

MERE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Mere School recognises the importance of the partnership between parents and the school in ensuring the regular attendance of pupils. Regular attendance is instrumental to raising pupil attainment and we feel strongly that all pupils should have equal access to the school and opportunities within the school.

Aims

At Mere School we aim to:

- ensure that children make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning.
- emphasise a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.
- ensure that everyone within the school community understands the issues and procedures for attendance.
- fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance.
- encourage, recognise and reward good attendance.
- continually improve attendance rates.

The Legal Framework – roles and responsibilities

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must ensure their children are educated. For most parents this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted.

By law schools are required:

- to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon.
- to report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for 10 consecutive school days or more without known reason.

By law the attendance register must show for every session, whether a pupil is present, absent, attending approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences are unauthorised (see Wiltshire LA Attendance Policy 2007 and responsibility of the Education Welfare Service in respect of non-attendance at school).

Partnership Working – roles and responsibilities

Staff, in school, have the following responsibilities:

- the head teacher must improve and maintain good attendance.
- the head teacher is designated as the attendance leader.
- the head teacher must maintain an attendance profile through assemblies, staff meetings, monitoring, registration process, target setting, liaison with EWO, parent/carer contact, school attendance meetings, attending LA attendance meetings or Court Assembled Meetings (CAM)
- teachers must ensure accurate registration, follow-up notes, parent/carer contact and target setting for pupils.
- Mrs Rachel Porter is the governor responsible for attendance,
- administrative staff must ensure first day contact and maintenance of records.

Parents have, in partnership with the school, an important role to ensure that good attendance is maintained. They must:

- ensure their child arrives in school on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn'.
- work in partnership with the school to help their child/ren gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education.
- work in partnership with the school and other agencies to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance.

The pupils also have a responsibility to make sure they follow school procedures made know to them for receiving their registration mark, in particular when arriving late.

Procedures

All staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness (including supply teachers):

- clear systems for accurate registration.
- identified period for the register to remain open (15 minutes).
- scheduled and unscheduled spot checks of registers outside of statutory requirements.
- agreed criteria and consistent approaches to lateness.
- consistent use of register codes which are known to all staff.
- identification of absence.
- use of Fast Track, warning letters, Fixed Penalty Notice procedure.
- a range of in-school strategies for dealing with pupil absence.
- procedures for re-integration following long-term absence including catch up of missed work.
- procedures for the involvement of the Education Welfare Service.

Any child arriving after 9.00 am enters school through the office and not the classroom doors.

Parents are asked to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence by 9.15 am on the first day of absence (by note, telephone call or personal contact). If no contact has been made by 9.15 am when the registers close, the assistant administrative officer will phone the parents. Teachers have filled in a form during registration to alert the administrative officer to unauthorised absences. If we are unable to contact the parents they are asked to fill in a form to explain their child's absence once the child returns to school.

The school actively discourages late arrivals by pupils as a late arrival may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. The registers close at 9.00 am. Any child arriving after that time will be marked 'late' in the register and the parents will be asked to sign the 'late' register in the office.

Persistent lateness by pupils will be investigated by the Head teacher with the parents, to see if there are difficulties at home or genuine unavoidable circumstances which are contributing to lateness.

The Home/School Agreement refers to the need for regular and punctual attendance and school expectations of the parents/carers.

The school does not authorise holidays during term time.

Authorised absences will be given for the following:

- 1 medical and dental appointments.
- 2 family bereavement.

Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted for more than 2 weeks in any year. Otherwise any period of over 2 weeks will be treated as unauthorised.

Strategies for improving and maintaining good attendance

The school employs a range of measures to ensure good attendance at Mere School.

Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of the schools attendance procedures are evaluated regularly by the staff and governors. The EWO monitors and inspect the registers annually and discusses any concerns arising.

Communicating the contents of the Attendance Policy

The contents of the School Attendance Policy are widely available to parents, staff, pupils and governors.

The Head teacher describes the procedures in detail to new parents and attention is regularly drawn to the policy through the school prospectus and Head teacher and governor newsletters.

Spring term 2011

Review: Spring term 2014

