

## Attendance Policy

### The Richard Whittington Primary School

#### Attendance Policy

Date: 9 August 2013

Review date: 20 September 2014

Signed: G. Holmes

#### **Initial Statement**

At the Richard Whittington Primary School, we want the whole school community - governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for students registered at a school or academy and is essential if students are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The School aims to assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

The School aims to reduce persistent absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

The School believes that good school attendance assists children and young people to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- To be healthy
- To stay safe
- To enjoy and achieve
- To make a positive contribution
- To achieve economic well-being

#### **The legal requirement for attendance at school:**

*Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states*

*Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.*

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

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*(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

### Target Setting/Monitoring

In November 2010, the Department for Education issued the following information to schools and local authorities about attendance targets from summer 2012.

'Local authorities and schools should note they are no longer required to set targets for persistent absence and overall attendance respectively and the regulations will be amended accordingly. The Department however remains firmly of the view that unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools. The Department therefore expects all schools and local authorities to continue focusing on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence. Absence will continue to be monitored closely via the pupil level school census and the Secretary of State's power to require an individual school to set absence targets where a school's absence record is of particular concern is being retained.'

A new inspection framework for maintained schools and academies was introduced in January 2012. The quality of teaching and learning judgement relates to attendance because, however good the teaching, it does not benefit pupils if they are not present.

### Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

The expectations for **school** include:

- The school will provide a safe learning environment
- The school will ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained, on a daily basis, according to Government legislation and guidance
- The school will promote good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- The school staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- The school will act early to address patterns of absence.
- The school will follow up all instances of poor punctuality
- The school will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern
- The school will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record

The expectations for **parents** include:

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.
- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn

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- Parents will inform school on each day of absence, the reason for their child's absence from school
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

The expectations for **pupils** include:

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn
- Pupils will not leave the school without permission

### Doors open

Breakfast Club opens at 8.00 am

School doors open at 8.50 am (KS2) and 8.55 am (Reception / KS1). Pupils may enter the building at that time. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8.40 am (KS2) and 8.45 am (Reception / KS1)

- Reception pupils may enter the building at 8.45 am
- Years 3 - 6 pupils may enter the building at 8.50 am
- Years 1 and 2 pupils may enter the building at 8.55 am

### Registration

- Registers are called at 8.55 am (KS2) and 9.00 am (Reception / KS1) (morning) and 12.55 pm (KS2) and 1.00 pm (Reception / KS1) (afternoon). Registers close at 9.05 am (KS2) and 9.10 am (Reception / KS1) (morning) and 1.05 pm (KS2) and 1.10 pm (Reception / KS1) (afternoon). Registers are marked consistently by staff
- Any pupil arriving after closure of the register will be marked absent for the whole of the session
- Pupils should be called by name and respond in the prescribed formal manner - 'here', 'present' etc

Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance. See *Absence and Attendance Codes* January 2009. Please refer to **Appendix A**

### Lateness

**Pupils arriving at school after 8.50 am (KS2) and 8.55 am (Reception / KS1) and 12.55 pm (KS2) and 12.55 am (Reception / KS1) are required to access school via the school office as other entry doors will be closed and lateness needs to be recorded**

- Pupils will be asked to sign the late book. Pupils will be supervised escorted into class by a member of staff
- Entries in the late book will be transferred to the computerised registration system
- If a pupil has arrived late in school the school office will inform the Classteacher to ensure that if a fire breaks out, it is clear to anyone taking a register that they are present
- There are circumstances in which a school will authorise a late arrival after the registers have closed (e.g. bad weather, road closure, etc)

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### Recording 'lates'

#### Morning

- **KS2 'Lates'** - from 8.56 to 9.05 am = L; from 9.06 am onwards = U 'register closed'
- **Reception / KS1 'Lates'** - from 9.01 to 9.10 am = L; from 9.11 am onwards = U 'register closed'

#### Afternoon

- **KS2 'Lates'** - from 12.56 to 1.05 pm = L; from 1.06 pm onwards = U 'register closed'
- **Reception / KS1 'Lates'** - from 1.01 to 1.10 pm = L; from 1.11 pm onwards = U 'register closed'

### Following up Lateness

- The names of pupils who arrive late will be given to the Classteacher by the school office.
- If a child has more than 3 late arrivals in a week, the School Office will contact the parents to inform them.
- The pupil may be expected to complete missing work.

Parents, whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. Should punctuality continue to cause concern, the Headteacher will contact the Attendance and Improvement Officer to seek further advice / support.

### Absences

Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school. Designated school staff will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence.

It is the school and not the parent who authorise absences.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement.

The school will accept reasons from a relative and accepts telephone, letter, e-mail notification. The notification must be given to the School Office or Class Teacher. The notification will be stored in the register. The notification is stored for three years.

