



BIRCH COPSE PRIMARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Version

Version: 1.2

Status:

Good practice

Principles

A child should come to school every day.

A child should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law and parents can be fined up to £1000 on each occasion. Every half-day absence from school 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.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason: e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no request for absence has been granted. This includes:

- keeping children off school for trivial reasons
- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained
- late arrival at school too late to get a mark (half an hour after the register closes)
- additional holidays during term time over the 10 day limit

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not “unavoidable”. Children should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house for younger children, or a ‘treat’.

If there are attendance problems, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.) from the Local Authority. The E.W.O. will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve a child’s attendance have failed, the E.W.O can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents may wish to contact the E.W.O. themselves for advice. They are independent from the school, and their telephone number is available at the School Office, or from the Local Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and other legitimate reasons:

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school by 9.30am on each day of absence, in person or by telephone. If a child is absent and no reason has been given, the school will contact the parents before 10:00am on the first day of absence. This is a safety measure. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Absence may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments arranged in school time, provided a written explanation is received. When a telephone message has been received,

the correct absence recorded in the register by Office Staff. When a letter has been received from parents, the reason for absence will be noted by the teacher in the register.

2. Holidays:

The granting of leave of absence for holidays is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Provided the request is made in advance in writing by the parent or guardian looking after the child, leave of absence for up to 10 days per school year may be granted, provided the child's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory. Leave of absence forms for this purpose are available from the School Office. Leave of absence for a holiday may not be granted where a child has already had many absences for other reasons, or at crucial times of the year (for example, during tests). The school needs at least 2 weeks' notice of any requests for absence. This will enable the teacher to know in good time if a child will be unable to take part in any Educational Visit, Class Assembly, or major production etc.

The school actively discourages parents to take holidays during term time.

3. Punctuality/lateness:

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. A record will be kept in the School Office of all latecomers. The Headteacher will write to the parents of children who are persistently late, in order for them to come to school on time.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Information will be included in a child's report at the end of every year. Very good attendance is rewarded each year with a special Certificate.

The school has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure their children attend. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Responsible officer

Headteacher

Date of last review: March 2015

Dates of amendments: 8th December 2010, 1st March 2012

Date of next review: March 2018