

# **Fleecefield Primary School**



## **Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Autumn 2018**

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# Legal Framework

## EDUCATION ACT 1996

***If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.***

This information is based on:-

- ❖ This Education Act 1996
- ❖ The Children's Act 1989
- ❖ Children and Young Persons Act 1933
- ❖ The Education (Pupil's Attendance Records) Regulations 1997
- ❖ The Education (Pupil's Registration – Amendment) Regulations 1997
- ❖ Social Inclusion Pupil Support – DfES circulars 10/99 and 11/99

Copies of all above documents are available from the Education Welfare Service.

- If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school and does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school, the LEA will serve the parent with an Attendance Order under Sections 437-439 of the Education Act 1996.
- If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason, and attempts by the EWS and school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the EWS will, unless there is statutory defense, take legal action against the parents before the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or by applying for an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989.
- If, after taking legal action, the child still fails to attend school regularly, the EWS will keep the case open and will, if deemed appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.
- In cases where the parents withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the EWS will promptly begin legal proceedings on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

# Introduction

We strongly believe regular attendance is linked to higher achievement. Arriving at school on time each day will enable your child to make the most of the rich learning and social experiences Fleecefield has to offer. This is especially important during the early years at school. Habits of regular attendance and good time keeping need to be established early on and will benefit your child for the rest of his or her school career and throughout life.

Our ethos aims to ensure that all children at Fleecefield feel valued and welcomed, that pupils feel their attendance at school is important and that they will be missed when they are absent or late.

Our Attendance Officer and Deputy Head are responsible for monitoring attendance regularly and analyses attendance registers, liaising directly with parents and Education Welfare Services about any pupils of concern, providing regular training to support class teachers on completion of registers, providing induction training for new class teachers, reporting termly to School Governors and are available to offer advice and support to Parents/Carers on any area of attendance.

# Strategies and Rewards

At Fleecefield we have clear strategies and rewards to promote and celebrate good attendance:

- We encourage open communication with parents through telephone calls and letters. We encourage parents to meet with us to enable us to clearly understand and support their concerns about family/health issues, which may affect their child's attendance.
- We hold regular attendance clinics with our Education Welfare Officer and School Nurse for parents of children who are causing us concern or who have recurring illnesses to discuss issues and agree a way forward. Regular clinics are also held by the Deputy Head.
- We give parents of new children leaflets outlining their responsibilities in ensuring their child attends school every day on time.
- Home visits may be carried out by members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- We target the Early Years and Reception pupils. At home visits and open evenings we discuss and emphasise the importance of good attendance and hand out leaflets to this effect.
- Each phase will receive Fluffy or Fleecy the sheep, as a reward for the class with the best attendance. They will keep this in class for the week.
- Weekly certificates are awarded for the class with the best attendance
- Weekly certificates are awarded to the class with the best punctuality.
- Termly and yearly 100% attendance certificates and rewards are awarded to those pupils with no absences. Rewards/incentives may be awarded to pupils who have attended school regularly in difficult circumstances and to pupils with improved attendance and timekeeping.
- Yearly certificates are awarded to pupils in Early Years who have made a fantastic effort in attendance, pupils who have attended school regularly in difficult circumstances and to pupils with improved attendance and timekeeping.

# Registration & Attendance Procedures

## Requests for absence during the school term

- **Holidays taken during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence.**
- Requests for absence during term time **must** be put in writing to the Headteacher along with completing a Request for Absence form, giving the reasons why the absence cannot be taken during the normal school holidays. Evidence will be required to support any request. The Deputy Head will liaise with the Attendance Officer and look at each case individually before reaching a decision.
- Parents will receive a copy of the request form, informing them whether or not the request has been authorized or not. A Penalty Notice warning letter will be issued with the request form.
- Only the school has the authority, (not parents), to decide on how to classify any absence.
- Parents who take their children out of school during term time without permission from the Headteacher or who takes unauthorised term time leave are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice and being fined up to £60 per parent per child. If this is not paid, the fine increases to £120 per parent per child and if still unpaid, prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

## Lateness

- Punctuality is taken seriously at Fleecefield and by the Education Welfare Service. We regularly monitor lateness and will address the issue with the parent/carer either by phone or letter, offering advice and support.
- The main gate is locked at 9am and **all** pupils who arrive after the gate is closed should report to the school office **before** going to their class.
- Registration closes at 9.05am. Children who arrive at school between 9.05am and 9.30am, will be marked as an authorised late. Children who are late **AFTER** 9.30am will be marked with an unauthorised late.
- The Deputy Headteacher carries out weekly late gate checks and meets with the parents of children who are persistently late every month.

