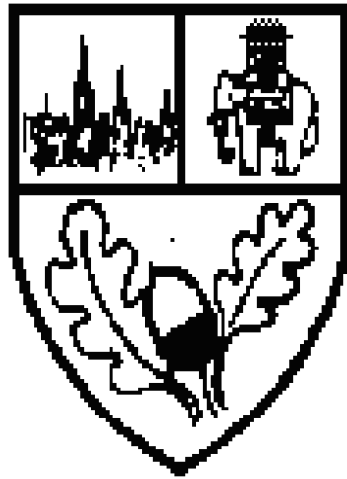


Potters Green School

Attendance Policy



Approved by Governors: November 2009

To be Reviewed: Autumn Term 2011
(or earlier if necessary)

Aim

To ensure that children receive their full entitlement to teaching and learning opportunities at Potters Green School by promoting good attendance and punctuality. Good consistent school attendance is regarded as essential in securing the desired outcomes for children as itemised in 'Every Child Matters' and is crucial in ensuring that pupils have the best chance of success.

Context

The government expectation for attendance is 95%. Maintaining this level of attendance gives pupils the greatest opportunity to achieve to the best of their potential in school both academically and socially. Anything less than this gives Potters Green School cause for concern.

School Actions

SMT and Learning Mentors will regularly monitor attendance and punctuality and identify children who are causing concern. Parents will be contacted and remedial actions agreed. The Head and Learning Mentors arrange meetings with parents of children whose attendance remains poor throughout the term. This provides the opportunity to discuss reasons and agree actions, including support that is available to the family. The school recognises the need for a multi agency approach to support the attendance and welfare of some pupils and also recognises the need to find varied and differing means of support in the interests of social inclusion.

Local Authority Actions

The Local Authority, through the Education Welfare Service, monitors attendance of children with less than 80%:

- where there are no firm medical reasons for absence;
- when absence is unauthorised;
- when absence or lateness gives cause for concern.

Parents are invited to an attendance meeting involving all relevant agencies and strategies for improvement are put in place.

In the event of persistent unauthorised absence from school the Education Welfare Service will send formal letters warning of prosecution and prepare and present prosecution files to court for non-attendance.

Registration

The legal status of school registers is regularly stressed to all school staff and meticulous effort is made to ensure they are accurately kept. New Staff are provided with training in both the detail of accurate register marking, and methods and strategies for encouraging pupils to be punctual and regular in their attendance. School Staff are reminded that the authorisation of absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion not the parents.

Reports

- Individual attendance and punctuality data is recorded on pupil's reports.
- The Head Teacher will report on attendance as part of their termly report to governors.
- The Head Teacher will also send attendance statistics on a termly basis to the DCSF and half termly to the Principle Education Welfare Officer.

Removal from Roll

In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from a receiving school. Should no notification be received the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service. If unsuccessful, a missing person form will be completed and sent to the Local Authority and the pupil removed from roll after four weeks.

If a pupil fails to return to school within 10 days of the agreed return date following a holiday they also may be removed from roll (See policy on term time holidays)

Late Arrival at School

Parents are informed, and regularly reminded, of the school dates and times during the year. It is pointed out to parents that poor punctuality gives the pupil who is late a difficult and negative start to their day and disrupts the teaching and learning of the whole class. The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings, sharing news and preparing the class ready for the business of learning, is stressed to parents.

All pupils who arrive late have to report in at reception on arrival and an accurate log of their time of arrival is made. The EWO will be informed of pupils who regularly arrive late and they will take appropriate action.

Parents

The importance placed on regular attendance and punctuality is explained to parents when they first enrol their child in the school. The school prospectus also details school attendance issues. At different times through the school year attendance issues are also reiterated in School Newsletters. Parents are regularly informed that if their child is absent they should telephone the office on the first morning of absence and a note sent with their child on the day they return to school explaining the absence. Should no contact with parents be forthcoming, the school will contact the parents by telephone or by letter. An absence that has not been explained will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Potters Green School believes that the involvement of parents is a key factor in addressing attendance issues and will ensure that all school parents and carers are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to attendance. It is

our aim that all parents will understand that, 'In addition to securing regular attendance they also have a responsibility to ensure that their children arrive on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.' (*Government Guidelines*).

Rewards and Strategies

SMT and Learning Mentors liaise with Learning Managers to agree systems, for both individuals and whole classes, to reward good and improved attendance. In addition to these rewards, certificates are awarded for 100% attendance for each term and for the whole year.

Reward systems will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are kept fresh and motivational. The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils and parents. The school also aims to help pupils develop their own motivation for daily, punctual attendance.

Attendance Figures

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
School	95.36	94.22	94.01	93.9
National	94.24	94.82		

Holidays in Term Time

Introduction, Law and Regulations

Regulation 12 of the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, states that schools have the discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. This permission is only granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school and only in the most exceptional circumstances should this be granted for more than 10 school days in any one year. Parents and guardians do not have the automatic right to take authorised holiday.

Permission must be given in advance of the holiday after agreed procedures have been followed.

The law states that the holiday must be the annual family holiday and should only be requested by the parent with whom the child normally resides. Only in exceptional circumstances may the amount granted exceed more than two weeks in any school year.

The Government's own guidance on the issue of term-time holidays states:

‘Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term-time’.

