

# Toll Bar Primary School



Every Child Matters

Attendance Policy

September 2011

Toll Bar Primary School has a positive ethos.

- We 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 REGULAR 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 course of any absence is always required, preferably by telephoning the school on the first day of absence, 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.

### PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA):

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any young person's educational prospects. As a school we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Absence is monitored thoroughly.

### ABSENCE PROCEDURES

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact school by 9.00am on the first day of absence.

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officers who monitor attendance below 90%.

### TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. To help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on the telephone numbers throughout the year.

### THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER:

Education Welfare Officers try to resolve any attendance problems by working with home and school but, if other ways of trying to improve the attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local authority.

### **ATTENDANCE PANELS:**

This panel will be convened to meet with parents/carers whose child's attendance is causing the school concern. Warning letters will be sent out to parents every half term making them aware of their attendance rate and any areas of concern. The Panel's procedures run in parallel to Education Welfare procedures, which are the beginning of Enforcement Procedures.

### **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking holidays in term time.

Remember that any savings you think you may have made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to progress and attainment. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Attendance less than 92%, holidays may not be authorised.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as Penalty Notice.

### **SCHOOL TARGETS:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and you have a vital part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance at this school is 92% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your daughter's/son's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

**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:** Mrs Draper

### **SUMMARY:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

**Date of Policy:** Sept 2011

**Date of Policy Review:** Sept 2012

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I have read and understand the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Toll Bar Primary school.

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_

