

EXCALIBUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Attendance Policy in respect of Excalibur Primary School has been discussed and adopted by the Governing Body

Chair of Governors

Gill Burgess

Head Teacher:

Juliet Jones

Ratified at the meeting of Full Governing Body on 17th January 2022

To be reviewed January 2025

SCOPE

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Please see further guidance on the Cheshire East website: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/school_attendance.aspx

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school 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 like illness.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy from a whole session
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- taking holidays

Parents are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may issue parents with a letter that details the concerns or may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceedings against parents if required,

including Penalty Notices. These are issued under section 444 of the Education Act or section 106 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Penalty Notice: The Local Authority can issue a warning letter to the parents of a pupil who has had 10 or more unauthorised absences from school. Parents are given a period of 15 school days of monitoring their child's attendance at school. If at the end of this period there has not been an improvement or an improvement has been made but is not sustained, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Each parent/carer would have to pay £60.00 per child. If this is not paid within 21 days, the payment increases to £120.00 per child per parent. Payments will not be accepted after 28 days. If parents do not pay the Local Authority will prosecute in the Magistrates' Court. If convicted the parent will have a criminal record and may receive a fine of up to £1000.

At Excalibur Primary School all students who have attendance below 90% are discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer as they are seen as 'Persistent Absentees'. Both the school and the 'Educational Welfare Service' will intervene with these students and contact with parents will be made.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01270 375255.

PROCEDURES

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. These students are called "persistent absentees" by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

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

Registers

Our school day has two sessions.

- Morning registration at 9.00am
- Afternoon registration at 1.00pm for EYFS and KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2

Punctuality

All students should be at their classroom ready to learn at 9.00am. Students who arrive after this time will be recorded as late. The Headteacher will determine whether the lateness is authorised.

Holidays

The regulations linked to holidays have been changed. In April 2012, the Government accepted Charlie Taylor's recommendation to challenge the culture of the expectation term time holiday and set out a clear expectation that term time holiday leave should only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'.

If, despite the law, a parent wishes to write to the Headteacher detailing the exceptional circumstances we recommend that this is done well in advance of booking a holiday. With the achievement of our pupils of paramount importance and the regulations clear we will be extremely unlikely to authorise any holiday leave.

It is pertinent to point out that taking your child out of school without the school's authorisation may result in the school requesting the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty fine to each parent/carer for each child, the penalty details are listed in the table below, and/or prosecute parents/carers under the Education Act 1996.

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
TIMELINE	ONE CHILD	TWO CHILDREN
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will be summons to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your	You will be summons to appear before the magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular

	child's regular attendance	attendance
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Notification of absence

Parents are required to phone or e-mail the school to notify the school of absence due to illness. Contact will need to be made for each day of absence unless an agreement has been made with the Head Teacher or School Business Manager.

Absence Reporting: 01270 845781 or using Parentmail absence reporting

Leave may however, be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative). Parents are encouraged to provide a written note explaining the absence in advance and the school will determine whether the absence is to be authorised or not.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, the child's teacher or school's receptionist should be informed in advance. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. We always expect students to attend school before and after appointments.

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Whole School Target

Excalibur Primary School has high expectations for the attendance of our students and expects students to have attendance of 97% or above in line with Chancery Multi Academy Trust's target.

All school reports include attendance information as well as authorised and unauthorised absences.

First Day Calling

The parents of absent students are contacted from 9.30am when no contact has been made to explain the absence of their child. For safeguarding reasons it is important that we as a school address any absent students and contact parents about this.

Responsibilities

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Please work with us.

This policy will be made available on our web site.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in the light of operating experience and/or changes in legislation.