

# Newbarns Primary School

# *Attendance Policy*



# NEWBARNs PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Mission Statement/Rationale**

Our school wishes to set high standards for all children and provide opportunities for them to achieve their full potential. We wish to see all children succeed and be prepared for the next stage of their education and future life. We expect everyone in school to have tolerance, understanding and respect for all members of the community. We recognise that we will only achieve this by working together in a partnership comprising of governors, parents and members of the wider community.

It is our belief that by attending school on time every day, children will be able to participate fully in the opportunities provided. Children will only succeed in their education if they attend school, therefore we will take action to ensure that all children attend school on a regular basis. We work closely with our Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority to make sure that appropriate action regarding school attendance is taken at all times.

The Department for Education records attendance rates for all schools and attendance is improving across the country. Newbarns Primary School has set a target of achieving above 96% attendance rate annually.

### **Why regular attendance and good punctuality is very important:**

We would like all of our pupils to attend 100% of the time, as we know good attendance leads to:

- Making the best of all the opportunities that are available
- Keeping up with their work
- Each day's learning building on what has been learnt before, so every day at school makes all future learning easier
- Supporting the building of strong friendships and relationships in school

Being away from school even for half a day disrupts a child's access to learning and some children find it difficult to catch up on their return.

School is also a place where we care for the wellbeing of your children and they have access to many activities and opportunities that we do not want them to miss.

Did you know that:

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day of lessons per week
- 80% attendance means a student has missed 38 days education in a school year and nearly 200 hours of lessons missed

It is very important your child arrives on time:

- So they don't miss the instructions at the start of the lesson
- So we know your child has arrived safely in school

The start times of sessions are 8.50am and 1.00pm (Key Stage 2), 8.50am and 1.05pm (Key Stage 1), and there is a registration period of 30 minutes at the start of each session. Pupils who arrive after the start of registration but before it ends are recorded as being late with the code **L**. Pupils who arrive after the end of the 30 minute period of registration has closed, are recorded as an unauthorised late with a **U code**. Please be aware that a child who is 10 minutes late every day for a week misses the equivalent of a whole lesson for that week.

## **Registration Periods**

### **Morning**

8.50am – 9.20am

### **Afternoon**

1.00pm – 1.30pm (Key Stage 2)

1.05pm – 1.35pm (Early Years, Key Stage 1)

## **What the law says**

The law says that if a parent/carer fails to secure the regular attendance of pupils who are registered at a school, they are committing an offence if the absence is not authorised by the school. We always prefer to work with and support parents and pupils to ensure good school attendance and punctuality. However, if attendance fails to improve we do refer to our Education Welfare Officer who liaises with the Local Authority regarding next steps which can include Penalty Notice, a court appearance, fine and even a prison sentence.

We have to record every absence a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents advise us about the cause of any absence by telephone or letter on the first day of absence

## **Definitions**

AUTHORISED - absences are a day or half day away from school for a good reason e.g. illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, or other emergencies with unavoidable cause.

UNAUTHORISED - absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no leave of absence has been granted. This type of absence may lead to the use of other legal sanctions from the Local Authority, This includes:

- Parents keeping children off unnecessarily
- Absences where the parents have not provided an explanation
- Pupils who arrive at the School too late in the morning to get their mark
- Shopping, hair appointments, birthdays etc.
- **Holidays and day trips in term time.**

PERSISTENT ABSENCE – Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 85%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects Schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

When a pupil's attendance, at any one time, is less than 85% they are classed as a persistent absentee. This equates to missing more than 28 days (for whatever reason) in a school year.

### ***What is leave of absence?***

Leave of absence is any absence that the parent/carer requests because of exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence can only be agreed by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances.

