

## **Darwen St James' C of E Primary School ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

### **AIMS**

Improving school attendance is a key priority at Darwen St James' Primary School. There is a strong link between absence and attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and frequently missing lessons will negatively impact on a child's learning - whereas good attendance and punctuality will increase the chances of a child achieving their full potential in school.

**The Education Act 1996 states, "if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."**

At St James' we will:

- work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually
- acknowledge the efforts of pupils and parents who work to ensure good attendance and punctuality
- challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to regular attendance and good punctuality
- maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to assist in improving attendance and punctuality
- maintain an effective and efficient system of gathering, monitoring and analysing attendance related data
- continue to ensure that good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all pupils, parents, staff and governors.

### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Achieving good attendance and punctuality is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and staff.

**Parents have a responsibility to:**

- ensure that their child is educated
- ensure that their child attends school every day that school is open
- ensure that their child attends school on time every day that the school is open
- notify school immediately if their child is unwell and unable to attend school

Absences for any reason other than illness may be recorded as unauthorised. This is decided by the Headteacher. Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours wherever possible. If school are not given a reason for an absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised. Persistent unauthorised absences are referred to the Education Welfare Officer and may lead to penalty notices being issued to parents or, in some circumstances, prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

When children are late for school or are collected early from school, parents must fill in a late/early collection slip stating the reason.

Parents must request permission in advance for any family holidays during term using the school's discretionary leave of absence form. The Headteacher will consider all applications as per the Local Authority Policy and may authorise up to 10 days if there is a genuine, unavoidable reason for the holiday needing to be taken in school time. A holiday request form is available from the school office and must be completed BEFORE the holiday is taken. Holidays will not be authorised retrospectively and a maximum of 20 days holiday will be granted across the whole Primary Phase (Reception - Year 6).

Parents are reminded that an education penalty notice can be issued for any unauthorised holidays taken without school permission - and this includes children from Gypsy/Roma families who go travelling for anything other than occupational purposes and fail to dual register in a school elsewhere.

Consideration will be given to requests for extended leave of longer than two weeks and in certain exceptional circumstances permission might be granted with added proviso that school work is taken for the child to complete during the absence. Any extended leave will have an agreed return date which must be adhered to. If a child doesn't return within 10 days of this agreed date, the absence will be referred to the Local Authority and the pupil may be removed from the school roll.

**School** have a responsibility to:

- keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- inform the Local Authority of pupils who are persistently absent, have a high level of unauthorised absences or who have been absent for longer than 2 weeks without reason
- work collaboratively with parents, pupils, governors and other agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

**The Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator: Miss L Hillman**

- responsibility for monitoring attendance and punctuality at Darwen St James' Primary School.
- will work with pupils, families and other agencies to improve attendance and punctuality
- make referrals to the Education Welfare Service where appropriate

**The Headteacher: Miss M Beck**

- overall (doesn't - it rests with the Headteacher) responsibility for monitoring attendance and punctuality at Darwen St James' Primary School.
- consider and authorise advance holiday requests
- decide whether any absences for reasons other than illness can be authorised

## **PROCEDURES**

Please also refer to individual schools Attendance Procedures document.

### **Daily**

- Unusual or repetitive absences (e.g. repeated odd days off for medical appts, absence due to not having shoes/uniform etc) should be discussed with the Headteacher.
- The names of any children without a reason for absence are referred to Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator to contact parents.
- Persistent absentees are noted by Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator, as are families who cannot repeatedly be contacted regarding absences.
- Staff should notify either the Headteacher or Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator if they become concerned about a child's attendance.

### **Fortnightly**

- Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator and Headteacher will monitor attendance fortnightly.
- All children with attendance under 90% are monitored and reasons for absence are investigated by Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- Children with attendance under 85% are "persistent absentees" and will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and targeted to improve their attendance. Parents will be contacted and invited to attend an attendance planning meeting in school.
- Children who are repeatedly late will be referred to Pupil Wellbeing Co-ordinator, parents will be contacted and targets set to improve punctuality
- Children who show patterns of absenteeism, e.g. regularly off on Fridays, are also noted and monitored. Reasons for these absences will be investigated and parents will be contacted.

### **Collection at the end of the school day**

School ends at 3.15pm and children should be collected promptly at this time. Parents have a duty to inform school if they are running late or if someone other than themselves is collecting their child. Children will remain in class until 3.20pm after which time they will be taken to the school office.

It is important that school know if pupils are to be collected by a parent, another responsible adult or are to make their own way home. If these circumstances change it is important that school is kept informed.

Parents have a duty to inform school if they are running late or if someone other than themselves is collecting their child.

It is vital that school have up to date phone numbers for parents and that mobile phones are switched on during school hours.

If a child is not collected at the end of the school day or activity and parents/carers cannot be contacted arrangements will be made to take the child to a place of safety (e.g. Children's Centre). Children's Social Care will also be contacted. This follows the Blackburn with Darwen agreed "Protocol for safeguarding children not collected from school at the end of the school day or school activity."

## **REWARDS & INCENTIVES**

Each term pupils with 100% attendance are awarded a certificate and rewarded, e.g. bowling trip.

Each year pupils with 100% attendance are entered into an annual prize draw for a bicycle.

Any child who achieves 100% attendance for their time at that school will be eligible for an individual prize.

The school may also reward pupils whose attendance or punctuality has greatly improved.

**Policy Revised July 2013**