- The Education Welfare Officer monitors our registers regularly and is authorised to check any pupil's attendance at any time. Late arrival at school after registers have closed has to be recorded as unauthorised absence. Frequent very late arrival or other unauthorised absence can result in referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- Absences can only be authorised by school.
- Unauthorised lateness will lower the child's attendance level.
- Reminders are put in newsletters about start and finish times of the school day.
- We celebrate and reward good timekeeping in weekly assemblies.

### **Every Day Contact and Truancy Calls**

- Any child who is absent without a reason given is contacted by the school office.
- The school closely monitors pupils whose attendance is less than 90%. We produce an under 90% absence list every week and this is monitored weekly by the Attendance officer and Deputy Head. This list is also shared with the EWO at every visit.
- Letters are sent to parents advising them their child has been absent without a reason, giving them clear instructions on how to advise the school of absence. At this stage, any further absence where a class teacher or the Attendance Officer is notified of the reason, the absence may be authorised.
- Parents should call the office before 8.55am **every day the child is absent** explaining the reason for the absence. Parents could also provide a written note giving dates and reasons of absence. **This does not automatically authorise the absence; only the school can do this.**
- Absence for holidays, shopping trips, birthdays, appointments for parents/siblings, or helping out at home will not be authorised.
- For all other absences, parents will complete a 'Permission for absence' form. The Deputy Head will decide if the absence will be authorised based on the reason given, current attendance percentage and the evidence provided.
- If a pupil remains on the under 90% absence list by the end of every half term, a letter will be posted to parents advising them of their child's attendance percentage, explaining that any further absence will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is produced, and that our Education Welfare Officer may be informed. Parents/Carers will be invited to meet with the Deputy Head to discuss any family/medical issues and strategies to improve attendance.

- If a pupil remains on the under 90% absence list for more than 4 weeks, and attendance is still a concern to us and the Education Welfare Officer, a letter is sent to parents stating that a referral will be made to Education Welfare Officer who will contact them directly.
- The vast majority of absences supported by medical evidence such as: Doctor's note, prescription, medicine bottle will be authorised.

### **Deletion from Roll**

- When a registered pupil remains absent from school, staff attempt to telephone parents and/or visit their homes. They are also referred to the Education Welfare Officer, who will make checks with Housing Benefit and Social Services and may visit their homes. If they have been located after a period of four weeks but have not returned to school, they will be deleted from roll and should they return later, they will have to re-apply for a school place. Due to the shortage of school places they could remain out of school for some time and may not be able to get back into Fleecefield Primary School or siblings might be allocated different schools.

### **Children not collected at the end of the school day**

It is important that children are collected promptly at 3.15pm as staff have responsibilities and commitments to fulfill and cannot supervise children who have not been collected. It can also be distressing for children when they are not collected on time.

The London Borough of Enfield has very clear guidelines on how to deal with children not collected at the end of the school day. A copy of the Policy is available from the school office.

Parents should call the school in advance if they know they are going to be late and inform the school what time they will be arriving to collect their child.

If the school has not been contacted by 3.25pm, a member of staff will contact the parent on the emergency contact numbers. If the parent has not responded to the school's call and one hour and 30 minutes has elapsed since the end of the school day, the school will make a referral to Children Services. This contact will alert the Service that a child may need to be accommodated to await collection by their parent.

The school keeps records of children collected late. If parents persistently collect their children late from school, we will send a letter to them explaining our concerns.

We hope that parents will work with us to ensure that ALL children are collected on time at 3.15pm.

# Educational Welfare Service

We have been allocated an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is authorised to monitor registers and check pupils' attendance records.

The EWO not only supports the school, but is active in supporting parents with concerns about their children's attendance. The EWO will also attend new parents meetings to stress the importance of establishing good attendance routines from an early age.

Where attendance and punctuality is poor over a period, they are referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). EWS intervention takes the form of letters to parents, meetings with them and if attendance fails to improve, parents can be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court.

# How Parents can help

- Bring your child/ren to school every day in plenty of time for morning registration by at least 8.55am.
- Ensure your child is collected promptly at 3.15pm.
- Ensure you contact the office before 8.55am **every day** your child is absent explaining why they are not at school.
- Provide the class teacher and the school office with reasons for absence.
- Provide medical evidence, where necessary.
- Keep medical appointments outside of school hours as much as possible.
- Do not keep children off school for holidays, birthdays, translating, shopping/family days out, appointments for parents/siblings, etc.
- No holidays should be taken during term time.
- Meet with the Deputy Head to discuss any concerns regarding your child's attendance.

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