The school **will** authorise absence for the following reasons:

- Older sibling's graduation
- Music or dance exams
- Moving house

The school **will not** authorise absence for the following reasons:

- Shopping
- Looking after siblings or parents who are unwell

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- Birthdays
- Funeral of distant relative involving more than one day of absence
- Pet going to the vet / pet death

The school may not grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

*If a child is absent from school because of holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you.*

If there is any doubt about whether an absence should be authorised, the school will make the decision. The Headteacher would make the decision to unauthorise absence, and then inform parents

### Following up Absences

The School follows up all absences from school in the following circumstances:

- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 9.30 am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted.
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence after 3 consecutive days, a letter will be sent to the parent of the pupil.
- If a pupil returns to school after an absence without a written explanation from his/her parent and this has still not been received within 3 days, a letter requesting this will be sent to his/her parents.
- Parents, whose children have more than 4% absence from school in a period of 1 month, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in attendance

Pupils whose attendance is less than 96% may have an action plan and regular reviews of attendance until they have reached their target attendance. If the pupil's attendance does not improve sufficiently, the pupil will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

There is an escalation of involvement by school staff depending on the level of attendance. This may take the form of standard letters and a request to attend meetings. There is also a mechanism for alerting other professionals involved - School Nurse, Attendance and Improvement Officer, Social Worker and Education Support Centre Outreach.

Pupils are supported when they return after long term absence - buddy to help with settling them back in, teachers alerted, time with class teacher to go over essential topics.

The Headteacher is responsible for making a referral to School Nurse, Attendance and Improvement Officer, Education Support Team for Medical Absence (ESTMA) when a pupil is likely to be absent for a long time due to illness.

The school office is responsible for completing EWN1 to make Attendance and Pupil Support aware that a pupil has been taken off roll.

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### **Leaving and returning to School during School Day**

Pupils/parents must notify school staff if the pupil leaves the school site during the school day. Pupils must sign out of school via the school office and sign back into school, at the school office, on their return. The signing in and out record will be the responsibility of the school in the event of fire.

### **First Day Response**

The School uses First Day Response for all pupils. First Day Response text message will be made after 9.30 am. First Day Response texts will be triggered when parents / carers do not inform the school office (by letter, telephone or email). First Day Response texts will be made by the school office.

The Headteacher is responsible for deciding whether to authorise absences notified through First Day Response.

Parents will ensure that the school is informed of any changes of contact details. The telephone contact list will be updated by the school office.

Registers will be updated with First Day Response information by the school office.

### **Term Time Holidays**

Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for family holiday or to agree to extend leave for parents to visit their country of origin. Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but will only do so in exceptional circumstances. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. There is no right to take a holiday in term time and you are strongly advised not to book holiday before discussing your exceptional circumstances with the head teacher. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you.

Any request for term time holiday to the school must be made a minimum three weeks in advance, in writing, giving full details of the exceptional reasons for the request. The school may request an appointment with parents / carers requesting family holidays in term time. The school treats all requests in the same way. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

When making the decision the following factors will be considered

- purpose of the leave
- circumstances of the request
- age of the pupil
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record
- proximity to SATs and public examinations
- length of the proposed leave
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil
- when the request was made.

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A retrospective request for authorisation of a family holiday in term time will not be granted.

Parents/ carers are made aware of the school ethos regarding term time holidays via annual and termly newsletters and the school website.

### **Rewards**

The school rewards good attendance. Good attendance is rewarded individually. The highest termly and annual attendance is rewarded to individuals (certificates):

Pupils, staff and parents are informed of the reward scheme via school brochure, newsletters and school website.

### **Penalty Notices**

At the Richard Whittington Primary School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 21 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance. (Please refer to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1 September 2013.)

### **Integrated Working**

The school works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance.

The school will demonstrate full commitment to integrated working by:

- using the Common Assessment Framework
- sharing information
- encouraging staff to take on the role of Lead Professional
- working with other agencies and being part of 'teams around the family'.

### **Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)**

The school works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. Information to enable the AIO to carry out an effective consultation visit and/or home visit will be provided by the school office / headteacher. The headteacher meets the AIO on an agreed schedule. The school also works closely with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance.

When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO the school will make a referral to Children, Schools and Families for the AIO to work with the family on a formal basis

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Publication of Information**

The school shares information on individual pupil's attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff. The school will provide overall attendance information and statistics during an annual newsletter. Attendance is a standing item on the agenda of school Governors' meetings.

Pupils will be informed about the importance of school attendance through assemblies, tutor time, presentations by visiting professionals, statistics, and displays in school.

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring that data collected by DfE is accurate.

New parents are informed of school's ethos on attendance and punctuality via the school brochure, newsletters, school web site and transition meetings.

Staff are informed of changes to School Attendance Policy via newsletters, staff meetings and circulation of revised policy.

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### Appendix A

#### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday - Exceptional circumstances (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Partial and forced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

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### APPENDIX B

#### FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The conditions under which leave of absence for a holiday during term time may be granted are laid down in regulation 7 of 'The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and sections 62 - 68 of the DfE's publication Keeping Pupil Registers.

