

Downs Way School Attendance Policy

Introduction

The Headteacher and staff at Downs Way School are committed to maintaining a sound partnership with the Local Authority, parents, Governors and pupils to build a school of which the community can be proud. We believe that regular attendance at school is very important if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities we offer them. We do all we can to encourage full attendance and identify and act promptly on any factors which affect this.

Expectations

A sharing of expectations between the school, parents and children is vital for a policy to work effectively.

The school will:-

- Ensure parents receive information on the times of the school day and holiday dates annually, amended when necessary.
- Ensure parents receive information about equipment, uniform and resources children will need to be prepared for their day at school.
- Keep twice daily records of attendance through the school register.
- Encourage good attendance and monitor all pupils' attendance.
- Make prompt enquiries of any parents of pupils attending irregularly and clarify the school's and LA's expectations.
- Refer any on-going irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service whose Officer visits the school regularly.

Parents will:-

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that children arrive at school punctually, prepared for the day and having done any required homework.
- Contact the school on the first day of their child's absence either by phone or in writing. Inform the school in advance and in writing of any medical or dental appointments which will necessitate a late arrival or collection during the school day.
- Work with the school to address any problems that may keep their child away from school.
- Try to arrange family outings and holidays during school holiday time and inform the school in advance and in writing if this is not possible.
- **Pupils will:-**
- Attend school every day unless they are ill.
- Attend school punctually.
- Be rested and prepared with all they need for the day.

Responding to late arrival

Registers are closed at 9.05 a.m. and 1.20 p.m. A child who arrives at school after this time will be marked as late. A child who arrives after 9.15 in the morning will be marked as an unauthorised absentee unless it is a medical matter or the child is new to school and has not yet settled in school.

Responding to absence

All our children are brought to school and collected at the end of the day, so our parents are used to informing the school straight away if their child is unable to attend. If, however, a pupil does not attend school and there is no message about it, we will respond as follows:-

First day of absence

If no telephone call or letter has been received to explain the absence by 9.30 am the school will try to contact the family at home by phone or email. If there is no reply we will ask known friends and neighbours if they have been asked to deliver a message. A log of calls and their outcome is kept in the Office.

Second day of absence

If there is still no explanation of the absence the school will send a letter inviting parents to school to discuss the absence and explaining that if the absence persists then a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Education Welfare Service will result in further action, which could include court prosecution and the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Leave of Absence

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.**

When the Headteacher decides on the authorisation of the holiday, she will consider the following:-

- The child's record of attendance
- Decide if it is felt that the experience would be of educational value or is an exceptional circumstance.
- The timing of the holiday, so it does not coincide with important examinations or assessments.

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance. Except in cases where an employer states that holiday must be taken in term time the school will NOT authorise absences for **holidays**.

Parents/carers must complete an Absence during Term Time Request Form to request approval for **any** leave of absence. The forms can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website.

- Where leave is denied - but the child is removed from school anyway - the school will classify the absence as unauthorised.
- Cases of persistent unauthorised absence will be reported to the LA who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service may issue Penalty Notices to a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school. A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Where a child is taken out of school for holiday in term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the headteacher, **EACH PARENT/CARER** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **EACH CHILD**. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

After 20 schooldays of unauthorised absence and without any communications, after both school and Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil, the said pupil can be removed from the school roll.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform us as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school's roll until the following information has been received:-

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address

Conclusion

The school will do all it can to promote good attendance by providing a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Reviewed Summer Term 2013

Review Summer Term 2014