

Attendance Policy

Carlton Junior & Infant School



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ATTENDANCE POLICY

OVERVIEW

1.0 STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Carlton Junior and Infant School regards regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. There is now more Government pressure on schools than ever before to ensure the regular attendance of children in their school. There is a legal requirement for schools to set targets for improving school attendance. This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

1.2 WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parent's/carer's responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting regular attendance and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our regular newsletters.
- Report to parent/carer's at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and prizes.
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

3.1 Every half day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

3.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a „persistent absentee“ (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service and the Pyramid Education Social Worker.

4.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

4.1 If a child is absent parents/carer's must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents/carers should do this even if they have already telephoned us;
- Or parents/carers can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them.

4.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Worker/Education Social Worker and/or Head teacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service; if attendance falls below 80%.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

5.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the end of registration. • All children arriving after registration period will be entered into the "late book" in the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the Attendance Worker or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

6.0 HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The law states that 10 days in a school year may be granted under certain circumstances. **This is always at the discretion of the Head teacher.** Parents/carers wishing to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time must complete the **Holiday Request Form** and return to the Head teacher **before** booking the holiday. The form is available from the school office.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education. If parents/carers take their child out of school on a holiday which has not been authorised by the Head teacher they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 28 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 28 days. This is per parent and per child. Alternatively, the Local Authority may take legal action against you for the non-attendance of your child where the maximum penalty for an offence is £2500.

7.0 ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the APSS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

8.0 SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as a high a level of attendance as possible.

OUTCOME

If this policy is adhered to fully, then each child will receive consistently good education and the school will achieve the expected whole school targeted for attendance.

Dream Aspire Achieve