



WEST RISE

WEST RISE JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY: ATTENDANCE AND HOLIDAY

Original Date of Policy: November 2015

Ratified by Governors: January 2017

Signed:

Review Date: January 2018

At West Rise Junior School we inspire and empower independent and creative learners who will continue to enrich their lives and those of others within a culture of high achievement and mutual respect

West Rise Junior School is a Rights Respecting School and puts the articles of the Unicef Children's Rights Charter at the heart of all school policy. This policy reflects that as a school we recognise that all children have the right to be safe, be educated and learn, be treated fairly, be listened to, a healthy lifestyle, extra support if they need it and a right to join in cultural and artistic activities.

This Policy reflects the vision and aims of West Rise Junior School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

PRINCIPLES

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absences or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness and other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- ***Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***Truancy before or during the school day***
- ***Absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.***
- ***Unauthorised holidays.***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the ESBAS (East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service) from the Local Education Authority. ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, their Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

PROCEDURES

Day to day attendance matters are dealt with by the Attendance Officer with reference to the Headteacher. The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

HOLIDAY AND ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Parents are asked not to take holidays in term time. Holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headteacher. If parents wish to request time off for a holiday they are asked to complete a 'Withdrawal from Learning Application' form and submit it to the Headteacher for his consideration. The Headteacher or a senior member of staff will telephone the parent/carer to discuss the request. If an unauthorised holiday is taken this is noted in the register, and unauthorised holiday of 5 days or over will incur a Penalty Notice. This is issued by the Local Authority and is currently £60.00 per parent per child.

ABSENCES

If your child is absent from school, please telephone us by 9.20 a.m. on the first morning. If we have not heard from you by this time the school will make every effort to contact you. You will have been asked to provide telephone numbers for this purpose. This will ensure that the absence becomes authorised. **In the interest of your child's safety, it is imperative that we are advised of their whereabouts if they are not in school.** If we do not receive any explanation, a letter will be sent from the school for you to complete and return. If we still do not receive a satisfactory reply, the absence remains unauthorised and will be noted as such on your child's report. Our registers are inspected on a regular basis by ESBAS who will note unauthorised absences and if necessary, act on them.

Children who have 90% or less attendance at any time during the year are classed as 'persistent absentees'. The school will contact the parents of any children falling into this category, and will work with the parents/carers and ESBAS to resolve issues around the child's attendance. A report is sent to ESBAS at the end of each term listing the children whose attendance is 90% or under.

ILLNESS

Parents/Carers must notify the school before 9.20 a.m. on the first morning of any absence, providing a reason for their child's absence. Pupils who have vomiting or diarrhoea must be clear of all symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents/carers are encouraged to send their children to school if they are only a little unwell. The school will always contact parents//carers if they are concerned about a child's fitness to be in school. If the school has reason to doubt the validity of the reason for the child's absence, they will request evidence such as a doctor's note, medical appointment card, etc.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents/Carers are asked to make every effort to make dental and medical appointments outside school time. If the school deems it necessary, the parent/carer can be asked to provide evidence of the appointment.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Attendance Officer will notify the SENCO or Headteacher or Child Protection Lead about attendance concerns for vulnerable children, i.e. those on the Child Protection Register.

LATENESS

We expect every child to be on time for school, but appreciate that very occasionally there may be a reason for a child being late. The school gate is closed at 8.45 a.m. and children arriving after that time should enter through the main office door and will be recorded in the school's 'late book'. Children who are late without a valid reason will be given a 'red warning slip' and if two slips are issued in one week, the child will have a detention with the Headteacher at the end of that week. Detentions for lateness can also be given at the Headteacher's discretion. If a child has 3 detentions for being late, the parent/carer will be contacted, the matter discussed, and the situation monitored.

It is our policy to actively discourage late arrival. A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning, but also that of others.

CHILDREN MOVING/LEAVING SCHOOL

Children remain on roll until contact is made by their receiving school. Records are then sent to that school and an Off Roll Form completed and sent to ESBAS. If a child leaves and the school is not advised of the child's new school, this will be identified on the Off Roll Form. Any serious concerns about vulnerable children will be directed to the ESBAS via a 'Child Missing Education' form', verbally or electronically.

INCENTIVES FOR ATTENDANCE

The class with the highest attendance each week are rewarded in assembly at the end of each week. 'Max' the attendance water buffalo is presented, and the children of that class have an extra 10 minutes playtime straight after the assembly. A bar chart with the individual class attendance is displayed in the hall and on the parent notice board.

Certificates are issued at the end of each term to children who have achieved 100% attendance for that term. Children who achieve 99/ 100% attendance for the whole year receive a gift token at the end of the year.

SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

