

REDFIELD EDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Redfield Edge Primary School we believe that full and regular attendance at school is a vital factor in achieving a successful education and we therefore do everything we can to promote it. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Requests for absence during term time have become more common in recent years. Real disruption to individuals' educational progress is a result of the full attendance pattern being broken.

Legislation

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

The educational welfare service has provided guidance as to what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances- these will be considered on an individual basis.
- Consideration will be given to parents or carers who work for the emergency services and are only granted leave at certain times.

The school will consider every above request individually but the following **will not meet the criteria**:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family and friends that have a different half term holiday

Requests for Absence

These should be made:

- on the school 'Absence Request' form
- well in advance of the proposed holidays and well before any bookings are made
- by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. This covers the situation of children whose parents are separated or divorced and who wish to go on holiday with the other parent or other relative. The parent with care should make the request on behalf of the other parent or relative, in order to avoid any subsequent misunderstanding or disputes

School Policy

The school will consider each request for absence on its merits, but general principles are:

- a) It is at the Head Teacher's discretion to grant leave of absence in order that a pupil may take part in a family holiday that can not take place during school holidays because a parent/carer is unable to arrange leave from work to coincide.
- b) Where leave is granted, one week of term time per school year shall be regarded as sufficient under normal circumstances.
- c) Leave will not normally be granted for pupils to go on holiday with friends or friends' parents.
- d) In line with other local schools no holiday request will be authorised in Term 1 or Term 5.
- e) No leave will be granted in Years 2 and 6 during the SATs period in May.
- f) Any absences in September at the beginning of the school year, brings a particular disadvantage as it prevents a child from settling down with a new teacher and perhaps with new classmates. Parents/carers are urged not to request leave at this time of year.
- g) Holiday leave will not be granted to pupils already with poor attendance records.
- h) In some cases, such as an extended visit to relatives abroad, a trip may bring considerable education benefit to the child. In such circumstance we might wish to discuss how the trip could be used as part of an educational programme, perhaps by the children keeping a holiday diary while away.
- i) Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Children's absence and late arrival at school is recorded in the registers and is monitored by the Head Teacher and the Educational Welfare Officer regularly. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. Registers are taken at 8.55 am for the morning session and at 1.15 pm for the afternoon session. Any child arriving after these times will be marked as late. However, if they arrive half an hour after these times, this will be classed as unauthorised absence, if there is not an acceptable reason.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. 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 too late to get a mark

If there are any problems regarding attendance, the Head Teacher and/or Education Welfare Officer will arrange a meeting with the parents/carers of the child to discuss it further.

Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27 February 2004.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in case of unauthorised absence from school.

The following circumstances may result in a parent/carer being issued with a penalty notice:

- general non attendance of 10 unauthorised absence sessions (a session is a morning or afternoon)
- excessive holiday during term time
- truancy
- persistent late arrival at school
- Any holiday taken in Term 1 and/or Term 5
- Any holiday taken where a pupil's attendance has fallen below 90% in the academic year.

Please refer to South Gloucestershire Education Welfare Penalty Notice Protocol and the Revision to the Local Code of Conduct for the issue of Penalty Notices.

Late Arrival

When children arrive after the doors have been locked, parents/carers are asked to bring them into school via the office, so that their arrival is recorded. Lessons are disrupted by the late arrival of pupils and the school discourages this whenever possible.

Absence Due to Illness

If a child is ill and will not be attending school, parents/carers are asked to telephone the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence and then again after one week if the absence is for a longer period. If we do not receive a telephone call, the secretaries telephone home to establish the reason. When the reason for absence has been discovered, a notification slip is completed and kept in the child's folder and the register marked accordingly.

If problems are experienced with making contact with the parents/carers, a letter is sent home with the child on their return to school asking the parent/carer for the reasons for absence and for clarification of their contact telephone numbers.

It is anticipated that by making first day calls and following up all absences, parents/carers will get into the habit of calling the school themselves to notify of absence due to illness etc.

Conclusion

We believe that our policy on attendance will help parents/carers support our attempts to provide the best possible education for the children. The reinforcement of punctuality and full attendance has a powerful impact on educational progress.

Positive advice on attendance, term time holidays and lateness are given in the 'Attending School' information produced by the school and distributed to every family.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chair of the Governors

Head Teacher

Date: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Governor with responsibility for attendance

Date: _____

Reviewed: May 2016

To be reviewed: May 2019