

Paganel Primary School Attendance Policy

At Paganel Primary School, we believe that regular school attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the opportunity which our school offers them. We believe that children who are effectively denied access to the curriculum are particularly at risk of educational disadvantage and as a direct consequence fail to fulfill their potential in the economic and social life of the community. In some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social behaviour. As in all areas of school life, we encourage a partnership between home and school to promote a regular and punctual pattern of attendance for all our pupils.

“Parents are required by law to ensure that their children attend school on time and in a condition to learn.” (Education Acts 1944 and 1993)

Paganel Primary School works with the Big Community Team (since September 2013).

Paganel Primary School uses the ‘Spot Light on Attendance’ initiative to target unauthorised absence (since September 2014).

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Expectations

Our Paganel school motto regarding attendance and punctuality is:

Always be in school on time, by ten to nine, every school day!

School expects that all pupils will attend school regularly and arrive in good time, from 8:40am but no later than 8:50am, and be appropriately prepared for the day ahead.

Parents/carers will contact the school, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school and explain the reasons for their child’s absence.

All pupils arriving late to school – that is, after 8:50 am, MUST be signed into the building by their parent/carer at the main office.

Parents/carers will endeavor to keep medical appointments out of school hours where possible.

Illnesses must be supported by doctor's letters, appointment cards or prescriptions.

Parents/carers will endeavor to always take holidays within the 13 weeks of school holidays.

Parents/carers will inform the class teacher and pastoral manager (Mrs. Osman) of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.

Parents/carers will seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

Parents/carers will fulfill their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/children attend school every day and on time.

3 We encourage attendance by:

Working closely with Big Community social workers using the 'Spot Light on Attendance' initiative to target families where punctuality and/or unauthorised attendance are a cause for concern.

Having consistent, clear communication with parents/carers and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt attendance.

Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with the governors, parents/carers and pupils.

Offer rewards and incentives for pupils with attendance of 96% and above each half-term.

The accurate completion of registers within 10 minutes of the start of each session.

Offering parents/carers support with attendance concerns through the Big Community team or Inclusion team.

4 Definitions

4.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not be an authorised absence.

4.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

5 If a child is absent

- 5.1** Parents/carers should contact the school, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school and explain the reason for absence.
- 5.2** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.
- 5.3** When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence, should this not have already happened.
- 5.4** A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

6 The school responds to non-attendance by:

Contacting parents/carers on the first or second day of absence if no reason has been received.

Contact will be made by either text or telephone.

If there is no response from the parents/carers following the text or telephone call either by phone or in person, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

If a pupil's attendance/punctuality begins to be cause for concern, a referral to Big Community will be made in order to support the family in addressing the concerns and avoiding the beginning of 'Spot Light'.

On our request and behalf, the Big Community attendance team will undertake a 'Safe and Well Check' - a visit to the child's home to ensure that the child, who is not in school for an unknown reason, is safe and well. Such a visit will be undertaken immediately on the day the referral is made and the school will be informed of the outcome of the visit.

Should a child not be in school for 10 consecutive days without notification from the child's parent/carer and the school has been unable to make contact, the school will notify the Local Authority to report the child as missing education (CME).

7 Repeated unauthorised absence

Pupils with repeated unauthorised absence (20 sessions or more) will be referred to Spot Light.

The school DLP (Designated Lead on Attendance) runs the Spotlight campaign. This person is responsible for ensuring parents/ carers and those with a duty of care around attendance are aware of the Spotlight campaign, and that students are supported in improving their child's attendance. The DLP will also be the person who prepares evidence to submit to Court when attendance continues to fall.

- 7.1 The governors, supported by the LEA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis

8 Holiday absence and requests for leave

- 8.1 In accordance with the 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in Term Time Guidance', parents/carers do NOT have the right to withdraw their children from school for holiday leave. Any holidays taken during school time are not allowed and will be unauthorised. Head Teachers may only authorise leave during term time where the circumstances are exceptional. Such exceptional circumstances include:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (medical evidence required)

If your child takes leave that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, it will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

- 8.2 If a pupil takes unauthorised leave in term time without the Head Teacher's permission, and does not return to school within 20 school days, the pupil may be deleted from the school register on the 21st day i.e. *they will no longer have a place at this school.*

9 Long-term absence

- 9.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 9.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.
- 9.3 Any long-term illness (more than 5 days) must be supported by a doctor's medical note in order for school to authorise the absence. If a doctor's note is not provided the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

10 Rewards for good attendance

- 10.1 A whole school competition to be the best class for attendance each half-term is featured in a weekly assembly, with the top three classes each week awarded points. At the end of each half-term the class with the most points wins an

attendance trophy and a special “Golden Time” (a time when children can choose a special activity they’d like to do).

- 10.2** Any child who has more than 96% attendance in any one half-term receives a school attendance bronze/silver certificate. Those with 100 per cent attendance in any one half-term receive an excellence gold certificate - awarded at the last assembly of the half-term. The names of these 100% children are entered in to a draw with a special prize awarded to a child from each key stage.

Special platinum certificates and badges are awarded to any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

11 Attendance targets

- 11.1** Senior staff and governors set attendance targets at the start of each new academic/school year. The targets are challenging and based on the attendance figures for other similar schools and all school nationally (the attendance target for 2015-16 = 96.0%).

12 Monitoring and review

- 12.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 12.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 12.3** The school will provide information for parents/carers in its annual Guide to Good Attendance and attendance will be regularly reported on in the school newsletter.
- 12.4** Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child’s absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Pastoral Manager, who will contact the parents or carers.
- 12.5** The attendance for each child will be shared with parents/carers in their end of year annual school report.
- 12.6** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.