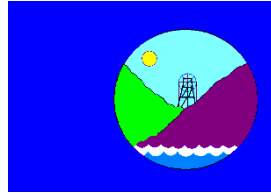


Lingdale Primary School
and
Lingdale Primary School Two Year Old Provision



Attendance Policy

Nic Oxtoby – Headteacher

Kay Longstaff – Chair of Governing Body

Ratified: Full Governing Body

Signed: *K. Longstaff*

(Chair of Governing Body)

Date: 11th September 2013

Review date: End September 2014 – Full Governing Body

Lingdale Primary School

Attendance Policy

This document complies with the Attendance Strategy for Redcar and Cleveland which was developed and published in 2004. In all matters of interpretation the Governors have decided that the decision of the Headteacher is final, with due regard to legal due process.

A key element in establishing and maintaining attendance rates is the Attendance Policy of the School. OFSTED and the Department for Children, Schools and Families recommend the following:-

‘Clear school policies to deal promptly with the causes of non-attendance and effective working procedures can have a substantial influence on school rates attendance’.

**‘Parents need to know: what are their responsibilities, including their legal obligations, for securing their child’s education; what counts as valid reasons for absence; and what action can be taken by the school and the Education Welfare Service.’
(Department for Children, Schools and Families Education Observed – Attendance at School)**

Lingdale Primary works with other agencies, including health and social care to secure good attendance we are pleased to have the support of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in the discharge of our duties in respect of school attendance matters.

The School aims to:

- Maximise the educational opportunities of all pupils;
- Promote social inclusion and address social disadvantage through anti-discriminatory practice;
- Ensure the safety and well being of all children and recognise that the child’s welfare is paramount;
- Treat all families with care, understanding and respect;
- Practice in a manner which is both professional and responsive to need whilst
- recognising cultural and social diversity;
- Work in partnership with otherservices and agencies;
- Develop and improve the working practice of the school to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

The aim of working in the above manner is to ensure that the outcomes of the Children Act 2004, for all young people, are achieved - being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well being. These procedures will be regularly reviewed and amended in the event of new legislation or identified best practice.

Attendance at Lingdale Primary School

Attendance at School really matters, our decision as a School is **not** to authorise absences for holidays .

If your child is absent from school or Nursery we must be notified at the earliest opportunity, in person, by 'phone, email or in writing. Registers are checked regularly to monitor authorised and unauthorised absence and punctuality. 'Unauthorised' absence is one in which the school is not notified of the cause or which is not regarded as a valid reason for absence. Parents who do not inform school are contacted by telephone or by letter and may be visited by the school's Education Welfare Officer.

Holiday dates are sent to all families in July and September, they are always available for the current year and following academic year on the Parent Notice Board in school and on the RCBC Website.

Legal action may be taken in cases of poor attendance; the School target is 95% attendance.

CHILDREN ARRIVING AFTER 9.00AM MUST ENTER VIA THE MAIN ENTRANCE. REGISTRATION CLOSSES AT 9.10AM.

Parents, including Nursery and Two Year Old parents, must not bring their cars into the school site, including our access road, between 8.25am and 4.30pm. Footpaths should be used to reach the playgrounds and not the central roadway. Cyclists must dismount on reaching the school site. Scooters, roller boots, in-line skates and any other wheeled items must not be used within our site. Parents of children wishing to travel to school by bike (or scooter!) should ensure that their child wears a helmet and locks their bike in the Bike Shed. School will not take any responsibility for ant loss or damage.

Operational notes

Classroom Doors to shut at 09.00hrs

Register completed on SIMs by 09.10hrs

Late mark may be awarded till 09.30hrs

A 'U' will be entered after 09.30hrs

A child arriving late for a session, but with evidence of attending a medical appointment, will receive 'M' with a note recorded to their SIMs register

PARENTS HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Note: Throughout the document the term "parent(s)/carer(s)" refers to one parent, both parents or the child's carer.

DEFINITION OF "PARENT"

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not an actual parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not an actual parent, has care of a child or young person.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Having parental responsibility means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law (if the parents are not married at the time of birth only the mother has parental responsibility, however, the father can acquire parental responsibility by various legal means). People other than a child's natural parents can acquire parental responsibility through:

- Being granted a residence order;
- Being appointed a guardian;
- Being named in an emergency protection order (parental responsibility in such a case is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare);
- Adopting a child.

