Dame Ellen Pinsent School Attendance Policy

Dame Ellen Pinsent: Where children develop independence and confidence; learning through curiosity, play and enquiring

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Introduction

Dame Ellen Pinsent School:-

1. Values good attendance from all pupils. Each pupil is important and valued by the school. The school has a commitment to provide the best possible education for each pupil. This cannot be achieved if attendance is poor.
2. Promises to actively encourage pupil's attendance by working to provide a safe, happy and secure place where children are successful and achievements are recognised and celebrated.
3. Recognises that good attendance is based on a working partnership between pupil, parent and school. All involved have a relationship where open communication is encouraged.

Aims

Dame Ellen Pinsent School has set clear procedures in order to maximise attendance to provide success for all.

We aim to:-

- Ensure that all the legal requirements with regard to attendance are met.
- Ensure that the school works in partnership with relevant organisations to offer support to children and families.
- Challenge poor attendance.
- Praise improvement to attendance.
- Encourage children to have high expectations of themselves by raising their self-esteem.
- Ensure that every child experiences pleasure in learning and pride in success.
- Work to make sure that there is good behaviour, respect and consideration from everyone to everyone.
- Regard every member of school or visitor as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender, (including gender reassignment), disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marital/civil partnership status or age.
- Have due regard for the COVID-19 Pandemic and the limitations and expectations this places on both school and families

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

Pupils should: -

- Be aware that it is important to come to school.
- Feel comfortable and safe to share any worries or concerns they have about attending school with the staff at school and / or their parents.
- Have time to speak to an adult in quiet time and in confidence.

Parents

The Education Act has placed a duty on any parent of children aged 5 to 16 that they receive full time education.

Parents should: -

- Make sure that their child attends school regularly and stays at school.

- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, by them being ready when school transport arrives, if not then they need to get their child to school themselves. Or ensuring they are ready for school transport.
- Ensure that their child is properly dressed and in a condition to learn.
- Inform the school the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible preferably on the first day, either by telephone or a message via the escort.
- Know that they can only explain absences, they cannot authorise them. It is the school decision whether it is authorised or unauthorised (list of criteria for authorised and unauthorised absences can be found in appendix).
- Plan appointments where possible after school or at weekends.
- Inform school if an absence from school is known in advance. All leave of absence is unauthorised as per the amendment in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, especially with regard to holidays. Only exceptional circumstances will be considered for leave of absence for the pupil. School has an answer machine where a message can be left at any time.
- If they are worried regarding their child, contact school and arrange a discussion with a member of staff. It is important that problems are sorted out in the beginning.
- Help their child's attendance by giving positive messages about school, taking an interest in their child's work, praising effort and achievement, using the home/school book regularly to inform school of any difficulties and giving their child a regular routine.
- Ensure they follow both PHE guidance and school information as regards to COVID-19, particularly if their child is displaying symptoms

School
School Should:-
- Keep attendance and admission registers on computer.
- Have criteria that distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absences for pupils of compulsory school age (see appendix 1).
- Include any information on rate of absence for annual reports.
- Ask parents for a reason and / or explanation for any absence, by a telephone call, note or message via the escort.
- Have an effective system to contact parents / carers about unexplained absences if information hasn't been received via the above methods (see appendix 2).
- Work in partnership with relevant organisations if families need support regarding absence or lateness.
- Make clear the times for beginning and end of the school day, dates for school holidays and training days.
- Inform parents of any change to their child's transport arrangements that may result in the vehicle arriving at a different time.
- Work with parents to find joint solutions and especially listening sensitively to any concerns.
- Welcome children back to school.
- Praise and record good attendance by giving certificates for pupils with good and 100% attendance.
- Encourage good behaviour and mutual respect for each other.

- Follow Birmingham Guidance: Term Time Leave (Pupils) (Updated) Guidance for Schools and Academies; Birmingham City Council; September 2019
- Follow PHE and DfE guidance as regards to COVID-19 and what to do in the event of a pupil displaying symptoms and any positive cases

<u>Appendix 1</u>
<u>Codes for Absence Reports</u>

Present   / \

1. Educated off site   B
2. Other authorised circumstances   C
3. Dual registration   D
4. Extended family holiday (agreed)   F
5. Family holiday (not agreed)   G
6. Family holiday (agreed)   H
7. Illness   I
8. Late   L
9. Medical Appointment   M
10. Unauthorised absence   O
11. Approved sporting activity   P
12. Religious observation   R
13. Study leave   S
14. Late (after registers closed)   U
15. Education visit   V
16. Work experience   W

<u>Appendix 2</u>
<u>Same Day Contact</u>
Apart from the obvious health and safety issues involved, contacting families on the first day of a child's absence can be a useful tool in improving attendance.

Whilst not impacting on hard core, persistent non-attenders, it does influence casual or sporadic non-attenders back into school.

It is quite a time-consuming process but there are three areas which need to be set up to make it work more efficiently:

A.   The administration role
B.   The content of the call
C.   Monitoring and evaluation

A.1   The registers will need to be read every day so organising for this to happen before 10.00am is essential.
A.2   Ensure that the school has an effective late system in operation – it is counterproductive to ring parents to tell them their child is away when they are in lesson but have not registered (it is also a breach of fire regulations).

A.3   All guides write reasons for absence on the relevant absence sheet. The Senior Office Manager will chase up unexplained absences.

B.1   Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the call.
B.2   Explain that you are checking the whereabouts of <u>all</u> children marked absent for that session. It is important for parents to understand that everyone is being treated in exactly the same way.
B.3   Ascertain the reason for absence and make a judgement, if possible, about its legitimacy.
        a)   If legitimate, then establish a return date.
        b)   If not, explain how important regular attendance is for the success for their child and that this success stems from parents and school working in partnership.
B.4   If no direct contact is possible then choose whether to leave an answer machine message (if available), send a letter or arrange a visit to the home.

C.1   Repeat this process for each day during the same day contact to analyse its impact.
C.2   Monitor pupil absence half termly. Letters are sent to all parents outlining the attendance percentage for their child. All pupils with less than 90% are analysed, an action plan is put in place and some are put on the 'Cool Cat Programme'.