

# ***Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools***



## **Attendance Policy**

**Responsibility of: Curriculum and Pupil Achievement (CPA) Committee**

**Date of Policy:** January 2017

**Date of Review:** September 2018

### **2014 Junior School Mission Statement**

**The Emmbrook Junior School community works together to further develop each child's abilities by creating a nurturing and motivating environment for learning. Each child's self-confidence will be strengthened so they make good academic progress whilst gaining increasing resilience and respect for the community.**

#### **Introduction**

Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools seek to ensure that all their pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The schools will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment and make each member of the school community feel wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. **The school will highlight to parents of primary school pupils the importance of good school attendance and that getting their child(ren) into a good routine of regular attendance is beneficial for them and will set them up for their whole school career.**

The schools will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **Whole School Policy for School Attendance – Aims**

1. To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and Governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and with other services and agencies
8. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### **AIM NO 1**

#### **To improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School**

1. Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
2. Designate a senior member of staff as the Whole School Attendance Lead.
3. Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
4. Relate attendance directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.

### **AIM NO 2**

#### **To make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for all those associated with the School including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors**

1. Ensure all staff are aware of policies regarding authorised and unauthorised absence and holidays in term time.
2. Produce annual reports to parents and half-termly reports to Governors.
3. Provide information to parents prior to children starting at the school.
4. Produce newsletters.
5. Discuss all pupils' attendance on a monthly basis. Involve the EWS when attendance is significantly low.

### **AIM NO 3**

#### **To develop a Framework which defines agreed Roles and Responsibilities and promotes consistency on carrying out designated tasks**

1. Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration and ensure use of mandatory codes.
2. Make phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
3. Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
4. Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
5. Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
6. Have clear procedures prior to referral to EWS.
7. Review attendance on a monthly basis.
8. Be familiar with the EWS's referral and recording system.

### **AIM NO 4**

#### **To provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils**

1. Highlight attendance in:
  - PSHE
  - Assemblies
  - Making use of available resources
2. Publicise support offered by schools.
3. Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
4. Ensure appropriate communication with parents eg when parents ring in.
5. Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
6. Involve parents from earliest stage.

### **AIM NO 5**

#### **To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

1. Standardise recording of:
  - Authorised/unauthorised absence
  - Educational activity
  - Pupil presence
2. Be consistent in the collection and provision of information.

3. Decide what information, if any, is provided for:
  - Governors
  - Pastoral staff
  - Other school staff
  - Parents
  - Pupils (individual or groups)
  - EWS
4. Identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

#### **AIM NO 6**

##### **To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School**

1. Initiate first day absence contact.
2. Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls to parents.
3. Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
4. Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
5. Encourage all parents into school.

#### **AIM NO 7**

##### **To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions where appropriate**

1. Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
2. Implement a system of awards for improved and high levels of attendance and punctuality.

#### **AIM NO 8**

##### **To Promote Effective Partnerships with the EWS and with other Services and Agencies**

1. Designated key staff for liaison with EWS and other agencies.
2. Give priority to timetabled meetings with EWS.
3. Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
4. Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of EWS referral.
5. Hold monthly attendance review with key school staff.
6. Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.

7. Establish and maintain list of named contact within the local community if appropriate.

## **AIM NO 9**

### **To Recognise the needs of the Individual Pupil when Planning Reintegration following significant Periods of Absence**

1. Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
2. Involve/inform all staff in/of reintegration process.
3. Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
4. Consider mentoring.
5. Involve parents as far as possible.
6. Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
7. Include EWS, parents and pupil in Reintegration Plan.

### **School Systems for registration and absences in line with the Department for Education Guidance;**

#### **Registration**

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.50am in both schools, and again at 1.00 pm in the Junior school, 1.20pm in the Infant school.
- Registers close at 9.20am and 1.20pm (Junior)/ 1.50pm (Infant). If a pupil arrives after 8.55am they should report to the school office.
- If a child has failed to arrive in school and communication has not been received about the absence by 9.20am and 1.20/1.50pm, a telephone call will be made by the office to the child's parents/carers.
- When a pupil misses registration altogether and fails to provide an adequate explanation, the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absentee for that session.

#### **Authorised Absences**

Absences will be authorised for:

- Sickness (with medical evidence if requested)
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (whenever possible made outside school hours- with evidence)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

## Unauthorised Absence

Absences will not be authorised for:

- Truancy
- Arrival (without justified reason and evidence if requested) after registration period has closed
- Shopping
- Looking after family members (save in exceptional circumstances)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays or similar events
- Family holidays during term time unless specifically endorsed by the Head Teacher( **please see Holiday information on page 7** )
- Sibling or parental illness

When considering individual cases of absence, the school will consider:

- The nature of the event
- Frequency of absence
- Whether advance notification is given
- Overall attendance record of the pupil

If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the EWS, through the Head Teacher/Deputy Head who will work together to provide if appropriate:

- an holistic approach and cease implementing multiple intervention programmes e.g. a Looked After Child should have one plan that includes a PEP (Personal Education Plan), IEP (Individual Education Plan) and PSP (Pastoral Support Plan) not three separate plans
- A constant approach across the Authority regarding a percentage attendance grading system
- Enhanced transitional work between Infant and Junior to help pupils prepare and parents understand the issues in advance of the start of Junior school
- Include students in meetings regarding their attendance
- Improved access to learning mentors
- "Listening Ear" Adults and older students available for pupils to speak to in areas of the school and playground
- Focus Groups with Teacher/Teaching Assistants in small group work
- Work with parents regarding peer pressure on unacceptable absences which can be caused by "friends" absences

## PARENTS TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN TERM TIME

The Department of Education has produced a policy as of September 2013 that says that holidays in term time should only be authorised in “exceptional” circumstances.

The Head Teacher will determine whether the circumstances are exceptional or not. There is no automatic right to take a holiday in term time. The cost of a holiday is not considered to be sufficient to be an exceptional reason. Examples of ‘exceptional’ circumstances could be major illness or a close death within the family; parent(s) within the armed forces where tours of duty only end in term time.

Wokingham Borough Council has a Penalty Notice (PN) code of conduct that enables PN’s to be issued **per parent per pupil when unauthorised holiday absence of 5 days or more per term occurs**. The school Leave of Absence form contains a warning clause on the form that informs parents that a PN can be issued if unauthorised holiday absence is taken.

The current PN is a charge of £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid within 22 and 28 days. If no payment is made after 28 days then parent(s) will be taken to court for non-payment.

Approved by EJS Governing Body

Chair of Governors

Date 26.01.2017

Head Teacher

Date 26.01.2017