In addition, a local authority can acquire parental responsibility if it is named in the care order for a child, although any person who is a parent or guardian retains parental responsibility and may exercise it providing their actions are not incompatible with the care order. While the care order is in force, the local authority can refuse contact with the parent and does not have to seek parental consent. Children can also be "accommodated", whereby there is a joint agreement between the parents and local authority that the latter would look after the child. This does not, however, involve a court order and the parents can withdraw from the arrangements if they choose to do so.

The parental responsibility of one party does not stop simply because another person is also given it. So, in some cases several people may be regarded, for the purposes of education law, as being the "parent" of a child.

CARE OF A CHILD

Having care of a young child or person means that a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from age five when a child should attend school from the start of the term commencing on or after his fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

Full-time education - Circular 7/90 Management of the School Day suggests as a guide to good practice the following recommended minima for weekly taught time in school:

- 21 hours for pupils aged 5-7 years (key stage 1)

- 3 hours and 30 minutes for pupils aged 8-11 years (key stage 2)

Taught time does not include breaks, registration or acts of collective worship.

If it appears to the Headteacher that a child enrolled at Lingdale Primary School is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996 they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order by working with partner agencies.

In the case of a child attending Lingdale Primary School Two Year Olds Provision any child's attendance that is below 50% will be reported to the Family Information Service and funding for the place may be removed. Attendance is equally crucial for children below the age of five and Lingdale Primary School will work closely with Health Visitors to target 95% attendance.

LEGAL MEASURES

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES - SCHOOL

1 STAGE 1 – MONITOR

1.1 The School has primary responsibility for monitoring attendance of the pupils in the class group, for collecting notes explaining absences, maintaining an accurate register and contacting home with concerns about attendance and punctuality.

1.2 Unexplained absence - first day contact by phone is normally sought. As a minimum where a pupil is absent for 3 days and there has been no contact from home, then a 3 day response letter should be sent home (SD1). If pupils have a telephone number, then a phone call will also be made.

1.3 If a teacher becomes concerned about absence then the pupil should be referred to the head teacher. A level of school absence is inevitable due to medical or family circumstances, however, the Department for Children, Schools and Families recommends acceptable levels of school attendance should be around 95% at our School.

1.4 We recognise that our whole school practice and policy can affect attendance and truancy. We have a clear policy to challenge and address bullying and poor behaviour in and around school. We will develop practice which encourages good attendance, this can include class based activities and whole school activity to identify, praise and reward good attendance.

1.5 If a pupil has had 1-3 school days unauthorised absence the school is expected to contact the parent(s) by phone, letter or personal visit. If the absence continues the school should extend their enquiries to include attempts to contact extended family members and all efforts should be appropriately recorded.

1.6 We have a duty to refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service if they have been absent for 10 school days without any valid reason (including unauthorised absence). If the EWO is not available to collect this referral the school should make this referral directly to the Team Manager.

2 STAGE 2 - ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

2.1 The head teacher (or representative) should discuss the pupil with the class teacher and, where possible, see the parent(s)/carer(s). Parent(s)/carer(s) should be encouraged to visit school to discuss attendance and strategies for improvement. It is important to establish the reasons for poor attendance, the general health of the pupil, home circumstances etc. A target should be set for the pupil's attendance, which is higher than the normal attendance by that pupil.

2.2 Parent(s)/carer(s) should be contacted, by phone, home visit or by a formal letter or an invitation into school for a meeting to discuss the concerns. A record should be kept of all contacts and relevant conversations on a contact sheet or SIMs, as this could be required in subsequent court proceedings.

2.3 A date for review of attendance should be set, no more than four weeks later.

2.4 If attendance has improved, then a letter of commendation should be sent to parent(s)/carer(s) and pupil. (Return to STAGE 1.)

