PORTICO
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Attendance Policy

Date Written/Reviewed: _____September 2019_____

Next Review Date: _____September 2020_____

Person Responsible: _____D Henley_____

Porters Grange

Signature of Head of School: --

Date --

Signature of Chair of LGB --

Date --

Porters Grange Primary School and Nursery values all its pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. The school recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is supported by our other safeguarding policies.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:
There is a strong correlation between the amount of absence from school and the qualifications that pupils achieve. Every lesson in school matters and children who have regular absences tend to find it difficult to catch up and do well at school. Regular absence can limit a child's future opportunities and set up bad habits for work and life.

Legal Framework:
Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parent/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age and ability, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parent/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session, and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:
- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Categorising Absence:
Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parent/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (parent/carers should try to make such appointments outside of school hours wherever possible), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted.
For example:
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping trips, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays which have not been agreed in advance.

Absence Procedures:

Parent/carers are requested to:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation for the absence, even if telephone contact has already been made.

Parent/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, doctor's note etc.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave:

Parent/carers are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term-time. Parent/carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term-time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education that academic year.

However, up to ten school days leave in any one school year **may** be granted at the discretion of the Principal in exceptional circumstances. Parent/carers wishing to take their child out of school during term-time (other than for medical appointments) must complete a form and return it for the approval of the Principal. Upon receipt of a request, the Principal may ask to meet with the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for removing the pupil during term-time. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Each request will be considered individually and will take account of the following factors:

- Length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's general absence record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's educational needs
- Circumstances of the request
- Previous term-time holidays taken

All request for leave forms will be completed and returned to parents stating whether the leave has been approved or not. Where leave has been granted it is expected that parents/carers will:

- Ensure their child returns on the expected date of return
- Contact the school should any delays occur
- Understand that their child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parent/carers has not been made, the school may take the pupil off-roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil does not attend school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Religious Observance:

We acknowledge the multi faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request leave of absence for their child on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carer's religious body. Parent/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

Late Arrival:

The school day starts at 8.45am and we expect pupils to arrive by that time. The morning register is completed by 8:50am and pupils will receive a late mark if they have not arrived in class by that time. The register will remain open for 30 minutes, and if a pupil arrives after that time, in accordance with regulations, they will receive a mark that shows them as being on site but does not count as a present mark. This will result in the pupil receiving an unauthorised absence for that half day session (unless a satisfactory reason has been provided for the late arrival – for example the pupil has attended a medical appointment). If a pupil arrives after the registers have closed, they must immediately report to the school office.

Support Systems:

The school recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. The school has a range of strategies that could be used to support improved attendance.

These include:
- Discussion with parent/carers and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Completion of an Early Help Assessment (EHA)
- Work with learning mentors
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

Pupils with attendance between 100% and 96%
- Pupils receive certificates each term
- Classes with the best attendance over a half term are rewarded

Escalation of Attendance Interventions:

Pupils with attendance between 90% and 95%
- Class teacher will speak to the family to offer any support
- A personal attendance target will be set
- If this does not affect an improvement in attendance, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Leader where a target will be set and a review date agreed.
- Parent/carers will be advised of support services available and will be invited to complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA)

Pupils with less than 90% attendance
- If following the above strategies attendance continues to be an issue for concern and the pupil has 15% absence or more over a six-week period, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting in school. An Attendance Officer from the local authority will also be present at this meeting.
- Parents/carers will be requested to complete a parenting contract which will state that they agree to comply with specified requirements and that the school and local authority will agree to provide the support needed to enable the parent/carer to comply.
- Parents/carers will be informed that no further absence will be authorised without supporting medical evidence.
- A personal attendance target will be set and a review date agreed. If this target is not met, the case will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.
- The Local Authority Attendance Officer will try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if this is unsuccessful, this officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecution in the Magistrates court.

Roles and Responsibilities:
It is believed that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parent/carers, pupils and the wider school community.

As such the **Governing Body** will:
- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent/carers
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority as required and on time
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence and identifying vulnerable groups
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that all pupils have individual attendance targets which are integrated into the assessment and target setting processes of the school

The **Leadership Team** will:
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority as required and on time

- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

School staff will:
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parent/carers
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence and identify vulnerable groups
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Ensure that any pupil with attendance problems has a key worker who will talk to them and listen to their problems in line with the school's safeguarding policy

Parents/Carers are expected to:
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home-work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time and, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Principal in advance of booking the holiday

Pupils are expected to:
- Be punctual at school and lessons and be ready to learn.
- Speak to a member of staff if any issues arise which could contribute to nonattendance

Summary
Porters Grange Primary school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.