

# **Prettygate Infant and Junior School Attendance Policy**

## **Statement of Intent**

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

At both Prettygate Infant and Junior Schools we are committed to ensuring that all children receive their entitlement to a full education. In the school prospectus we stress the importance of regular attendance to our parents/carers in the school prospectus, at parents information meetings, teacher consultations and periodic newsletters. We work closely with the Education Welfare Service and have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer.

## **School Attendance and the Law**

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Missing

Education and Child Employment Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **Roles Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **School**

- The teacher records attendance of pupils and on SIMS (School Information Management System) This is verified by the school office.
- At the Infant school, children are expected to be in the classroom ready to begin learning at 9am. They therefore leave the playground at 8.55am to go to their classrooms. The doors are open from 8.45am and close at 8.55am. Children arriving after this time should enter the school via the school office. Parents are expected to sign their child in. Arrivals between 9am and 9.30am are recorded as Late (L) in the register.
- At the Junior school registration takes place at 8.55am and children are required to be in the classroom by this time. The doors are open from 8.40am.. Children arriving after 8.55am need to enter the school via the main reception and a member of staff will sign them in. Any arrivals between 8.55am and 9.30am will be recorded as late (L) in the register.  
A child arriving after 9.30 at either school will be recorded as a U in the register. This indicates an unauthorised absence. The exception to this is if a child arrives after 9.30 as a result of a medical appointment in which case L will be entered on the register indicating a present as oppose to an absence.
- If your child is absent from school and we have received no explanation we will contact you that morning using the contact details provided.
- Absence for Holidays, Birthday treats, family visits etc will not be authorised during term time unless exceptional circumstances have arisen. Absence for funerals, family emergencies etc. may be authorised if they are regarded as exceptional circumstances but you may have to complete a form.
- The schools will always keep parents informed of their child's attendance record and regularly send out letters to inform parents if the attendance has dropped below an acceptable level.  
At the infant school if attendance drops below 90% the Home School Liaison Worker will become involved and will write to parents or request a meeting if appropriate. If attendance drops below 85% the child is classed as a Persistent Absentee (according to L.E.A guidelines) and the school is required to take action at this stage The Education Welfare Service may well become involved.  
At the Junior school if attendance drops below 94% you will receive a letter, if it drops below 90% the Home School Liaison worker or Headteacher may request a meeting and if attendance drops below 85% the child is classed as a Persistent Absentee (according to L.E.A guidelines) The school is required to take action at this stage and the Education Welfare Service could become involved.
- In exceptional circumstances e.g. long term sickness, broken bones, behavioural and emotional difficulties, etc., the Headteacher will speak to individual parents to arrange a phased reintroduction into school for example, mornings only, to suit the child's needs.
- If a child is absent for ten consecutive sessions i.e. five days and there has been no communication with the parent the school will notify the Local Authority. This is a legal requirement

### **Parents/carers**

- If your child is absent due to illness please contact the school before 9am  
You are required to contact the school each day of your child's absence. If you do not contact the school then we will endeavour to contact you using the emergency numbers provided.  
Parents should be made aware that, where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES) will be considered.
- You must only request leave if there are exceptional circumstances as family holidays will NOT be authorised under any circumstances
- There is an expectation that parents work with school and/or MECES to resolve any attendance issues
- Please ensure that your child is at school punctually as lateness is recorded in the registers and monitored by MECES. Both schools record the number of times a child is late and also the number of minutes of the school day they have missed.

### **Missing Education and Child Employment Service (MECES)**

- Works within 4 quadrant based Area Attendance Teams to reduce persistent absence, improve overall attendance and give advice and support to children, families and schools.
- Carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance

The school may refer a pupil to MECES where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The MECES will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

### **Evaluation and Review**

The school will review this policy *annually* and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.