



## Whimple Primary School

### Attendance Policy

In striving to enable each child to reach their full potential we stress the importance to both children and parents for the need for maximum attendance and punctuality.

#### At Whimple Primary School we:-

- expect pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.
- encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- ensure school staff set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- will work closely with parents should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

#### Parents:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school by 9.30a.m. on the day of absence, the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit). The school will call the parents of a child that is absent with no known reason after 9.30 a.m. in order to ascertain the child is safe.
- Parents will note that amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave. Parents are not entitled to take their children out of school for up to ten school days per school year, which had been the previous interpretation of the legislation. The amendments now make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence if they wish to take their children out of school. Authorisation will only be given in the exceptional circumstances listed below, and at the discretion of the Head teacher. The Governing Body has agreed that the Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance.

*Equality and cohesion will be promoted, in line with our Equality and Cohesion Policy, and the policy will be operated in a non-discriminatory way*

**Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Parents should note that even if the reason for requesting absence falls within the exceptional circumstances listed above, the Head teacher will still consider the following before making a decision on whether the request will be authorised:

- If your child has an attendance level below 95% calculated over the previous twelve months.
- In the **first two weeks of the school year** (this is a crucial time when all children should be settling in to their new classroom routines and missing this time is detrimental to forming new relationships and routines in a new class)
- **During key assessment points within the school year such as SATs** (this is a time when it is important that all Year 6 children are in school as it is a week of examinations organised by the Department for Education and these tests cannot be taken at any other time).

**Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- Family holidays or celebrations
- Any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents

- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form** from the school office when asking for absence to be authorised.

**School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.** In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision. It is not the school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but is at the discretion of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.

It is now Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, of which the following is an extract: *"Following the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require each parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 28 days or £120.00 if paid within 42 days."* Fines are per parent per child. These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting). Fines can be implemented after a total of unauthorised absence for 10 sessions (half days). The school will send a letter of warning to parents who are at risk of being fined.

Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.

Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% may be invited in to school by the Head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance.

Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern [persistent absence].

Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Morning and Afternoon Session**

School starts at 9.00 a.m. Children should be in class at this time. Registers close at 9.15 am. Any child arriving after the registers have been sent to the office and 9.15 am is recorded as 'late before the register is closed'. If a child arrives after 9.15 am then it is recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a child arrives after 9.15 due to a medical or dental appointment they are recorded as 'late after the register is closed' and this is recorded as authorised for medical reasons.

The afternoon session commences at 1.00pm. Children who arrive after 1.10pm will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

**Pupils who are persistently late will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may incur a fine.**

Adopted by the Governing Body of Whimple School. 1.10.20