Upper Beeding Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

February 2016

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.

All pupils should be punctual to their lessons.

1. To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.
2. All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% or above attendance. It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance.
3. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
4. A child will be marked late after the register closes at 9.00am.
5. If a child arrives after 9.30am, it will be marked as unauthorised absence.
6. It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, s/he should report to the School Office to be marked in and ensure in case of emergency the school has an accurate head count.
7. It is most important that parents discuss any problem with either the class teacher or the Head Teacher so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours s/he must be signed out, and in again on return, at the School Office.
8. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.
9. If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/carers to make contact as early as possible but no later than 9.30am, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/carer the school will contact the parent/carer on that day. The school follows up absences where no reasons are given. If the reasons for these absences remain unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.
10. It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure their child's good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality is persistently unsatisfactory, initially the school will liaise with the parent verbally and/or by letter. If the situation does not improve i.e. the child's unauthorised absences build up to more than 10 half day sessions over a 10 school week period, the school will consider a referral to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI). Should a child's attendance/punctuality still not improve, the parent/carer could be prosecuted under the 1996 Education Act. Alternatively an Education Supervision Order could be sought in the family proceedings court under the 1989 Children Act.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

11. Head Teachers may **not grant any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, they should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. Examples of this would be:
    - Funeral of an immediate relative – 2 days
    - Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
    - Close family wedding – 1 day
    - Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day
12. A form obtained from the School Office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested.
13. Parents/carers should be aware that Chanctonbury Network of Schools will follow the WSCC PE:I guidelines regarding unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised holiday of five consecutive days or more will be forwarded to WSCC PE:I for consideration for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). However, the FPN team reserve the right to consider the suitability of a FPN being used. Where periods of absence are extensive and exceed the threshold for referral of 10 sessions, WSCC PE:I may take further legal action and the matter could be brought before the court.
14. In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after ten days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to the PE:I, which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parents/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it will consider taking the pupil off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If a child is taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.
15. Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.
16. Chanctonbury Network of Schools provides a broad, balanced curriculum, but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually.

Date agreed: February 2016
Effective from: February 2016
Date of Review: February 2017 unless any statutory changes come into effect.