



**Runwell Community  
Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

*May 2019*

## **Introduction**

This policy is to support, help and ensure all pupils have equal access to education.

This policy document on attendance has been produced to explain the responsibilities and rules relating to pupil attendance. Pupil attendance, punctuality and reliability are essential to promote learning opportunities.

Runwell Community Primary School aims to encourage all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

An open dialogue between parents and teachers is crucial in promoting effective attendance.

## **Aims (including values)**

The main aims of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum are as follows:

### ***We aim to be a school ...***

- where all pupils and staff are encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential in a safe, healthy, caring and stimulating environment;
- that promotes excellence and equality and has high expectations for all pupils and staff;
- where the teaching is of a consistently high standard;
- that provides a rich, thematic curriculum that is very well planned and resourced;
- that challenges the pupils to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes, so they can become confident, independent lifelong learners;
- which maintains very high standards of behaviour in a positive atmosphere;
- which develops mutual respect and tolerance;
- that promotes individual responsibility and accountability, and which helps children to develop into thoughtful citizens;
- that encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's education and the wider school community.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

## **Rights and responsibilities**

### **School:**

- Expects pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Encourages good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- Referrals will be made to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance and punctuality concerns continue.
- Will consider circumstances when deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Absences will be unauthorised if no reason is given.

### **Pupils:**

- Will attend regularly and punctually.

### **Parents/Carers:**

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

- Inform the school of the reason for any absence on the first day of absence confirming this in writing on the day the child returns to school.
- If you have been unable to contact the school written confirmation of the absence is still required.
- Inform the school of the child's lunch requirements on their return.
- Ensure the school has updated emergency contact details.

#### **Pupil Administrator Responsibilities:**

- Checks pupils' attendance each month.
- Identifies those pupils with attendance below 90% and below 95%.
- Contacts the parents by phone or in writing to inform them of the school's concern about the child's attendance.
- Informs the Headteacher when attendance is below 90% or 95% and is not improving month on month.

#### **Registration Procedures**

- All pupils are to be in class prior to the registers being marked.
- Registers are marked at 8.50 a.m. and 1.00/1.15 p.m. and are then returned to the office.
- Pupils who arrive after the close of registers, 9.15 a.m./1.30 p.m., will receive an unauthorised absence mark. Seasonal weather may effect the close time.
- Pupils who arrive late must report to the office to be recorded as present.
- Pupils leaving the school during the day must report to the office to be signed out.
- Pupils returning during the school day must report to the office to be signed in.

#### **First day absence procedure**

The school identifies that a child is not in school.

- i. A staff member (Pupil Administrator or Receptionist) with responsibility for first day contact, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home.
- ii. The results of this telephone call could be that:
  - a. There was no answer at the home
  - b. The person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe
  - c. The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned
  - d. The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is not concerned
- iii. In the case of a), b) and d) the staff member who made the telephone call should consider, with the school's nominated child protection adviser, the degree of vulnerability of the child; using the guidelines in 3.3.2 below.
- iv. In the case of c) the staff member who made the telephone call should advise the parent to:
  - a. Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child
  - b. Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment
  - c. Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing

#### **Holidays during term time.**

- Absences are an unnecessary interruption to a child's education. If in exceptional circumstances a holiday is to be taken, applications must be made to the Headteacher in advance of the holiday.

- If the absence is unauthorised the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and legal action may be taken, including the possibility of parents receiving a Penalty Notice.

#### **Procedures for following up absence and punctuality (lateness).**

- If no reason has been given by a parent for a child's absence the Pupil Administrator will contact the parent and ask for an explanation. If the parent cannot be contacted the Pupil Administrator will write to the parent requesting an explanation.
- When a pupil is identified as persistently absent and/or persistently late the issue will be discussed with the parent. Should this not resolve the issue a letter will be sent home or a formal meeting held at the school. This meeting may include the Education Welfare Officer.
- If the schools attempts have been unsuccessful in improving levels of absence or punctuality it may be necessary to formally refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service.
- Parents of pupils whose attendance is below 90% will be notified regardless of the individual circumstances.
- Truancy and Register Sweeps are undertaken by the Education Welfare Service who will make reports to the school of the children identified.
- Regular meetings will be held with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss pupils whose attendance or punctuality is of concern.

