure procedures are being followed
- To monitor the major causes of unauthorised absence

- To monitor the percentages of authorised and unauthorised attendance
- To monitor any child whose attendance falls below 95%
- To refer any pupil for investigation whose attendance is below 90% over a reasonable period of time

Tidemill recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of child protection concerns therefore special attention is paid to children identified within the school to be a child protection risk.

Obtaining a clear and precise reason for any absence is an important element of identifying Child Protection concerns.

If a child who is on the child protection register is absent for two days then social care will be notified.

Taking Holiday During Term-Time

All requests for term time leave of absence must be put in writing to the headteacher using the Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time form.

From 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances."

At Tidemill we believe that exceptional circumstances should be of a unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

Decisions will be made on a case by case basis but will normally be refused.

In the event of the child still being taken out of school after the headteacher declining the request a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who may then refer onwards to the Lewisham Attendance and Welfare Service who may take legal action.

At the present time a fixed penalty for non-attendance is £60.00 per child per parent if paid within 28 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. The payment must be paid directly to the local authority. If the payment is not paid in full within 42 days the local authority may prosecute under the non-attendance clause of the Education Act.

Other Absence

Doctor/dentist/medical appointments are not absences unless the child misses the whole session. A child who registers as normal and is then collected for an appointment will be credited as having attended for the whole session. If however the appointment is at the beginning of the day or afternoon and the child misses registration then providing the parent has provided an appointment card an authorised absence will be recorded.

Religious Festival absence must be supported by a letter from the parent/carer and needs to be authorised by the school.

Special circumstances for absence will be considered at the discretion of the Family Liaison Officer (e.g. death in the family, moving house, etc.) who if unsure will discuss with the head teacher before authorising.

Supporting Non-Attendance

Where persistent non-attendance exists without an explanation the parent will be invited into school to meet with the Head/Deputy Head teacher and the Family Liaison Officer to discuss the schools concerns for that individual pupil's absence.

If there is persistent absence that is authorised through sickness and that absence is affecting the pupil's progress the school will invite the parents/carers into the school to discuss what support can be offered.

The school will investigate the pupil's circumstances within the school in an effort to identify any school based difficulties that may be affecting the child's attendance, e.g. bullying, or to investigate and establish if inappropriate parenting is the reason. Support may be offered to the parent/carer if this is the case.

If parents fail to respond to the schools requests to discuss a pupil's absence the school will refer the matter to EWO.

If the school has not received an explanation for an absence even though the child has now returned, the school will continue to follow-up the matter by telephone or letter as appropriate. If no explanation is forthcoming or the explanation given is not considered to be acceptable, the absence will be recorded in the register as "unauthorised". This may result in the matter being referred to the EWO.

If there is no contact or explanation on the first day of absence and the child continues to be absent for a further 2 days without contact with, or notification from, the parents, the school will refer the matter to the EWO as this may be a Child Protection issue.

If a child fails to return on the agreed day (the day the school has agreed with the parents/carer in light of the nature child's illness), the Family Liaison Officer will contact the parent/carer to find out the continued reason for absence. If no explanation is forthcoming or the explanation given is not considered to be acceptable, the absence will be recorded in the register as "unauthorised". This may result in the matter being referred to the EWO.

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

To encourage good attendance and punctuality, results for each class are read out in assembly on a Friday, and the class with the best punctuality is awarded a trophy for the week.

100% attendance certificates and incentive gifts are awarded every term to pupils who qualify. 99% attendance certificates are awarded at end of year to those who qualify. Attendance is also reported in the half-termly newsletters.

Absence Analysis

Tidemill Academy analyses patterns of attendance/ absence by group. Yearly reports are produced by the following groups:-

- SEN
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disadvantaged/Free School Meals (pupil premium)