

# Attendance Policy 2019-2020

Adopted and signed on behalf of the school by the Governing Body Representative at the meeting on: Autumn Term 2019

Name of the Governing Body Representative: Margaret Brightman

Signature of the Governing Body Representative:



Date signed: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

Last reviewed: October 2019

Next review due by: October 2020



## TORRIDON PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

*'Every child matters, every day matters'*

### INTRODUCTION

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential if children are to gain the greatest benefit from their education and feel part of the school community. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

### AIMS

At Torridon Primary School we are committed to working with parents/carers to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community (parents/carers, pupils, staff)
- Maintain an average whole school attendance of at least 97% in line with the national average
- Ensure parents understand their legal responsibilities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of school systems and procedures
- Provide appropriate advice and support where there are attendance and punctuality issues in order to bring about improvements.

### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

By law all children of compulsory school age (i.e. the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) must get a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure

this happens either by registering the child at a school or making other suitable arrangements. Once a child is registered at a school parents/carer are responsible for making sure the child attends regularly. If a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance then they are guilty of an offence which could result in prosecution.

#### INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

In order to emphasise the importance of good attendance, an information leaflet is provided for all new parents. Details are explained by the headteacher prior to a child starting school.

Attendance information is regularly shared with parents/carers through the school newsletter and parents receive information on their child's attendance with their annual school report.

#### PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The school also issues certificates for children with 100% attendance at the end of each term. In addition special awards are presented in July to any child who has achieved the following attendance levels over the course of the year:

Above 99%	Gold Award
98%	Silver Award
97%	Bronze Award

#### UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised' which is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless an acceptable explanation for the absence is received.

#### Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as:

- Illness
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (where these cannot be made after school)
- Family bereavement
- Days of religious observance

If a child's attendance is causing concern, proof of the absence may be required in order for this to be authorised.

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These include:

- Birthdays, shopping and day trips
- Visiting family members/friends
- Family holidays
- Absences which have never been properly explained

### Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. In such cases the absence patterns and reasons given are monitored very thoroughly and reported to the Local Authority. Parents are contacted in order to gain their support to improve the situation.

### REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In very **exceptional** circumstances the headteacher may authorise a limited absence from school. Parents/carers who wish to request a leave of absence for their child must make an appointment to discuss this with the headteacher and complete a form detailing reasons for the request.

The headteacher will make a decision based on the nature of the request, previous and current attendance rates, as well as the likely impact on the child's progress. If a child has lower than expected attendance then the request will not be granted.

If the absence is not sanctioned this will be recorded as unauthorised. Requests for exceptional leave will not be given retrospectively.

If parents apply for exceptional leave of absence and the request is refused, the Local Authority may serve a Fixed Penalty Notice which may result in a fine.

### SCHOOL MONITORING PROCEDURES

#### Daily

Class teachers mark registers twice daily at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm (12.30 pm in the Nursery and Reception). Any child who is not in the classroom for registration is marked absent. Once completed, registers are sent online to the school office.

Parents are requested to inform the school on the first day of a child's absence, giving the reason for absence and if possible the likely date of return. Reasons for absence are logged by attendance officer or admin staff as appropriate.

Inventory is kept updated with reasons for lateness recorded by the pupils, parents/carers or school administrative staff.

### Weekly

Punctuality is monitored and parents are contacted if a child is late on more than two occasions in any week. A member of the Senior Management team will speak to the parent.

### Monthly

A monthly computer check is carried out. Information is gathered on pupils with less than 90% attendance. This information is used as the basis for discussion with parents as well as the school's Attendance and Welfare Officer (AWO).

### FOLLOWING UP ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY ISSUES

- Look at online registers promptly by 9.15 both AM and PM. (Including Nursery)
- Listen to absence calls, read absence emails, check absence diary for planned absences e.g. medical appointments
- Begin first day calling for children absent without explanation, call everyone on the contact lists. Leave messages if there is a voicemail option, then text message from Scholarpack. If we are aware of a sibling in another school contact them to see if the siblings are in.
- Call the contact list at least twice
- If still no replies speak to DSL and HT to see whether the child/family has additional agency support, such as a social worker, contact them.
- Always run through check on every child, no explanation from a supportive family is just as worrying as absence from a vulnerable family.
- Inform HT/DSL where no contact has been made. Attendance officer and one other person to make a home visit that day.
- If we cannot get an answer refer immediately to children's services / MASH team/ Police and request a welfare call.
- Input all information to our system to show our attempts to make contact and note any correspondence we have had with parent's carers or contacts of the child.

### SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Poor attendance may be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are advised to make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic violence. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school's Learning Mentor, as well as local organisations may be able to provide support for families where there are on-going difficulties.

The school may make use of the Interpreting Service for families for whom English is an additional language to ensure that any issues relating to attendance / lateness are fully understood.

#### LEGAL SANCTIONS

The school expects that attendance issues can be resolved by working together with the parent and with the involvement of the Attendance and Welfare Service, where necessary. However, where intervention fails to bring about an improvement the Attendance and Welfare Service can take further action. This can result in parents receiving any of the following:

- An Education Supervision Order
- A Parenting Contract
- A Parenting Order (imposed by the court)
- A Fixed Penalty Notice (fine)

#### DELETIONS FROM THE REGISTER

Pupils will be removed from the school's register when one of the following applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

The school follows the Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Further information on any of the above is available from the Headteacher or from the Council's Attendance and Welfare Department.

Parents receive a letter from the Head teacher to advice of best practice implementation of staff making home visits when no communication has been made with a parent or contact when a child is absent.

Date: Autumn Term 2019  
Review Date: Autumn Term 2020