#### **Children Missing from School**

- Where children on roll at Runwell Community Primary do not arrive at school the Pupil Administrator will ensure that the First Day Absence Procedure is followed (see Section 5).
- If this does not resolve the problem the Pupil Administrator will follow the 'Missing Pupil Checklist - Action for Schools (Appendix A)' (contained in Essex - Children Missing from Education - Policy and Procedures) until the matter is resolved; this may include deleting the pupil from the school roll.

#### **Procedures for following when children are not collected from school**

- See Appendix 1 and 2.

#### **Procedures for following when children leave the school premises without permission**

- See Appendix 3.

#### **Reward Systems**

- There is a weekly class award for the best attendance and an end of year reward for children whose attendance has been 100% for the entire year.

#### **Target Setting**

- Targets are set each year for whole school attendance level using information supplied by the Local Authority. This ensures that the school's attendance level is compared to that in similar schools.

#### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor this policy and to evaluate levels of attendance. Levels of attendance are reviewed at every Full Governing Body meeting. The policy is reviewed every 2 years by the governing body.

**Approved by Governors: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

## **Appendix 1**

### **PROCEDURE FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT COLLECTED AFTER SCHOOL**

At Runwell Community Primary School we have adopted the following procedure to be followed should any pupil not be collected from a school at the usual times.

#### **Prevention**

Staff at Runwell School act in Loco Parentis and should ensure that parents and carers have the establishment's telephone number and that they are familiar with the expectations regarding providing contact details and collecting their child from school.

We ensure that we obtain up to date telephone numbers and addresses for each pupil. We remind parents and carers in letters home, newsletters and information boards to update contact details. If a telephone number does not work we follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the parent/carer.

#### **Action if a child is not collected**

If the parent/carer has failed to contact the establishment to explain that they are going to be late, a member of staff should telephone all the contact numbers (including emergency numbers) available for that pupil and make every effort to contact a responsible adult to ensure the pupil is collected. If it is not possible to contact a responsible adult, the following procedures apply. Please note that there will be very few occasions when this procedure is needed.

1. Where no after school child care provision exists or is full – after 1 hour if it has not been possible to contact a parent /carer/emergency contact, then contact PCSO Hilary Willmott Fleming at South Woodham Police Station.
2. Where after school child care provision is available - Send pupil to after school club/extended school/childcare provision care and continue to try to contact parent or carer. Parents or carers should expect to pay a charge to use this facility. If contact has not been made 30 minutes prior to the after school club/childcare facilities official closing time, contact PCSO Hilary Willmott at South Woodham Police Station on 0300 333 4444.
3. For pupils who usually attend after school childcare provision - Allow 30 minutes after the official closing time of the provision to make contact with parents/carers/emergency contacts or for the parent/carer to contact you. After 30 minutes if contact with the parent/carer/emergency contact has not been made, then contact PCSO Hilary Willmott at South Woodham Police Station on 0300 333 4444.
4. Discretion should be used with the above procedures in exceptional circumstances, such as major disasters or unexpected early closures.

#### **Action to follow up an incident of a child not being collected**

On the first occasion when a child has not been collected, the school should consider the most appropriate response to ensure the incident is not repeated. The level of action will depend on the context of the situation. For parents or carers who repeatedly fail to collect their child on time from the school meetings with the parent/carer should be set up to address this. If this fails to improve the situation the Local Authority Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 01245-436744. They can give

advice and guidance to schools about any concerns in this area and can advise when a referral to Children's Social Care may be appropriate.

