

ALFRED STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

CO-ORDINATOR: John Kidney

GOVERNOR: Brenda Hunt

September 2014

Statement of Aims

Alfred Street Junior School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance is essential for all pupils if they are to be successful and aims to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels. Alfred Street Junior School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Rights and Responsibilities

Maintaining good attendance at Alfred Street Junior School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents/carers, governors and all staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend regularly and punctually. At the end of each half term the Head Teacher reviews the attendance of each child.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents/carers are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is

received from the parent/carer. Parents/Carers will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents/Carers whose child's attendance is a cause for concern (falls below 90%) will be written to by the Head Teacher or the Parent Support Advisor at the end of each half term. If there is no improvement in attendance or punctuality a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents/Carers whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will encourage good attendance and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents/carers.

Parent Support Advisor

The Bursar brings to the attention of the head teacher any pupils who are persistently absent or late, or pupils who are at risk of becoming so. The head teacher meets regularly with the allocated Parent Support Advisor to put support systems into place. Where attendance falls below 90%, an attendance target will be set and monitored on a fortnightly basis. If there is no improvement in attendance or punctuality a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

Governors

As part of the annual target setting process the head teacher and a designated governor representative, will agree attendance targets with the School Improvement Partner. Attendance figures and progress towards the targets set are discussed at each termly full governing body meeting. Strategies employed and future action to be implemented are discussed and agreed. As part of the Raise-on-line analysis the school's attendance figures are compared to other schools. If targets are not being met, an analysis of the reasons why is given to the governors.

Registration

Registration takes place punctually at 8.50am and 1.05pm. It is a legal requirement and ensures an orderly start to the session. If a pupil arrives after the registration period the pupil/parent/carer must sign the late book outside the school office; they will then be registered 'late' for that session. If a pupil arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register, the parent/carer must sign the late book outside the school office. They will be registered as **unauthorised** absent for the session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Parents/Carers must be aware that it is the school that decides whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. A letter or other communication does not in itself authorise an absence. It is important that all staff are clear as to the policy on this issue.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons: -

- genuine illness

- medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement
- holidays in term time, authorised in advance by the Head Teacher, [see next paragraph].

Parents/Carers cannot expect a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday as a right. They need to submit a request to the Head Teacher, who will reply as to whether the request is granted or not. All requests for holidays in term time will be considered by the Head Teacher.

When the Head Teacher makes the decision whether to authorise the absence the reason, the following issues will be taken into account:

- The time and duration of leave
- The pupil's previous record of attendance
- The age of the pupil
- The pupil's educational needs
- The general welfare of the pupil
- The circumstances of the request and the purpose of the leave.

The maximum permitted absence for holidays is ten days in any school year. The circumstances under which holidays may be authorised are:

- Where parents/carers are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time
- Where a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The circumstances under which holidays should not be authorised are:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.

Permission will not be granted for absence during SATs week in May of any year.

If a child is taken out of school for a holiday, without permission, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Absence rates are monitored by the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence, Expectations and Follow-up

Parents/Carers should notify the school, either by telephone or in person, on the first day of absence, giving the reason and, if possible, likely duration of the absence.

If a pupil is absent and no notification is received, the class teacher will send a request for information to the school office. The Bursar or Admin Assistant will attempt to contact the home by the end of the day.

If a pupil returns to school after an absence where no notification of absence was received, a written explanation must accompany the child.

If a pupil is persistently late or absent the Head Teacher will carry out the following steps, depending on the success of each stage in improving attendance.

1. Contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day
2. Involve the support of the Parent Support Advisor
3. Visit the parents/carers
4. Formally write to parents/carers

If the school's efforts to improve the situation have been unsuccessful, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

Monitoring And Evaluation

Attendance is monitored by the Bursar and Head teacher at the end of each half term. Individual class attendance is reviewed with the teacher.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Resources Committee on behalf of the full governing body.

John Kidney
September 2012
Reviewed July 2014