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**Caslon Primary Community School**

**Attendance Policy 2017**

***United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child***

***Article 3:*** *The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.*

*(UNICEF Rights of the Child – Article 3)*

At Caslon Primary Community School we believe that every child has the right to an education (UNICEF Rights of the Child – Article 28) and that excellent attendance and punctuality play a crucial part in maximising every individual’s chance to reach their full potential.

We promote a belief in excellent attendance and punctuality right the way through our school which will enable your child’s education to develop their personality, talents and abilities to the full (UNICEF Rights of the Child – Article 29). We understand the importance of setting in place attitudes and expectations which will impact upon the futures of our pupils as citizens, employers and employees.

We believe that persistent lateness hinders children’s readiness to learn and may have a detrimental effect on their academic progress.

We follow the Department for Education guidelines and expect every child to maintain attendance of at least 96.1% (our school target is 97.5%) throughout the academic year.

**Celebration of Attendance**

We strongly believe in rewarding those whose attendance and punctuality is significantly improved through half-termly assemblies where every child with 100% attendance receives a certificate.

Class attendance percentages are shared at a weekly assembly with the class achieving the highest attendance receiving the Attendance Trophy. At the end of every term, the class whose attendance has the highest average and is above 97.5% will receive an additional reward to be determined with the class teacher.

A display in the hall and main entrance shows our attendance target and the previous weeks’ percentages. These are also published in the newsletters.

**Attendance Analysis**

We have a dedicated team of staff who meet regularly to look at attendance figures. The information gathered in these meetings leads to families receiving letters stating the percentage attendance of their child/children and expectations for improvements.

After each monthly attendance analysis meeting, letters informing parents of declining attendance and punctuality will be sent home to keep parents informed and set targets for improvement.

Where attendance is dropping towards 93%, a meeting may be requested by the Deputy Head Teacher or our Education Investigation Service colleague. When it drops to 90%, an immediate referral to Education Investigation Service will be initiated.

**Procedures**

**Authorised absence:**

We will authorise a maximum of 10 half days/5 days of absence per pupil per year without any medical evidence of illness. This caters for the occasional colds/coughs/sickness bugs. Attendance at medical appointments will also be authorised provided an appointment card/letter of proof is presented for our records.

Any longer term illness which leads to more days off will be authorised provided it is in line with LA guidance (e.g. in the case of chicken pox.)

We consider that a medical prescription is proof of illness but does not necessarily justify a child’s absence unless supported by a doctors’ note. In most cases prescriptions can be administered at school where there is a need for 4 doses to be administered per day. (Also see medicine policy.)

**Late to school**

* Registration happens in the classroom between 8:45 and 8:55am**.**
* Where a child arrives at school before 8:55am, they receive a present (/) mark.
* Class teachers will shut their registers at 8:55am.
* Where a child arrives after 8:55am they should come the front entrance where admin staff will log their arrival in the registers. They will receive a late (L) mark (up to maximum of 5). After the 5 authorised lates have been issued, the child will receive unauthorised late marks (U).
* When a child arrives after 9:15am, they must automatically receive an unauthorised late (U) mark.
* If your child arrives late at any point, they must be signed in by a parent/carer at the main school office and a reason for lateness must be given.
* Any child who is in Year 5 or 6 and is not accompanied by an adult should bring a note explaining their lateness.
* The only exception to a child not receiving a late or unauthorised mark is that you have been able to provide proof of attendance at a medical appointment e.g. appointment card from Doctors surgery.
* Late marks are a privilege which the school can choose to apply or withdraw at head teacher’s discretion.
* If your child is late 1 time, you will receive a green warning letter.
* If your child is late 3 times, you will receive an amber warning letter.
* If your child is late 5 times, you will receive a red letter notifying you that any further late arrivals will be unauthorised and as such, contribute towards your child’s attendance percentage.
* In the event of a child arriving after 9:15am, you will receive an ‘unauthorised late arrival’ notification.
* Improvement will be expected and your child may be offered a free place at Breakfast Club to support you in bringing about improvement.

We are aware that there may be exceptional circumstances for some children and we would ask that you speak to the Deputy Head or Headteacher if you consider that your circumstances require special consideration.

*The DfE have stated that;*

*“Arriving late for school, after the register has closed, is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.”*

*The Pupil Registrations Act 2008 states that it is the duty of the parents to ensure their child/children arrive on time for school.*

**Short Term Illness**

Please refer to Dudley LA guidance on recommended periods of absence regarding specific illnesses (See medical Policy).

If your child is particularly ill, your first action is to call the school as early as possible (and before 9:30am) on the following number – 01384 818875. If you cannot get through please leave an answer phone message.

This must be done EVERY DAY that your child remains ill. Without a Doctors’ note, length of illness cannot be predicted and must therefore be reported to school daily.

Reporting your child as being absent for a significant period (3+ days) with no proof will be recorded as unauthorised absence. (The only exception to this is if your child has been admitted to hospital or has a significant long-term illness which has already been reported to the school with medical evidence).

Please be aware that out records of parental communication are presented as evidence for referral purposes.

**Long Term Sickness**

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they can work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would mean that your child is being educated off site and this would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

If a child leaves hospital and following this is at home for 2 weeks or more, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they will support your child at home.

**Persistent Absence**

Where a child’s attendance has become of significant concern, whether through a decline in percentage of attendance (towards 90%) or an emerging pattern in their absence, Regular meetings will be requested by the Deputy Head Teacher to monitor the attendance with a view to seeing rapid improvement. Daily absence calls may also be placed by the Deputy Head to the parent. Records of each meeting and phone call will be kept as evidence should the need to a referral arise.

**Holidays/Leave of Absence**

We follow the DfE guidelines which state that holiday should not be taken during term time.