**Police Contact Details**

South Woodham Ferrers Police Station: 0300 333 4444

## Appendix 2

### **Letter to parents to try to ensure contact details are kept up to date.**

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Runwell Community Primary School we have a Policy for children who have not been collected from school at the arranged time. For us to carry out this policy it is essential that we have up to date contact details for you.

In order for us to have up to date information can you please inform the school if you have recently changed your mobile phone, moved house or changed your phone number for any reason. Not being able to contact a child's parents or carers in the case of an injury or emergency can delay any medical treatment that may be needed, cause concern to the school staff and, most importantly, cause the child to be more distressed than necessary.

Please ensure that the school has your current telephone number(s) and also the number of another relative, trusted friend, neighbour etc. who may act as an emergency contact.

If you are going to be late collecting your child from school for any reason please make sure that you contact the school and let us know. The staff can then reassure your child that you are on your way and again prevent them from becoming distressed.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

### Appendix 3

#### PROCEDURE FOR CHILDREN WHO LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES WITHOUT PERMISSION

Runwell School provides a secure site, which prevents unauthorised people gaining access to the site and also prevents children from leaving the site without permission.

This is achieved by the following means:

- Gates are locked as soon as the children have entered the school at the start of the school day. They remain locked until the end of the school day, unless there is a need to unlock them, in which case a member of staff will lock and unlock the gates as required.
- All Exit doors from the school are kept closed to prevent intrusion. All doors that open into unsecure areas, such as the car park and front entrance, are locked shut with a magnetic catch. Release switches are set at a high level so the doors can only be opened by an adult.
- Visitors to the school during the school day are only allowed to enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office window. They are given a visitors badge on entry, which must be worn.
- Children will only be allowed to leave the school site during the school day if they are collected by an adult with parental responsibility or confirmed permission. They must sign out at the school office.

If any pupil leaves the school premises without permission during the school day the following procedure will be followed:

#### **If the child has not left the school site but is beyond the external EXIT doors**

1. If the child is seen leaving by a member of staff she will call out to the child to stop.
2. Once the member of staff has the child's attention she will ask him/her to come over to the member of staff. If the child returns the member of staff will hold the child's hand and lead him/her back in to school.
3. If the child does not stop/keeps walking/runs off the member of staff will decide if the child can be SAFELY stopped from leaving the school premises. If the child can be SAFELY stopped the member of staff will stop the child. If the child cannot be SAFELY stopped the child will be allowed to leave the premises. The judgement will be made on a comparison of the risk of stopping the child compared to the risk of letting the child leave the school premises. For example, if the child is 5 years old there is significant risk to the child leaving the school site and walking/running by or across roads, therefore it would be sensible to try to stop the child leaving the school site. If the child is 10 years old there is less risk of the child walking/running by or across roads and an increased risk of harm if the child is running to try to get away from the member of staff, therefore it would not be safe to try to stop the child leaving the site.

#### **If the child has left the school site**

4. Once a child has left the school premises without permission then staff must never chase after him/her, as this will greatly increase the risk of harm due to the dangers of an accident on the road. In these situations the member of staff must report immediately to the office that a child has left the school site.

5. One member of the office staff will inform the parents that the child has left the school site. The police may also be informed if the circumstances suggest that the child is at sufficient risk of harm that police intervention is required.
6. Another member of staff (the Headteacher if he/she is available) will walk after the child to try to keep him/her safe and to try to persuade him/her to return to school. **The child will never be pressurised to return** and no action by the staff member will be taken that may cause the child to behave in a way that puts him/her at greater risk, for example, makes him run away across a road.
7. If the child will not stop or return to school the member of staff will follow the child at a safe distance. If the child starts to run away the member of staff **WILL NOT run after the child**, but will continue to walk in the direction the child takes. If the member of staff cannot follow the child she/he will return to school and inform the Headteacher or Office Staff of the last known place the child was at. The parents/police will then be informed as appropriate to find the child.
8. Regular contact will be maintained with the parents/police until the child is safe.