

LARKS HILL JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL



Attendance Matters

Reviewed: Autumn Term 2013

Larks Hill J & I School

Attendance Matters

Working Together

Introduction

Why is good attendance and punctuality so important?

Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement (compulsory from the age of five) and is of vital importance if a child is to benefit fully from their education both academically and socially and prepare our youngsters for their adult role in society. Unfortunately, like many schools, we have a small number of families where education is not valued or seen as a high priority. Consequently some children receive little parental support or encouragement and pick up the message that school is not important. A positive and proactive approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality is essential and to some extent will help to offset a negative or ambivalent attitude to school and education.

How?

It is important that there are established procedures regarding attendance/registration through school and that the monitoring of attendance is supported by the active promotion of good attendance habits and a positive reinforcement/reward/praise/high profile on a regular basis e.g. through assemblies, certificates, golden time etc.

By working collaboratively with the EWO and parents from the moment children enter school we can hopefully improve attendance and punctuality overall and mitigate against negative attitudes to school and education generally.

Partnership and communication with parents will obviously be a key area in improving attendance generally and in specific cases. EWO involvement/intervention should only occur in a very small number of cases.

Regular liaison with our EWO can identify families where support or further actions may be needed once a child has entered mainstream (this will be a very small number of families). Coupled with school actions and incentives, rigorous monitoring and follow up of attendance issues in school the level of unauthorised absence should decrease and hopefully authorised absence be kept at a reasonable/acceptable level.

Attendance matters can be reviewed at an individual level, as a class or whole school and actions can be taken at each level to encourage and promote good/regular attendance and punctuality.

Mrs Smith and Miss Lightfoot have overall responsibility for attendance matters in liaison with and cooperation of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). All teaching

staff have responsibility for the taking, marking and maintenance of attendance registers and for informing the Headteacher where there are concerns about individual children or families.

The process begins with the monitoring of attendance figures for the individual, class and school and the identification of children/families causing concern e.g. three consecutive broken weeks, children with poor attendance record, regular day/s of absence etc.

The office staff will at a school level be responsible for monitoring registers and attendance figures. The school will follow a first day of absence procedure in contacting by telephone and/or letter (standard format) when a child is absent without notification in person/by telephone/by letter. All staff should ensure that registers are taken/marked correctly and the office notified (by absence book) of daily absences.

Improved liaison with the Education Welfare Officer, and regular register checks/scrutiny will take place and appropriate follow up where necessary by school or EWO will take place.

A Proactive Approach

The importance of regular attendance, punctuality and notification will be included in the induction of new children meetings for parents e.g. nursery to reception, new starters through school with an invitation to EWO to be present/contribute.

The school leaflet "Attendance Matters Working Together" will be given out and discussed with parents. This covers expectations and responsibilities and issues such as term time holidays etc.

Regular reinforcement of the importance of good attendance will be made at opportune occasions e.g. parents open evenings, reports etc.

It is vital that improvements and achievements are recognised and rewarded and that children are given the incentive and motivation to improve and maintain attendance/punctuality records. Whilst assemblies and presentations are excellent vehicles for this recognition other opportunities to involve parents and other people should not be overlooked e.g. governors, councillors etc.

This will be supported by a high profile celebration of attendance in school at class and school level e.g. sharing time, golden time, assemblies etc. and some of the following:-

- Personal targets for the individual child.
- Use of visual diary/calendar/chart.
- Weekly/termly/annual attendance with certificates of achievement.
- Other appropriate rewards e.g. praise, stickers, golden time etc.

- Class discussions/weekly celebration at the Monday assembly for 100% attendance the previous week.
- Special recognition for 100% attendance for the school year to be incorporated in the Leavers Service by school and EWO.
- A 100% Club for pupils with maximum attendance e.g. termly/annually/Key Stage/whole school.
- Comments/achievements in Newsletter etc.
- Communicating with parents.

Ethos

It is essential that the emphasis is on the celebration of the positive and that there is no element of censure or blame attached where the children are concerned especially where it is the attitude of the parent/s towards school/education that is a major contributory factor in irregular/poor attendance/absence without good reason.

School must be a welcoming and stimulating environment. It must be an attractive and lively place celebrating and displaying the work of children and other artists and cultures. It must promote the care and consideration of each other and give value to the school as a community. It must promote good relations and relationships between the children and adults in school and in the local area.

If we make this a reality, a place where the children feel safe, secure and valued, then attendance will not/should not be a major issue and concern. The success of our procedures and strategies will be apparent in the reduction of the numbers of children being monitored, reduced involvement of the EWO and an improvement in our attendance returns generally.