2.5 If attendance has not improved, then options may include:

- Contact parent(s)/carer(s) to discuss the review and set a further date;
- Discuss with the parent(s)/carer(s), areas of concern and where other support might be appropriate; e.g. referral to appropriate agencies;
- Refer to Education Welfare Officer;

Criteria for referral to EWS follow LA guidelines:-

- Unsatisfactorily explained or addressed medical absences
- Erratic attendance
- Unauthorised absences

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

WORKING WITH THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

3 STAGE 3 – REFERRAL / PRE CAF ASSESSMENT/CAF

Lingdale Primary School will follow and support the procedures drawn up by the Local Authority and agreed with Schools.

4. (A) STAGE 4(A) – PLANNED INTERVENTION

4.1 Where attendance has continued to be unsatisfactory, a programme of planned intervention should be pursued. Lingdale Primary School will follow the agreed Local Authority guidance.

5. STAGE 5 – ATTENDANCE CASE CONFERENCE – VIA PLANNING

5.1 If attendance continues to be unsatisfactory an Attendance Case Conference will be arranged and the case will be recorded as an Open Case File on the EWS database. Lingdale Primary School will follow the agreed Local Authority guidance.

6. STAGE 6 – LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

If the decision has been made to prosecute under Section 444(1), a court warning letter (EW16), signed by the Team Manager, will be sent to the parent(s)/carer(s). The letter will inform the parent(s)/carer(s) of their legal responsibility to ensure the regular and sustained school attendance of their child and that a prosecution is imminent if they fail to do so. Lingdale Primary School will follow the agreed Local Authority guidance.

7. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ORDER

7.1 School Attendance Orders (SAO) may be used to direct the parent(s)/carer(s) to send their child to a specified school. An SAO should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school. These circumstances are likely to arise when:

- The parent(s)/carer(s) has not registered their child with any primary school;
- There is a change of school phase such as transition from primary to secondary school;
- The parent(s)/carer(s) has failed to secure a place at the school of their preference and they are faced with options which they view to be unsuitable;
- The parent(s)/carer(s) has failed in their duty under arrangements for Education Otherwise and are reluctant to engage with any school;
- Children from another LA move into the area and have been taken off the school roll in their previous LA.

Lingdale Primary School will follow the agreed Local Authority guidance.

8. PARENTING CONTRACTS – ATTENDANCE

A Parenting Contract is a written document containing:

- A statement by the parent(s)/carer(s) that they agree to comply, for a specified period, with whatever requirements are specified in the contract; **And**
- A statement by the LA or governing body agreeing to provide support to the parent(s)/carer(s) for the purpose of complying with the contract. The statement

should be made by whoever is in a position to commit any additional resources necessary. Parents/carers, LA's or governing bodies are not compelled to enter into a Parenting Contract – it is a voluntary arrangement. Courts will, however, have regard to whether or not Parenting Contracts have been tried before granting an application for a Parenting Order. Parenting Contracts have no legal sanction or authority attached to them, however, they are seen as good practice to encourage improved parenting skills and contribute to moderating a child's behaviour and/or school attendance. The failure of parents/carers to accept a contract or subsequent failure to comply with the terms of a contract, contributes to the 'grounds' for seeking a 'Parenting Order'.

Lingdale Primary School will follow the agreed Local Authority guidance.

9. HOLIDAY POLICY

Holidays in term time can damage a child's education and future life prospects,

particularly for those pupils with existing attendance problems, struggling with education therefore Lingdale Primary School will not authorise Leave of Absence for the purpose of a holiday.

Holiday absence taken without approval will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday absence (code G) and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. The EWS will decide on the appropriate action to take which could include formal written warnings or the issue of a fixed penalty notice. A penalty notice would only be issued where it was believed appropriate and necessary to do so.

Each case file needs to be looked at individually and the Education Welfare Service Team Manager needs to be aware at all times if the Penalty Notice is unpaid. There must be sufficient evidence to pursue a prosecution for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child.

10. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

If a pupil has had 1-3 school days unauthorised absence the school is expected to contact the parent(s)/carer(s) by phone, letter or personal visit. If the absence continues the school should extend their enquiries to include attempts to contact extended family members and all efforts should be appropriately recorded.

Schools have a duty to refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service if they have been absent for 10 school days without any valid reason (including unauthorised absence). If the EWO is not available to collect this referral the school should make this referral directly to the Team Manager.

When schools refer a pupil missing from education to the EWS, they should pass on all contact details for the family including extended family members. This information should include all current and historical details.