

# Toll Bar Primary School



## Every Child Matters

### Attendance Policy

September 2013

Toll Bar Primary School believes it is important to:

- Work in partnership with parents
- Have inclusive principles
- Work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration

In school there is the right to:

- **Learn** in an encouraging environment
- Feel **safe** and cared for in school
- **Achieve** the best qualifications possible
- **Enjoy** time in school
- **Know** that any adult in the school can be approached for help, advice or guidance

For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they:

- **Attend school regularly**
- Are **punctual**, arriving to school and lessons on time
- Have the correct equipment and attitude for learning

#### WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching and learning routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, students and all members of school staff. There is a clear understanding by all staff of the links between behaviour, attendance and student progress and attainment.

TO HELP US ALL FOCUS ON THIS WE WILL:

- Report to parents half-termly on attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate and reward good attendance
- Work with parents to raise attendance levels across the school

## UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the reason of any absence is always required, preferably by telephoning the school on the first day of absence, as early as possible, or a note from parent/carer.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive in school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, birthdays, hair appointments or looking after other children
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best

sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The Headteacher and staff believe that good attendance is essential – and so do most parents. Unfortunately, not all families are as cooperative and some continue to condone excessive absences and / or take holidays in school time which does have a negative impact on performance and standards.

In order to ensure that all Don Valley Schools treat absence in the same way, the following code of practice has been agreed:

- 1 In 2003 the Government introduced legislation that made it possible for Local Authorities to issue FIXED PENALTY NOTICES
- 2 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE ISSUED IF:
  - A pupil has unauthorised absence from school and the parent / carer fails to cooperate with the school or Education Welfare Officer
- 3 A holiday is taken within term-time – under new Government legislation, schools are unable to authorise holidays during term-time, unless there are exceptional circumstances eg. Armed Forces leave. Holidays taken in term-time will be treated as unauthorised absence and the Local Authority will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 4 If a FIXED PENALTY NOTICE is issued, the penalty will be £60 to EACH PARENT for EACH CHILD when payment is made within 28 days, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but before 42 days. Failure to pay within the 42 days will result in a summons to appear in Court

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are and they can be contacted by telephone on 01302 874324:**

**Office:** Mrs Newton, Mrs Milner

**Head:** Mrs Northwood

**Education Welfare:** Carole O'Neill

**Date of Policy:** Sept 2013

**Date of Policy Review:** Sept 2014

