

Mudeford Community Infants School

Principles

Children should be in school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence of the parent. The governors of Mudeford Community Infants School recognise the extensive research that shows good attendance in school strongly correlates to successful educational outcomes. It also recognises that good attendance habits are formed at an early age and a co-ordinated and consistent approach to attendance will ensure students will maintain these habits as they enter the employment beyond their education.

The TLF expects good attendance from its students, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to make sure this is achieved.

Parents are required to help the school by notifying them of all absences on the first day with a verbal message to either the school reception. Any absence which is known in advance such as medical appointments should be notified to the school in writing beforehand. For longer absences contact will be maintained by the school phoning the parents to enquire about the child's well being.

The head teacher will adopt strategies to monitor attendance and intervene should the need arise, with the support of the Local Authority if necessary. This intervention will begin once attendance drops below 90%

Mudeford Infants School has to report both to governors and the Local Authority on attendance patterns at regular stages throughout the year and works closely with the Local Authority to support good attendance. All schools have a statutory requirement to refer individual cases of poor attendance to the Local Authority and this can be done without the permission of parents.

Authorised Absences include:

- Illness that deems a child 'unfit' for school.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged out of school hours.
- Days of religious observance
- Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher

Should a parent believe absence should be authorised but does not meet the above criteria it is vital that they contact the school to discuss the absence well in advance.

Note: "Regulation 7 of 2006 Education (England) Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupils except where an application has been made **in advance** and the proprietor considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application." It should be recognised that the amendments **remove reference to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.**

The amendments make it clear that a Headteacher **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences:

All other absence from school will be recorded as unauthorised.

Child Missing From Education

What will be done when children stop attending school, school has been unable to contact those children and they are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school or the children are missing?

- The school will try to make telephone contact.
- The school will write to the known home address.
- The school will make informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child and refer to the Locality Social Worker.
- If the area is known where the child has gone to, a tracer will be sent by the Locality Social Worker
- On receipt of such a referral the Locality Social Worker will complete checks to locate the child.
- If the child has been missing, with no contact from parents or carers and no information as to where the child is for 10 days, a Child Missing Education form will be completed and sent to DCC.

If the school has any Child Protection concerns about the child it will follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact social care **immediately**.

Responsibilities:

Students:

- Have a responsibility to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Have a responsibility to ensure that their lifestyle beyond school does not, in any way, adversely affect their ability to attend school regularly, punctually and in a fit condition to learn. This is a shared responsibility with parents.

Parents:

- Have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents must notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- A Child's absence will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation has been given.
- Parents should work with the school to support good attendance and commit to meeting with the school should a child's attendance cause concern.

Schools:

- Identify a specific member of staff who will take responsibility for attendance.

- This will range from class teachers who are required to take registers and follow up on absence through to pastoral leaders who will liaise with parents as appropriate.
- The Head teacher will take responsibility for the school attendance strategy and will monitor and report on attendance patterns.
- Individual school will publicise their own specific strategies and processes regarding attendance to parents.

In addition the Headteacher will have responsibility for:

- Overall monitoring of individual and whole school absenteeism.
- Contacting parents to share concerns regarding high level or inappropriate absences or persistent lateness.
- Authorising leave of absence on behalf of the governing body.
- Making referrals to the Locality Team who represents the Local Authority.
- Liaison with external agencies such as Social Care as appropriate.
- Reporting to parents, the governing body and the Local Authority as appropriate.
- Making decisions concerning school closure in line with Local Authority guidance.
- Informing the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, following the authority's procedures for a Child Missing Education.
- Developing strategies and incentives to promote good attendance.

Governors:

- Will monitor overall attendance figures.
- Work with the Headteacher and staff to improve attendance as required.
- Liaise through the Chair of Governors with the Headteacher about school closure.

Dorset County Council:

Fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer term health and wellbeing.

Dorset County Council will be supporting schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school. Therefore a pattern of unauthorised absence, which can include **taking holidays in term time**, can result in a Penalty Notice (£60 per parent if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per parent if paid within 28 days). Failure to pay a Penalty may result in criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £2500 or imprisonment.

Policy review

This policy has been adopted by the governors and is approved annually by the full governing body at its first routine meeting of each academic year (usually in September). In the meantime it is reviewed as necessary by the owner of the policy and the head teacher, and any resultant changes other than minor clarifications or those of a typographical nature are brought to the attention of the governing body. The policies master record index is updated to reflect the dates of the last and next review, and the owner of the policy.

Reviewed Approved and Adopted: Sept 2015