

**William Torbitt Primary  
School**

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



May 2017

# William Torbitt Primary School

## Attendance Policy May 2017

### 1. RATIONALE

At William Torbitt we believe that good attendance is central to a pupil attaining well and making the best possible progress. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any pupil's absence or regular late arrival will undoubtedly impact negatively on their learning and progress.

This school has adopted the Redbridge Attendance Strategy September 13 and Redbridge Code of Conduct Penalty Notices in respect of cases of attendance and persistent lateness, which can be viewed on the local authority's website 'Redbridge i' and school website. However, this policy clarifies our internal procedures, roles and responsibilities.

#### **Good attendance is important because:**

- ❖ Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- ❖ Pupils with regular attendance make better progress, both socially and academically.
- ❖ Pupils with regular attendance find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- ❖ Pupils with regular attendance have an easier transfer to secondary school, having developed positive habits in attending school every day.

### 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Carers have a responsibility by law (Education Act 1996 section 444(1) & (1a)) for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school. The school also believes that all members of the school community have a part to play in creating a pattern of regular attendance.

#### **2.1 Pupils can help by:**

- a. Going to bed when their parents/carers tell them
- b. Doing their best to get up in the mornings and getting ready quickly for school
- c. For our older pupils, getting their book bags, PE kits, etc ready the night before

#### **2.2 Parents and Carers can help by:**

- a. Bringing their children to school every day and on time;
- b. Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly
- c. Arranging medical/dental appointments out of school hours;
- d. Ensuring that holidays or parts of a holiday are not taken during term time
- e. Ringing the school on their child's first day of absence before 9.00am;
- f. Sending in a written note explaining their child's absence on their return to school;
- g. Keeping the school informed by phone during prolonged absence due to illness;
- h. Providing the school with medical evidence for any absence due to illness, when requested
- i. Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to poor attendance
- j. Ensuring they are aware of the attendance policy of the school

#### **2.3 The Class Teacher will:**

- a. In line with legal requirements, complete registers promptly at the start of the morning (9.00am) and afternoon sessions (1.00pm/1.30pm). Pupils arriving after these times are recorded as late, and the time of their arrival entered in the register.

- b. Keep an overview of individual pupils' attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- c. Inform the Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher where there are concerns
- d. Provide background information to support referrals
- e. Emphasise to their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- f. Follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of office staff)
- g. Discuss any attendance issues, as relevant, with parents/carers on consultation evenings

#### **2.4 The School will:**

- a. Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- b. Monitor the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils and let parents/carers know if they have any concerns regarding their child's attendance or punctuality;
- c. Acknowledge and celebrate excellent attendance in assemblies and newsletters
- d. Follow up unexplained absences on the 1st day with a phone call in the morning and a phone call in the afternoon (if appropriate), this will continue for each day of absence;
- e. Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters/ parent meetings;
- f. Meet with parents/carers (sometimes alongside the Educational Welfare Officer or other relevant professionals) to discuss concerns and offer support when needed
- g. Report attendance figures termly to governors;
- h. Refer cases of poor attendance or punctuality and persistently absent pupils to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).
- i. Notifying the Education Welfare Service of the need for a Fixed Penalty Notice, when appropriate
- j. Set an exemplary example by staff members being punctual and having good attendance themselves

#### **2.5 The Purpose of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) visits**

- a. The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school regularly to meet with the Attendance Officer to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- b. Prior to the meeting the following information is collected:
  - Attendance record for any child with less than 90% attendance
  - Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
  - Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- c. Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate. Decisions taken are recorded.
- d. Following the meeting with the EWO, class teachers are notified of the outcome and agreed actions are discussed with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher / Class Teacher, and followed up as appropriate.

### **3. SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCE / PUNCTUALITY**

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

#### **3.1 Authorised Absence**

- a. Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill. Parents should be aware that the school may request a copy of medical evidence (e.g. a letter from the family doctor, copy of a prescription or the bottle or packet from prescribed medication).
- b. Family bereavement absences will be considered on an individual basis.

- c. An absence due to religious observance that falls within school term time, subject to a maximum of 3 days annually will be considered. However, it should be noted that religious observance days cannot be requested as a day in lieu if a particular religious festival falls within a school holiday or the weekend. Similarly, the school will not authorise leave of absence for pilgrimages (e.g. Lourdes, Mecca, Jerusalem) as these are not deemed to require absence during school term time.

### 3.2 Unauthorised Absence Sanctions

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (30 minutes after the start of the session)
- Days off for birthdays...
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed (authorised) by the Headteacher.

A penalty notice will be considered for unauthorised leave of absence after the first day of absence. School will send a request to the local authority to implement this on their behalf following discussions with the Head teacher and EWO in accordance with the Redbridge Attendance Strategy. Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The EWO may contact parents/carers and consider taking legal action against them if their child is persistently absent.

### 3.3 Leave of Absence Requests

For any requests for leave of absence, the school asks that parents/carers complete a separate leave of absence request form (available from the reception office) for each child concerned.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE HEAD TEACHER WILL NOT AUTHORISE HOLIDAYS, OF ANY LENGTH, IN TERM TIME. AUTHORISATION FOR A CHILD TO MISS SCHOOL WILL ONLY BE GRANTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO JUSTIFY THE REQUEST, AND THEN ORDINARILY FOR NO MORE THAN THREE DAYS.

*(Please refer to p4 -5 of the Redbridge Attendance Strategy 2013 for examples of exceptional circumstances and special considerations).*

**If a child is taken out of school during term time without the school's permission (authorisation) their parents/carer will receive a penalty notice and will risk losing the child's school place.**

### 3.4 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason (including illness). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and the school needs the parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers are informed. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. The school also combines this with the tracking of that pupil's academic progress. All PA pupils and their parents/carers are subject to an Action Plan, which may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in activities around raising attendance.