***Parents/carers need to be aware that the law changed in September 2013 and parents can no longer request the Headteacher to authorise up to 10 days absence for holidays.***

## **Working together to improve attendance.**

### ***What we expect from our pupils***

- Arrive at school on-time with the correct uniform and equipment ready to start the day
- Attend 100% of the time unless they are genuinely ill or there is an exceptional circumstance
- If a pupil is absent the parent /carer must telephone the school and explain the absence on the first day of absence (preferably before 8:50am)
- Talk to their class teacher or another member of staff if they have any worries or concerns that may be stopping them from wanting to come to school

### ***What we expect from parents/carers***

- Support their children to attend every day
- Ensure that all children arrive on time and are appropriately prepared for the school day
- Notify school on the first morning of any absence and if possible when they expect the child to return
- Contact school if they have concerns about anything that might impact on their child's attendance
- Ensure they prioritise their child's education by not keeping them away from school unnecessarily
- Make sure all contact details given to the school are accurate and kept up to date
- Respond to school quickly if they are contacted about their child's absence
- Complete a Leave of Absence Form and provide documentation, if required, when they wish to request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

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

#### ***Newbarns School will:***

- Maintain accurate registers and follow up reasons for absence when needed
- If no letter or telephone call is received from parents/carers, school will try to establish contact by telephone after 9.20am. If the school has been unable to establish contact on the first day with the parent/carer regarding the absence, further telephone calls will be made and if necessary a visit will be made to ascertain cause of absence
- Support parent/carers and pupils with regular attendance and punctuality. The school's Education Welfare Officer and senior assistant head teacher will meet regularly to review support available to improve attendance and punctuality
- If your child's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason you will be invited to meet with the head or deputy head teacher and our Education Welfare Officer.
- If absences persist the Education Welfare Officer may offer further support or other interventions
- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more
- Ensure strategies exist for rewarding good or improved attendance and the punctuality of individual pupils and classes

## ***Reintegration of Pupils into School after Lengthy Absence***

Where a child has been absent from school for a lengthy period, perhaps through illness, every effort will be made by the school to ensure the child is reintegrated back into school life sensitively and as appropriate to the needs of the individual child.

## **Rewards for Good Attendance**

Staff work hard to promote good attendance and punctuality through the use of praise, certificates, extra playtime, assemblies, attendance monitoring and contact with parents. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

- 100% attendance in a given school year = Certificate presented in Leavers' Assembly,
- 1/2, 1 day absence in a given school year = Certificate. A record of attendance achievement maintained by Headteacher in evidence folder,
- Special certificates are regularly given to children achieving more than 1 year's continuous attendance at the Leavers' Assembly,
- All certificates given are recorded in the children's individual records and achievement.
- Best attending class from each Key Stage (weekly) = Key Stage Attendance Shield and 5 minutes additional playtime,

## **Working Practice**

### **Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher, school admin staff, head teacher and deputy head to identify pupils with poor attendance. Initially, we will contact parents/carers informally by telephone to discuss the issue or by more formal letters and arranged meeting. The head teacher/deputy head will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and any outside agencies regarding attendance to discuss appropriate advice support and any formal follow up action required.

### **Class Teachers**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to mark the attendance register each morning and afternoon, on line. Absences should be recorded with the appropriate code N if unknown. **ONLY** those codes given in the registers should be used. Children who are late, but arrive before the registration period ends should be marked an **L**. Those arriving after the registration period ends should be marked a **U code**. The registers are checked daily by the administrative staff. Class teachers will discuss with the head teacher/deputy head any concerns regarding individual pupil absence.

### **School Secretary**

The School Secretary will follow up any absences after the registration period closes with a telephone phone call to the parents/carers. All absences are collated and print outs given for information and monitoring purposes.

### **What we expect from Cumbria County Council Local Authority**

Our Education Welfare Officer will liaise with the LA to notify when a parent/carer, pupil has failed to respond to support offered following the school-based action planning attendance panels/other meetings as agreed with the school.

They will follow up attendance actions through the use of legal interventions where it is deemed necessary.

**Policy developed: Summer 2014**

**Agreed by Governors:**

**Next Review: Summer 2016**

