

## Attendance Policy

The governors and staff at The Blake School want all pupils to benefit from all the opportunities that school offers to them and achieve the very best they can; for this they need to be in school regularly.

To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and will identify and act promptly upon any problems that prevent full attendance.

### **The School expects pupils to:**

- attend school regularly,
- arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day,
- inform a trusted adult of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

### **The School expects parents and carers to:**

- ensure their children attend school regularly and arrive on time,
- ensure they contact school as soon as is reasonably practical on the first day of absence whenever their child is unable to attend school,
- ensure their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework,
- contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school,
- take family holidays during school holiday periods except in exceptional circumstances,
- work closely with the school and outside agencies to resolve any problems that may impede their child's attendance.

### **The School will ensure:**

- regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance,
- early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend without providing good reason
- immediate action is taken on any problem notified to us,
- all staff members contribute to improving and maintaining pupil attendance by taking ownership of attendance,
- monitoring of attendance by governors,
- referral of specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate,
- provision of effective and prompt support for families experiencing difficulties over attendance.

### **Contents of Attendance Register**

Morning Register is taken at 9.00am; Afternoon Register is taken at 1.00-1.05pm. On each occasion teachers must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;

- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The School admissions officer will follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not; and
- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register.

### **Absence and Attendance Codes**

The national codes are used to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the DFE School Census System.

#### Present at School

If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes. In these circumstances, pupils will be signed in and out of the main reception as they come and go, to record that they have left the school premises during the session.

If a child is present in school during registration but is not in their classroom they will be marked as a late arrival, before the register has closed. Pupils are required to enter the school via the main reception and will be entered in the late book.

Registers are kept open for 30 minutes; a pupil arriving before the register is closed will be marked with code L, a pupil arriving after the register has closed (9.30am) will be marked as absent with code U, or with another code if that is more appropriate.

#### Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, sporting activities or alternative provision.

The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

#### Authorised Absence

An absence can be authorised by a school either before or after it occurs. There are three main categories of authorised absence-

- When a pupil is prevented from attending by sickness. The school can request that parents provide medical evidence to support absence on the grounds of illness and may request signed parental consent to contact their GP.
- A day set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong
- When no suitable transport is available and the school is not within walking distance (2 miles).

Other categories of authorised absence include:

- Medical or dental appointments, by necessity made in school time. Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours - sight of an appointment card may be requested.

- Exclusions of a fixed-term
- Domestic circumstances that could include death of a close relative, or other exceptional traumatic event
- Exceptional circumstances as determined by the head teacher.

### Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence.

Examples:

- Birthdays
- Shopping
- Special treat
- 'Couldn't get up'
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.

### **Responding to non-attendance**

In all cases of absence parents/carers should contact school by 9.30am to allow the school to record the absence appropriately. Parents/carers should give an indication of the probable length of absence if likely to be longer than one day.

Where there has been no contact from parents/carers and the child is absent without explanation, the school admissions officer will make contact with the parents/carers of the pupil to ask the reason for absence. In the first instance contact will be by phone, using all of the available contact numbers, but where parents/carers cannot be contacted in this way an email will be sent.

Head teachers are required to tell the Local Authority if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. After twenty school days, with no response, the head teacher is entitled to remove the child from the school roll. The LA then continues to follow up absence.

### **Where attendance gives rise for concern**

Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored by the school and discussed with parents. Parents will be supported by the school in order to improve their child's attendance, which may include the use of a parenting contract, an Early Help Assessment, or other appropriate strategy. If there is no improvement despite support a referral may be made to the Attendance and Engagement Team.

The Local Authority may decide to impose a penalty notice where a child has unauthorised absence of more than 20% and/or all other strategies to improve attendance have failed.

Pupils who are absent through sickness for an extended time will be provided with work to be done at home and will be re-integrated back into school on their return as appropriate.

### **Family holidays during term time**

The head teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, all cases will be considered on an individual basis. If parents feel that there are exceptional

circumstances for their child's absence, they must arrange to have an interview with the head teacher and also complete the 'Request for leave of absence form' at least two weeks before the event. In extenuating circumstances, absence can be requested at least one calendar month before the event. Absence will only be authorised if it has been agreed prior to the absence being taken.

When assessing whether or not an absence request is exceptional the school will consider the:

- Motive and purpose of the absence.
- Duration of the absence and its impact on continuity of learning.
- Circumstances of the family request.

The school can only agree to absence of up to 10 days if the head teacher believes there are special circumstances which warrant it. Parents must appreciate that it is their responsibility to encourage their child to catch up with missed work on their return.

Pupils who fail to return to school within 10 days of the end of extended leave of absence may be removed from the school roll if both the school and LA fail to locate them and they do not have good reason to be absent.

### **Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller - Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. The School cannot remove a Traveller child from the School roll while they are travelling if it is the base school.

### **Extended visits to the country of family origin during term time**

It is recognised that extended visits to the country of family origin can provide important opportunities to reaffirm family, linguistic and cultural identities. As such they can be positive personal and educational experiences. As a school we follow Oxfordshire's Policy on Extended Visits to Country of Origin.

- Parents are encouraged to arrange visits to their country of family origin during school holiday periods. An extended period of absence may be granted, at the discretion of the school, for a maximum period of 4 weeks in term time.
- Only one such absence should be granted in the primary phase and one in the secondary phase of a child's education.
- A home/school contract, stating the date of return must be agreed and signed by the parent and the head teacher. The school and the parent(s) should retain a copy of the contract.
- Failure to agree a home/school contract, or non-return by agreed date places the child at risk of losing his/her school place.
- Parents should be advised not to take their children on extended visits during Years 2 and 6 until after statutory tests have taken place.
- In all normal circumstances, requests for extended absence should be made to the school well in advance. In exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, families are still required to contact the school to request leave of absence.