Regulation 7 states that:

"(3) Subject to paragraph (4), a pupil may be granted leave of absence from the school to enable him to go away on holiday where –

(a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and

(b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application.

(4) Save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil shall not in pursuance of paragraph (3) be granted more than ten school days leave of absence in any school year."

Permission is granted or not in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body of the school.

No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday as of right.

Only in 'exceptional circumstances' may the amount of leave granted exceed in total more than ten days in any school year.

The school explores with parents why such leave of absence is necessary.

Each request for holiday absence is considered individually. It is the responsibility of the headteacher and governors to decide whether or not to grant leave of absence. When making the decision the following factors are considered:

the amount of time requested

age of the pupil

the pupil's general absence/attendance record

proximity to SATs

length of the proposed leave

pupil's ability to catch up the work

pupil's educational needs

general welfare of the pupil

circumstances of the request

purpose of the leave

frequency of the activity, and

when the request was made.

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The procedure for requesting leave of absence is available to parents. Clear advice is included in the school's prospectus and school attendance policy. Parents are made aware that: holidays in term time are not a right and will not automatically be granted leave will be granted only where proper procedures have been followed and permission given it remains the discretionary power of the Head teacher to authorise leave of absence

When leave of absence has been granted the absence is recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol:

F - extended Family Holiday (agreed)

H - Family Holiday (agreed)

If parents take the child away without permission, or fail to apply for permission in advance of the holiday the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. If the pupil is kept away for a period in excess of the time agreed with the school the extra time should be treated as 'unauthorised' absence. The appropriate register symbol in both these circumstances is:

G - Family Holiday not agreed (or days in excess of agreement)

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### EXTENDED TRIPS OVERSEAS DURING TERM-TIME

In deciding whether to grant extended leave of absence, the school considers the particular circumstances of each individual case. It is important that the school shows an understanding of the parents' perspective whether or not they are able to authorise the request for absence.

The school ensures that all parents are aware of the school's attendance policy.

When deciding whether to grant leave of absence the school considers the following:

A visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance than the normal associations with a holiday

Visits may be very important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up. Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school - maintaining family links in extended family situations may involve greater significance and greater pressures in some cultures than it does currently in many western cultures.

The reasons for parents making a visit may be, for example, family illness or bereavement. It is less easy for parents to undertake these normal and necessary activities where long distances and high costs are involved.

If it is possible to include school holidays in the leave of absence in order to limit the amount of term time the pupil is absent.

The Governing Body may consult with local minority groups.

If leave of absence is agreed the school considers:

Explaining the work the pupil will miss, how it can be made up on return and how the parents could help the pupil.

Whether work can be given to the pupil while (s)he is away.

Preparing a study pack.

Asking the pupil to make notes and observations on a class topic.

Going through any work done by the pupil on return.

Sharing experiences in a positive way with the class and teacher on return.

Parents are informed of the regulation on removal from the school roll if the child does not return on the agreed date. Parents are asked to contact the school if the return is delayed. The school ensures that they have a contact number in the UK so that they can make enquiries if the pupil does not return at the agreed time.

Failure to return on the agreed date

When granting leave of absence for an extended trip overseas, the school ensures it has a date when the pupil will return to school. Regulation 8 (f) details in what circumstances pupils may be removed from roll if they do not return by the agreed date.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Regulation 8 (f) states that this applies -

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'In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that –

- (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

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### OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

Occasionally, parents/carers may advise the school that they need to take their child away from school for a period of time and that they do not know the date of return. An example might be when a close relative, living at a distance from the family, is dying.

The school will consider whether these absences should be regarded as 'family holidays' or as an ordinary absence from school and should always make sure they have contact details for the parents, including an address to which letters can be sent at their destination.

If they are to be regarded as an absence, not a holiday, the school will decide if the absence can be authorised. Code 'C' (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)), is for exceptional occasions which may warrant leave of absence. The school considers each request individually taking the following into account:

- Examples might include special occasions such as attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement, and prison visits.
- If the absence is prolonged, schools should read Statutory Instrument No. 1751 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These give detailed information about when a pupil may be deleted from the Admissions Register. Schools should discuss this with their Attendance Improvement Officer.

### STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The school and the Local Authority actively discourage holidays during term time

The school's Attendance Policy states that holidays during term time are not acceptable

Parents are given a clear message at every opportunity, e.g. at parents evening, in newsletters, school brochure and bulletins, about taking holiday in term time

Parents are informed of dates when leave of absence will not be granted, e.g. school examinations or SATs. The school calendar is sent to parents at the start of the term so that they are aware of term times and important dates

Parents requesting holidays may be invited into school to discuss the proposed absence and implications for their child of missing school time

Term time holiday absence is recorded on the pupil's report

To identify the extent of the issue and to keep a record of the amount of absence taken for holidays, information is published by the Governors in their report to parents, giving the absence figures