ALLENDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale:

Allendale Primary School, in line with the legal responsibilities of parents, actively promotes excellent punctuality and full attendance by all pupils, recognising that it is an important contributor to children's achievement and social development.

We believe that all our pupils should be in school every day to make the most of all learning and social opportunities. It develops good habits for life, builds their resilience and helps them to develop confidence, friendships and aspiration. We aim for our whole school attendance to be at least 96% and require parents to notify school on the morning of the absence with the reason for this. We expect families will take holidays within school holiday periods as this type of absence will be deemed unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We expect that all pupils will arrive on time for school to ensure they have a calm start to the day and minimise disruption for classes when pupils arrive late.

In line with our local authority, our attendance thresholds are as follows:

- 95% and above Expected attendance
- 90% - 95% Attendance will be monitored and parents may be contacted
- Below 90% Parents contacted and attendance discussed with the EWO

Why is attendance important?

Your child's attendance is very important. The more your child is in school, the more likely they are to achieve academically, succeed in exams and in life. Going to school every day means:

- Developing and maintaining friendships - not feeling they are left out or have missed out
- Taking part in activities
- Learning through play
- Building lasting relationships and developing social skills
- Higher attainment and academic progress as learning is continuous and support can be provided if needed

It is important to recognise that, on average, a 90% attendance rate means that your child misses:

- One half day every week
- Nearly four school weeks every academic year
- Over one school year in a child's school career

The Law and Regulations:

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and that they remain in school for the total extent of the school day. Under Section 7, Education Act 1996, it states that: "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence". Schools and the local authority monitor school absence and work with families and young people where the level of absence is giving cause for concern. The Local Authority may take legal action against you if your children do not attend school regularly, and if the absences are not authorised by the school (Section 444, Education Act 1996).

The Local Authority may also issue fixed penalty notices (and monitor payment). A penalty notice may be issued for irregular attendance at school or for unauthorised term-time holidays. Penalty notice issued under the local Code of Conduct (Sections 444A and 444B, Education Act 1996): A £80 fine per pupil per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 22 - 28 days. Non-payment will result in a prosecution for the original offence.

Parents are not entitled to remove children from school for holidays. Leave of absence must be applied for in all cases; a Headteacher has the discretion to grant up to ten days leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. (Statutory Instrument 2006, No. 1751, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

If a parent chooses to take their child out of school, where leave of absence has not been granted, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence, i.e. it has not been agreed with school, (also known as truancy). Northumberland Local Authority, (LA) Guidelines state that:

"*If the school does not agree the absence and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence should be categorised as unauthorised. The school should then write to the parent to give a warning that further formal action would be taken if this were to happen again. The Education Welfare Service should also be notified.*"

Absence Procedure:

We operate a first day notification of absence procedure. Parents are asked to phone school on this day and every subsequent day to report the reasons for their child's absence which will be noted and expected date of return. If no contact is made by the end of registration a member of staff will contact the parents / carers. This is particularly important as we need to account for the safety of all children, whether they arrive on

County transport or are brought directly to school by parents, adult carer or older sibling. We require 2 emergency contact numbers to be provided by parents and that these are updated when necessary.

We request that all appointments (e.g. doctor, dentist, optician etc.) should be made for outside of school hours. For hospital appointments, please bring your child into school for part of the day if possible. Please also show office staff a hospital letter / proof of appointment so pupil absence records can be updated accordingly.

It is important that parents do not allow their child to stay off school for a minor ailment.

The register must be taken each morning. If a child has not arrived by 9.10 a.m. he / she will be marked absent. If a child arrives after this time, the parent / carer must complete the late book, stating the reason for late arrival. The late book is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and parents / carers contacted if this is a regular occurrence.
Attendance for every pupil is monitored on a regular basis and the Education Welfare Officer, (EWO), visits school every half term to discuss attendance and monitor any pupils causing concern. Parents may be contacted by school and the EWO if attendance is a cause of concern and invited to attend a meeting.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time for school, as the first few minutes of the day are used to give out instructions. Basic skills are also taught during the first 30 minutes of each day, after the register has been taken. If your child is consistently missing morning instructions and missing being taught basic skills, it is detrimental to them, and to their learning. It is also very disruptive to your child's day, the teacher, and the rest of the class. Any child who has to enter the school via the main office because the gates to the playground have been shut will be marked as late. Children who arrive at school after the morning register has closed (after 9.15am) will not get their morning mark and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a child arrives late at school after the register has closed on 10 occasions within a 12 week period and has attendance under 90% they will be referred to the Local Authority for legal monitoring. A failed legal monitoring period will result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

It is vital that all parents / carers are aware of this policy and the importance the school places on full attendance. It will be brought to the attention of new parents in our school information booklet. It will also be available on the Allendale Primary School website.