

Legal Issues

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full-time education. Parents are responsible for making this happen, either by registering the child at school or by making other arrangements, which provide an effective education. (The Education Act 1996 Section 7).

Monitoring Attendance

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring pupils' attendance. The attendance registers are processed every day. Official Registers will be printed monthly. The administrative assistant will present the headteacher with weekly percentage attendance values for each class and for the school as a whole. Letters will be sent to parents requesting explanations for unexplained absences.

On a half termly basis a report listing all children with less than 95% attendance will be generated. In addition the Local Authority's 5 Stage Model of Intervention will be used:-

- Stage 1-2: Responsibility lies with the school.
- Stage 3: Shared responsibility between the school and the Education Social Work Service.
- Stage 4-5: Responsibility lies with Local Authority working in partnership with the school.

Letters informing parents that their child's attendance has fell below the expected level of 95% will be sent out. If there is no significant improvement following this letter, parents will be invited to an informal meeting with the Headteacher, Attendance administrator and/or a representative from the ACE Team.

Race Leys Infant School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

At Race Leys Infant School we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Categories of Absence

There are two categories of absence:-

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

Only the Headteacher can approve absence.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a

parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent lateness can constitute unauthorised absence.

Lateness

School begins at 8.55 am. Registers are taken straight away. Any child not present at registration will be marked absent and parents will be required to sign their child in the late book.

If a child is late to school and they miss the registration period then an unauthorised absence will be given.

If a child is late for more than 20% of a half term period, then parents will be asked to discuss the issue with the Head teacher.

Parental Involvement

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the school by 10am on the first day of their child's absence. If by 10am on the first day of a child's absence the school has not been notified, the Attendance Officer will contact the child's parent/carer.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment. If the parent has telephoned the school to report the absence a note is not required.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The Supreme Court recently reached a decision in the case of *Platt v Isle of Wight Council* which has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time. The parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they attend school on a regular basis. The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

Head Teachers retain the ability to authorise leave in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. When considering such requests for a leave of absence, the school are obliged to act within the law. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. If the leave is granted, head teachers are able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

It is for the Head Teacher to decide what is 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Failure to make an application for leave in advance will result in the absence being recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority