



**THREE
LANE ENDS**
ACADEMY
THRIVE • LEARN • ENJOY • ASPIRE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

July 2018

Three Lane Ends Academy promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. We feel that the whole school community takes responsibility for attendance.

THE LAW

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's school attendance. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent **knowingly** allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence, a fine or both.

Definition of a Parent (Department for Education school attendance parental responsibility measures Statutory Guidance)

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person, and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after child.

AIMS

- To raise levels of attendance.
- To improve punctuality.
- To raise levels of achievement.
- To maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance of individual pupils and the whole school.

GOOD ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- **Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and poor attendance.** Every lesson really does count for your child and children can quickly fall behind if even one day is missed. This includes days where the children could go to school but don't feel like it.

- **Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically.** Good regular attendance often means doing well academically, better relationships with other children and better overall behaviour in school.
- **Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with.** It's much easier for the child to know what they have to do if they have been in school on the day it has been taught.
- **Regular attendees find learning more satisfying.** Catching up even a little lost time from school can be really difficult and demotivating. Every lesson counts!
- **Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school.** If bad habits develop at primary school, children can struggle at secondary school or be at increased risk of harm if poor attendance habits develop. Research shows that 17 days absence equates to a drop of one grade at GCSE level.

Good attendance and punctuality isn't just about what happens in school – absence and lateness when your child is young can limit their future opportunities, and set up bad habits for work and life.

Whether your child is absent for a morning or a day, or you have trouble getting him/her to school, first talk to your child's teacher and they will try to help. There is lots of support available in school – we are always happy to support you.

As a parent you can help us by:

- **Ring on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when your child will return.**
- **Arranging dental and medical appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.**
- **Keeping us updated by telephone if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.**
- **Upon returning to school, providing medical evidence ie prescription labels, regarding the reason for absence.**

We will:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls (by 9 am on the first day of unexplained absence).
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school brochure and the home-school agreement.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance (and sending home your child's 100% attendance certificate at the end of each term)
- Publish your child's attendance figures on his/her annual report.
- Let you know if we have any concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- Refer concerns to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as authorised absences, *'Authorised absence' is when a child fails to attend regularly at the school by reason of his absence from the school.*

- a) at any time when he/she was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, or*
- b) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parents belongs, or*
- c) with 'leave'*

The term 'with leave' used above, means leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school. In respect of Three Lane Ends Academy the governing body shall determine the nature of 'leave' and define its decision within the policy. Following any change to the decision by the governing body, this policy shall be amended accordingly.

For the purpose of this policy and the determination of authorised absence, the governing body has determined 'leave' to include only the bereavement of a parent or sibling.

We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically (whilst adhering to our legal obligations).

It is extremely important that the parent/legal guardian sends a note to school following an absence. This note will be logged by the School Office.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are NOT permitted by law. These are known as unauthorised absences.

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, i.e, if information came to light to contradict the explanation, a coding of unauthorised absence will be made. Unauthorised absences have by law to be reported to the Local Authority. (The EWO inspects the Registers on a regular basis).

The Education Welfare Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has authorised absences.

PUNCTUALITY

- Children must be in their classroom at 8.55am. Registration finishes at 9.05am. Latecomers will have to enter school by the main entrance to receive their attendance mark.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the Department of Education guidance.
- Children who are late will be recorded in the late book. This book is monitored on a regular basis by the Assistant Headteacher and the School Office. Parents of those children who are regularly late for school will be referred to the EWO as persistent lateness will be unauthorised.
- It is important for your child to be at school at 8.55am as the first minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. Every minute counts!
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.

TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In line with other local schools and our High School, our policy is that **no holidays will be authorised during term time.**

If you do choose to take your child on holiday, the absence will be deemed as unauthorised and you will be at risk of a fixed penalty notice.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work set can only take place when the child is in the classroom.

Penalty Notice

The Department for Education Statutory Guidance States:

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Payment of Penalty Notice

The penalty is £60 per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority. Parents can be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

As stated in the Department for Education Statutory Guidance, penalty notices can be issued where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school, therefore, families who choose to take term time holidays will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent per child.

LEAVERS & CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

If your child is leaving Three Lane Ends Academy to go to another school other than at the end of Year Six, parents are asked to:

- Give us full information about your plans including reasons for moving school, date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, the name of the new school and start date when known.
- Confirm with us that we have your current mobile phone number.
- Let us know when you actually do move.

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information for us to be able to contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations which will include liaising with Family Services (Social Services), the police and other agencies in order to track and locate your child. **By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.**

BEING PROACTIVE

Throughout the year, parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through newsletters.

Good attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to make good progress in their learning. To promote good attendance we use the following strategies:

Weekly Attendance Assembly to announce the best attending class for the previous week. SAM (School Attendance Matters) teddy given to that class. The attendance percentage for each day of the week is announced. Days over 96% receive a letter for display with the ultimate aim of displaying "good attendance" this then results in extra playtime for the children.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We monitor attendance figures very closely. Our attendance target is 96% from 1st September 2018..

Registers of all classes are monitored by the school office on a daily basis.

A daily log is kept of:

- All children who arrive late.
- All children for whom no notification for absence has been received.
- All phone calls made to parents who have not notified school of their child's absence.

Attendance figures are analysed weekly by class and on a whole school level. Lateness and attendance figures are scrutinised on a half termly basis by the EWO. Children who are identified by the EWO as having more than three episodes of absence in a half term or are identified as being late on a regular basis will receive a letter from school. Attendance will then be monitored further.

If a situation of concern does not improve, then parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the Headteacher.

Any child with an absence record of under 90% will have their records examined and will be referred to the attention of the EWO. Children with an absence record between 90% and 95% will have their reasons for absence monitored. Unsatisfactory reasons for absence will also be brought to the attention of the EWO and may not be authorised.

EWS / LOCAL AUTHORITY

- The EWS will work in partnership with the school to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, either through a referral system or using the Fastrack to Attendance Programme; and at whole school level using proactive strategies and Action Plans.
- The EWS will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
- EWS will provide advice and guidance with regard to Children Missing Education, Child Employment and Licensing.
- EWS will work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
- EWS will undertake legal action on behalf of the School.
- The LA will support the school with networking and training events and with individual School Audits and Action Plans.