### 3.5 Punctuality

- a. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Good punctuality needs to be started from the earliest age i.e. Nursery and Reception.
- b. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. As activities begin as the children enter the classroom, pupils arriving late disrupt lessons and can also be embarrassing for them.

- c. The morning bell is rung in the playground at 8.55am. This is the time the children must be in the line in the playground, ready to be greeted by the class teacher. The class is then taken in so that the register can be taken by 9.00am.
- d. Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance;
- e. All pupils that arrive late will be marked in the register with either an 'L' code (between 1 and 30 minutes after the register is taken) or 'U' code (30 minutes or more after the start of the school day); their time of arrival is recorded and this could be used in evidence in the event of court action;
- f. At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark for that morning or afternoon session, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- g. Letters are sent out by the school to parents/carers whose child/ren have been late into school on **3** occasions. Continual reoccurrence of lateness will result in parents being requested to meet with the Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher to help resolve any difficulties or referral to the Educational Welfare Officer. A penalty notice may also be issued.

### **3.6 Rewards**

At the beginning of each term pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the term are awarded certificates and stickers in achievement assemblies.

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the year are awarded special certificates, Headteacher stickers, and their names published in the school newsletter.

Appropriate rewards are also offered to persistently absent pupils as part of an individual action plan drawn up by the school, in consultation with parents/carers/EWO.

### **3.7 Late pick up**

Parents/carers must contact the school, as soon as possible, if they find that they are going to be late picking up their child from school, so that the child does not become anxious, and the school is aware of what is happening. However, the parents/carers of pupils who are regularly not picked up on time (whether the school is informed or not), will be asked to meet with the Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher to discuss ways of improving the situation. If late pick ups continue, this could trigger a referral being made to social services as this could be deemed as neglect of a child.

### **3.8 Leavers**

If a child is leaving the school, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are asked to:

- Fill in a form that gives the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address new school and start date when known.
- Take our school's compliments slip to the new school so they can easily contact us and records can be transferred.

When pupils leave and parents have not given the school the above information, and the school cannot make contact, then a child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education (CME)**. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services and the CME Officer. By providing the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

## **4. PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

Headteacher and the Governing Body

## **5. TARGETS**

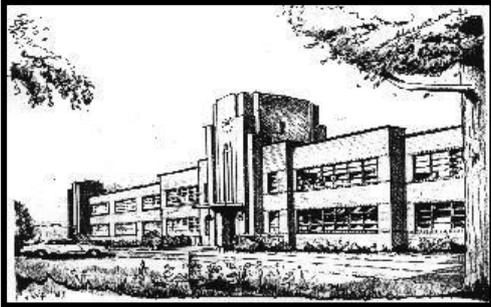
The Governors set a target for whole school attendance and for the percentage of persistent absenteeism each year which is monitored on a termly basis.

## **6. SUMMARY**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, and see this as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible for all pupils at William Torbitt Primary School.

## 7. REVIEW DATE

This policy is to be reviewed by the governing body in January 2019



# William Torbitt Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs Patricia Hinds B.Ed, NPQH

## Special consideration request form for leave of absence

Date form received by office \_\_\_\_\_

Pupils attend school for a maximum 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The school regards absence as a very serious concern and it is a proven fact there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement (Department for Education (DfE), 2012).

The DfE (2013) states that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted. The school will only grant leave in term time in the most exceptional circumstances for which evidence will be requested. Requests for leave during term time must be applied for in advance. Leave taken without the permission of the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised and you may be liable to a Penalty Notice fine of £120 per parent, per child (£60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days). The fines will be issued by Redbridge Education Welfare Service.

### To be completed by parent / carer

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### Date(s) of requested absence:

First day of absence \_\_\_\_\_ Returning to school \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for absence

Are arrangements (flights / accommodation) already booked? YES / NO

If so, please attach a copy of flight / booking details

I have read and understood the above information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of parent / carer (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent / carer

### To be completed by the school

Date of meeting / phone call with

Mrs Hinds (Headteacher) / Mrs Gould (Attendance Officer) (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Notes of meeting / or phone call

Authorised days

Unauthorised days

Supporting documents seen? YES / NO \_\_\_\_\_

Penalty to be imposed? YES / NO

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**If for any reason your child / children is / are not back in school on \_\_\_\_\_ you must contact the school immediately, otherwise there is the possibility of them being removed from the school roll.**

### To be completed once the child has returned to school

Actual absence from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Returned to school on \_\_\_\_\_

Authorised days

Unauthorised days

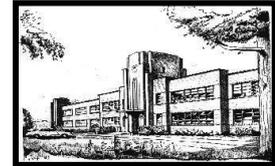
Local authority notified? YES / NO

Penalty to be imposed? YES / NO      Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Headteacher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent / carer \_\_\_\_\_

# William Torbitt Primary School



If your child is leaving the school other than at the end of Year 6, please complete the information below:

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Last day at William Torbitt \_\_\_\_\_

Date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of new school \_\_\_\_\_

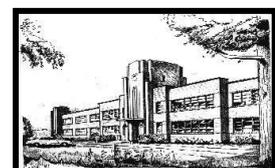
\_\_\_\_\_

Start date \_\_\_\_\_

Please take one of our compliments slips to the new school so that they can contact us and records can be transferred.

Thank you.

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\_\_\_\_\_

Start date \_\_\_\_\_

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