If a parent takes a pupil on holiday in term-time without the Head Teacher’s permission, or if a child fails to return from holiday by the agreed date, this will be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil’s school attendance record. If a pupil has not returned to school within 10 school days of the expected agreed date of return, the Head Teacher may take the pupil off roll, providing the correct procedure has been followed - **(see section 'Removing Pupils From Roll')**

Schools

In setting school procedures and a school policy on term-time holidays, the following have been considered: -

- The pupil’s overall attendance pattern. (If attendance is below 90% a meeting with the Head is required in order to discuss authorisation)
- Holidays already taken in the same school year. (Any second request in the same academic year will be automatically refused)
- The time of the year the child will be absent (For example, requests for the beginning of a term and at times when important tests are being taken are unlikely to be met with consent)
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave by their employer.

If parents are unable to avoid requesting absence during the school terms, an application must be made on an Authorised Absence Request Form available from the school office.

These procedures will be followed when requests for term time holidays are made;

- 1 A formal request form will be provided to parents for completion a minimum of three weeks prior to their holiday together with an information leaflet detailing concerns over Term-Time Holidays
- 2 The form to be returned to the Head who will approve or refuse Authorisation
- 3 Following receipt of the holiday application, a meeting with parents will be arranged within 5 working days of the request being made if the child’s attendance is below 90%. Parents will be made aware of the possible consequences of unauthorised holiday.
- 4 A meeting with parents will always be arranged if authorisation is not given
- 5 Following a decision about authorisation, those responsible for the pupil’s registration to be informed of the correct code to use: H, F or G
- 6 If the absence is to be unauthorised consideration will be given to a Penalty Notice application and the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Removal from roll will be considered if the conditions for this are met.
- 7 The Holiday Request form will be retained on the child’s school file.

Extended Holidays Overseas

Parents considering extended holidays overseas are made aware of the policy on extended absence. In the case of families recently arrived in Britain, special care will be taken to ensure that the policy has been clearly explained and understood, taking into account that the parents' first language may not be English and they may be unfamiliar with the education system in this country. Parents will be encouraged to time their holiday to overlap official school holidays.

Parents will be made aware that, if a holiday is more than 10 days to visit family overseas, the authorisation of this is at the head teacher's discretion and will take into account the educational needs and stage of the child. This extended holiday must be discussed with the Head teacher. The Head Teacher will stress the educational impact an extended holiday will have on the pupil. It will be made clear to parents that if the holiday is not authorised this could result in a Penalty Notice being issued or the pupil being removed from roll if they have not returned to school within 10 school days of the agreed date.

Information for parents

The following information will be communicated to parents at least annually:

- Holidays can seriously disrupt a child's continuity of learning
- Holidays can result in gaps in a pupil's learning
- Holidays can cause disruption to friendship groups
- Holidays should always be avoided at the beginning of a new school term
- Holidays should always be avoided close to tests
- Holidays should always be avoided during the first year at a new school
- Holidays should always be avoided during the Reception Year
- It is recommended that parents request holiday prior to confirming their holiday booking.
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in their SATs and achieve higher grades at GCSE
- Pupils who take 10 days' holiday during term-time can achieve only a maximum attendance of 94.7%, even if there are no other absences through the year. The government recommendation for all school pupils to achieve their potential is 95%+.
- Research suggests that children who are taken out of school during term-time may never catch up on work missed.
- Taking a school child on holiday in term-time may give them the unspoken message that it is acceptable to be absent from school during term-time.

Holidays In Term Time - Removing Pupils From Roll (*see flowchart attached*)

If a pupil does not return to school after an authorised or unauthorised 10 school day or more holiday, government guidance states that the school must check that the pupil has a "good reason" for their continued absence. Examples of good reasons are given as disrupted travel arrangements or illness. The Head Teacher will decide whether the illness of someone other than the pupil is relevant. If parents do not voluntarily contact the school to supply a "good reason" for a pupil's continued absence the school will attempt to make contact with the parents using the contact details supplied on the holiday consent form or in the school's general records. Within three days of the pupil's expected date of return, the school will attempt to communicate with the parents either in writing or through a telephone conversation, which will be noted. The following issues will be dealt with in the school's communication with the parents:

- The date the school expected the pupil to return.
- The parents' responsibility to ensure that the pupil attends school regularly.
- The reason why the pupil did not return on the expected date.
- The possibility of legal sanctions against the parents.
- The possibility of the school deleting the pupil from the school roll following a further 7 school days of absence.
- The fact that the pupil must be marked as unauthorised absence if there is no "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence.

If parents either voluntarily or following communication from the school supply the school with a "good reason" for the pupil's continued absence the pupil can be marked authorised absence whilst this reason continues.

If parents respond to communication from the school but do not supply a "good reason" for the pupil's continuing absence but the school is aware of the whereabouts of the pupil he/she can be taken off roll 10 school days or more after the date the pupil was expected to return to school.

If after reasonable enquiries by the school the pupil cannot be located or the school has welfare concerns over the pupil the Local Authority (Education Welfare Officer) should be contacted and the Education Welfare Service will carry out Local Authority checks and advise on future steps.

Children Under School Age

For reception classes parents can request that their child's entry to school is deferred until the child is of compulsory school age (ie. later in the school year, at the start of the term after the child's 5th birthday as long as this is not the start of the next academic year). This has the effect that the place is held for that child and is not available to be offered to another child.

Nursery and Reception Pupils

Pupils registered at school who are below statutory school age are expected to attend school regularly to ensure they make good progress in the Foundation Stage curriculum and to embed good habits for the future.

Attendance will be monitored and children causing concern will be identified.
Parents will be contacted and remedial actions agreed.