

Reedley Primary School

Reedley School Reedley Road Reedley Burnley BB10 2NE 01282 693688

www.reedley.lancs.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Bell



Our school nurtures curiosity and creativity through an inspiring, broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all that we do. Children at Reedley learn to become resilient and self-assured in a safe environment where challenge is key. Team Reedley are encouraged to thrive and achieve as individuals, preparing them for their role as caring and active citizens in modern Britain.

(Mission statement)

Introduction:

To create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach their potential. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that parents make sure that children attend regularly and this Policy sets out how this can be achieved.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance at school is parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help to focus on this, school staff:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Report to parents/carers half termly on how each child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class rewards, prizes, certificates and events.
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery reception, and before leaving for high school;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school by ringing home and carrying out home visits;
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole-school attendance.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED, which is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. A morning away from school is classed as after the register has closed at 9.30am.

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the register has closed at 9.30am

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- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents are encouraged to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and can make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and school needs parents' support and co-operation to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be given priority consideration, and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the pastoral system and school staff also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, parents must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone on 01282 693688 or by calling into school and report to Mrs Iqbal at reception

If a child is absent, school will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if a reason for the absence has not been communicated to school staff;
- Call at the family home to do a 'home visit' to see why the child is not in school,
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with Mrs Walton and/or Mrs Bell if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team where appropriate as per Local Authority protocol.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when school staff need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so it is vital that all contact numbers are up to date on school records at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

In-School Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, pastoral staff, Headteacher, school nurse
- Offering a variety of awards for children with good attendance
- Parenting contracts;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority School Attendance Team)

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• Penalty notices

The Local Authority School Attendance Team:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST). They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist the case may be referred to the Court Officers, who can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school over a school year.

How lateness is managed:

The school day starts at 8:50am and children are expected to be in class at that time. Doors open at 8.40am. Children arriving from 8.40am go straight to their classrooms where a member of staff will meet the children. Registers are marked by 9.00am and a child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a 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 and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If a child has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or a member of the pastoral support team to resolve the problem, but parents can approach school staff at any time if they are having problems getting a child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and school staff expect parents to help, by not taking children away in school time. Any savings that families may make by taking a holiday in school time, are offset by the cost to a child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office and, at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised but only in 'special circumstances'. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. It is important that parents understand the circumstances when leave in term time could be detrimental to a child's education.

- Family holidays that could be taken during the school holiday periods
- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as a child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (such as SATS) or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 96% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Penalty notices:

A penalty notice will be issued where a child has been absent from school for 10 or more unauthorised school sessions. (One school day is two school sessions.) This may include taking a child on a holiday during term time or

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where a child is absent without a valid reason. The absence information will be passed to the legal department and they will then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. This is currently £120 per child per parent and this halves to £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days. (Example: if there are 2 children and 2 parents, the initial fine would be £480, which could half to £240 if paid within 21 days). Failure to pay the fine, could result in the adult being taken to court for failure to pay the fine.

Extended Leave in Term Time:

Only in 'exceptional' circumstances will 'leave' of over 10 days, (up to 20 days) be authorised by the school. In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school rolls if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date, and readmission cannot be guaranteed. The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010) Parents may also be asked to attend a meeting to discuss educational opportunities for their child whilst on extended leave.

Religious Absence:

The school will authorise one day 'leave' (i.e. the day set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival, e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in this school:

Parents should:

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1st day of absence
- Avoid holidays in term time and apply in advance using form where there are exceptional circumstances
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

Pupils:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

Headteacher:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents

Designated Staff:

- Mrs Iqbal - First day response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Mrs Iqbal - Input and update the attendance registers
- Mrs Walton - Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Mrs Walton - Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance

All School Staff:

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- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

Governors

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and each child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum level of attendance for Reedley Primary School is 96% attendance and school informs parents/carers regularly about progress to this level and how their child's attendance compares. The school target is to achieve better than this however because good attendance is the key to successful schooling. Through the school year, absences and punctuality are monitored which show where improvements need to be made.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Date of Policy: October 2017

Date Review Due: January 2019

Appendix 1

Criteria for exceptional circumstances

Our policy allows school to authorise certain absences which could be classed as exceptional.

Visiting very poorly relatives

This may be classed as an authorised absence from school, if the following procedures are followed.

If parents/carers need to visit a very sick relative, the advice is that alternative arrangements should be made for the children to remain at home with an appropriate adult so that they can continue to attend school.

If this is not possible, then six school days may be authorised for this purpose if this visit is out of the UK. If this visit is within the UK, then two days may be authorised for this purpose.

Absences for this purpose that are longer than 6 days will be classed as unauthorised and could result in a fine being issued.

Families need to provide evidence that the booking has been made within two weeks of the departure date.

Parents/carers will need to contact school and attend a meeting with Mrs Bell and Mrs Walton, prior to the visit taking place.

This reason would only be authorised once within a school year and subsequent visits would be unauthorised.

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If following a leave of absence, a child is poorly and unable to return to school, we would need medical evidence of the illness, otherwise it will be recorded as unauthorised. Jetlag is not a valid reason to be absent.

Attending medical appointments

Absences where children are attending urgent or necessary medical appointments which cannot be made out of school hours, may be authorised, if evidence of the appointment is provided.

This does not include routine dentist or optician appointments or GP appointments.

If children attend medical appointments, they must attend school for the rest of the school day.

Eg If an appointment is at 10am, children need to attend school before and after the appointment.

Death of a close relative

Under these circumstances, parents/carers need to contact the school in order for us to discuss the individual circumstances and to enable us to provide the necessary support.

Appendix 2

Unauthorised absences

These are defined as absences which have not been approved by the school

These include:

- attending a family wedding
- oversleeping
- if parents/carers are unwell
- if parents/carers have issues with transportation eg missing the bus, car breaking down or taxi being late
- attending a dentist or optician routine check-up appointment
- obtaining or renewing passport or visa
- jetlag or tiredness following a leave of absence from school
- moving house

Please note that when children arrive after 9.30am, this is recorded as an absence, not a late.