Leave of Absence request forms should be filled in and submitted before any holidays or events with ‘exceptional circumstances’ are book, planned or paid for and at least 20 days before it is due to be taken.

Absences considered ‘exceptional circumstances’ must be requested in writing directly to the Headteacher at least 20 days before the event. All ‘Leave of Absence’ forms requesting 5 days off or more will receive a reply from the Headteacher.

A school or academy may notify the EIS that the circumstances required to justify the issuing of a Penalty Notice for a leave of absence, if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause and:

* An application has been refused and leave is then taken;
* No application has been made and leave is taken; or
* Leave has been granted but extended leave is taken without the additional absence being authorised by the school.

**Exceptional Circumstances**

Exceptional circumstances are not specified in the DfE guidance; however advice from the National Association of Head teachers identifies the following possible exceptional circumstances:

• Absences to visit family members are not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.

• Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.

• Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave.

• Consideration of the needs of the families of service personnel, if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.

• Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities

• Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

**Exclusions**

Parents/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices if a pupil who has been excluded and contravenes the details set out in the Exclusion Letter as to their whereabouts during school hours throughout the duration of that Exclusion.

It is our legal responsibility to make a referral when a child who has been excluded, is seen out in public. This will result in an immediate fine from Education Investigation Service.

**No contact from Parent**

In the event of no contact with parent/carer, the following procedures will be followed:

1st Day of Absence;

Phone call to parent from Mrs Hunt by 10am.

If no reply - repeat phone call at 1pm by Mrs Hunt.

Hourly messages sent via Parent Mail throughout day 1 of absence.

Day 2 of absence:

Door knock by member of Attendance Team.

Continued Parent Mail messages.

Day 3-6 of absence:

Day 3 - 2nd door knock and letter of concern delivered.

Daily phone calls to all named contacts.

Day 5 – final door knock (before referral to Attendance Agency).

Attendance Meeting with Deputy Head Teacher

Target set for attendance improvement.

Customized Attendance Contract signed.

Education Investigation Team will be contacted.

In the event of;

10 consecutive days off,

 9 full days over a 30 school day period,

 Or 18 half days over a 30 school day period.

**Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents/adults with parental responsibility for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5-17) attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them such as the Education Investigative Service, the local authority or the police. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices can be issued where a pupil’s absence has not been authorised by the school and drops to 90%

Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt. The payment must be paid directly to the local authority, the school does not receive the money. The parent can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no legal right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Penalty notices remain ‘active’ for a 12 month period after they have been awarded. Therefore it is necessary for improvement in attendance to be brought about in order to avoid a fixed penalty notice or court action.

**5 Days/10, ½ days of Absence**

School are legally obliged to inform the Education Investigation Service if there have been 10 unauthorised sessions (half days) of absence in a 30 day period.

If your child has more than 5 days off through illness and/or holiday during the school year, then every time your child is absent after this you MUST provide further evidence so we can consider whether the absence can be authorised. Further information may be a letter from a health professional stating something similar to “I have seen Jo in surgery today and in my professional opinion he is not fit for school”.

Prescription Medicines can be administered in school where 4 doses are needed in a 24hr period. These MUST be taken to the Main Entrance to be locked away securely and logged in each child’s medical register.

If parents/carers cannot provide any further evidence regarding child’s absence, the school may involve the Health Advisor and parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Investigation Service to discuss how to improve your child’s attendance. Following this meeting you may be issued with a Advisory Warning Notice from the Education Investigation Service.

**Criteria for Referrals/Penalty Notices**

Referrals to EIS will be made based on the following;

***General Unauthorised Absence:***

Where unauthorised absence levels indicate that child has less than 90% attendance a Penalty Notice may be used.

***Unauthorised absence in term time:***

Where the school’s rule on absence in term time (as stated above) and the head teacher has received written notification of a request for a leave of absence and it has been refused, or a leave of absence has been taken for 10 sessions or more, without seeking the absence to be authorised a penalty fine may be issued in conjunction with, or in isolation of any other absence.

**Removal from School Roll**

If a child is not ill and is persistently absent from our school for above 20 days, as a school we would work with the EIS to find out where your child is, as detailed above. A result of this investigation may be to have your child removed from the school roll. (Section 8 Admissions) It would then be the parent’s responsibility to contact admissions in order to re-register the child/children.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Pupils**

* To maintain a good and positive attitude towards coming to school.
* To try their hardest to come to school.

**Parents**

* To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, in a fit state to learn every day that school is open.
* To notify the school by 9:30am of any absence. Answer machine messages may be left giving a specific reason for absence.
* To provide written explanation of absence on the first day a pupil returns to school if a phone call was not made/message not left.
* To take family holidays in school holiday periods, not during term time.
* To provide letters/doctors notes where prolonged absence occurs.
* To ensure that the school have up-to-date contact details e.g. when mobile phones are replaced.

**Teachers**

* To complete attendance registers up to date and complete them by 8:55am and 1pm respectively.
* To praise pupils for continued and improved punctuality and attendance.
* To notify Attendance Team and SLT of concerns regarding absence or lateness particularly when it is having a detrimental impact upon progress.

**Senior Leadership Team**

* Named member of staff responsible for attendance (Deputy Head).
* Named member of staff to report to Headteacher and Governors termly in attendance issues.
* Set clear and challenging targets for attendance and punctuality for whole school, classes and individuals.
* To intervene early and make persistent efforts when individuals give cause for concern.
* Follow the schools Attendance Action Flow Chart in the event of persistent or prolonged absence.
* Utilise further professional bodies when improvements are not seen in relation to attendance below 85% or prolonged absence.
* Records to be kept of communication with parents whenever it occurs.

*Policy updated: September 2017 (CWarford)*

*Renewal Date: September 2018*