



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

Sunnylands Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

At Sunnylands Primary School we believe that each child will achieve success through:

- The provision a happy, secure and stimulating environment where every child is encouraged to reach his or her full potential.
- Innovative teaching and investigative approaches to learning.
- Our children being supported in developing an enquiring mind through a wide range of activities and curricular experiences.
- The provision of rich, varied and up to date learning resources.
- The children developing independence, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline and learning to respect other people, property and opinions.
- The establishment and development of effective learning partnerships between home, school and the local community.

### **Attendance Policy Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Sunnylands Primary school.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

## **Role of the School**

The Principal at Sunnylands Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers and administration staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Sunnylands Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

*Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.*

**(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)**

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Each morning the school bell will ring at 8:55am and all pupils are expected to be at their desks at 9:05am, at the latest, for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on your child's attendance record. A letter will be sent to the parents of a child if they are late more than two times in a half term. If a child is consistently late a meeting will be set up with the parent to discuss reasons why.

Any child who arrives after 9:15am will be marked as U, which counts as an unauthorized absence for the remainder of the morning session. For any pupil who is going home for lunch or missing the morning session, registration closes at 1pm, with the code U being used after that time. In instances of extreme weather the Principal or Senior Teacher will keep the registration open longer to account for disruptions to travel times. If a parent feels there have been exceptional circumstances that have led to the child's coming to school later than 9:15am they should appeal to the Senior Management Team of the school in writing.

If a pupil arrives after 9:15am saying they have been at the dentist or doctor – the code M will be used, if the school have not been informed in advance. The school must see sight of a medical appointment card for the code M to be used.

If the school is informed of the appointment previously a present mark will be given if the pupil has attended part of the session.

(For more details on Codes used see DENI circular 2013/13 – Appendix 1 or on the DENI website.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Sunnylands Primary School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

### **Absence Procedures**

If a pupil is going to be absent the parent/guardian should notify the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning. This should be backed up by a written note on the child's return to school to assist school record keeping.

To enable the school to code the absence in accordance to DENI procedures a reason for absence should always be given. If a reason has not been given a note will be sent home with date of absence requesting an explanation for the absence. These notes will be generated on a weekly basis.

Unless something has been brought to his attention the principal will run an attendance report on a monthly basis looking at attendance below 90%. Unless a valid reason is already known to the school a letter will be sent encouraging good attendance with a reminder of the significance of the percentages from the DENI guidance. Attendance

below 85% will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer, who normally visits or contacts the school on a monthly basis. In some cases that are being monitored by the EWO attendance sheets will be faxed on a weekly basis, when requested.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

Sunnylands Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. If a family persists on taking a holiday in term time requests for school work missed during the absence will not be granted.

### **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

If a pupil is absent for more than a few days with no explanation the school will contact the parent/guardian to seek an explanation. If appropriate the Education Welfare Officer will be updated.

### **Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

The Governors, Principal and staff appreciate parent's cooperation in implementing this policy.

December, 2013

This policy will be reviewed in 2015 unless new guidance is released by DENI

Signature – Principal

Signature – Chair, Board of Governors