



# West Jesmond Primary School

## Attendance Policy

| Revision Record of Published Versions |                                |         |  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|--|
| Author                                | Creation Date                  | Version | Status   |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | November 2009                  | 1.0     | Draft Policy for Staff and governor consultation             |
| Changed by                            | Revision Date                  | Version | Status   |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | December 2010                  | 2.0     | Consultation and revision with Staff                         |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2013  | 3.0     | Review by Governors  |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2014 | 4.0     | Annual review and update in line with Government legislation |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | 16/12/15                       | 5.0     | Annual review and update                                     |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | 2/12/16                        | 6.0     | Annual review and update                                     |
| West Jesmond Primary                  | 30/1/19                        | 6.1     | Annual review and updates to reflect staffing changes        |

### Aim:

At West Jesmond we aim to bring out the best in every child. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and enable children to achieve their full potential. This helps to establish a positive working ethos early in life.

### Rationale:

Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. When children are absent from school, they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when they are away, but are also less prepared for the lessons that follow which build on prior knowledge and teaching.

We recognise that by working together parents and school can improve a child's life chances by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance. Good attendance is important because statistics show a direct link between higher achievement and good attendance. Children who attend school regularly find school routines and school work easier to cope with.

Children with poor attendance are more likely to become 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET) when they leave school (Department for Education). There is a clear link between a child's poor attendance at school and resulting underachievement across the curriculum. Out of children who miss between 10% and 20% of their primary school education, only 35% achieve 5 A\* to C at GCSE. A two week period of absence is over 5% of a child's school year. A child's absence from school is seen as significant if they are absent for more than 6.4% of the school year and persistent if they are absent for 10% or more of the time.

### **To support good attendance the school will:**

#### **Monitor attendance daily**

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular uninterrupted attendance is vital to the child's educational progress.

School opens at 8.45am and all external doors are locked at 8.55am for the safety of all the children.

Registers will be called twice daily at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will be kept open for a maximum of 30 minutes (in accordance with DfE guidelines). Children arriving after the second buzzer at 8.55am will be recorded as late. Registers are taken in electronic format using SIMS. Should the SIMS platform be inaccessible staff will take a paper register and update the system once SIMS is back on line. In the event of staff absence due to illness or training Office staff will update SIMS following the completion of a paper register by covering supply staff.

Any children arriving after 8.55am will enter via the main entrance; children arriving after 9am will be marked as late by Office Staff. The reason for late arrival will be entered on the electronic register as a 'note'.

Attendance information entered into SIMS will be cross-referenced with names in the late book, e mails and absence messages left on the school answer phone.

The office staff will provide Attendance Office Helen Jordan with a breakdown of daily reported absence. Concerns about individual absences will be followed up by the Attendance Officer, who will contact parents directly.

#### **Monitor attendance weekly:**

Should a class teacher have particular concerns about a child's attendance or punctuality this will be raised with the Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Rebecca McVittie, or directly with Helen Jordan Attendance Officer.

The Deputy Head teacher regularly discusses absence, during meetings with the Attendance Officer. Attendance of all children falling below 90% (at risk of persistent absence) is discussed within this meeting, as is any unauthorised absence (1 session or more) or unauthorised holiday absence (holiday not approved by the Head Teacher). As a result of these discussions, the Attendance Officer will contact parents directly to discuss pupil absence (this may take the form of a telephone conversation or a home visit), reasons for absence and how the school can support families to improve attendance. The aforementioned discussions are recorded on the school's secure online monitoring system (CPOMS).

Should attendance not improve, due to repeated unauthorised absence of 2 sessions or more, the school will contact the parent(s) in writing asking them to attend a meeting in school to complete a Parenting Contract. Should the parent decline a parenting contract, this may be used in evidence during any future prosecution.

If school or the Attendance Officer are still concerned about absence, despite a parenting contract being in place, school may ask for a doctor's note to confirm a child's illness, before authorising an absence.

In the event of prolonged unauthorised absence (ten sessions within a ten week period) resulting in a child's attendance falling below 85%, the Head of School or Executive Head teacher may request that attendance is legally monitored by the local authority attendance officer.

At the end of the school year, parents are informed in their child's report about their attendance, listing the number of authorised and if any, the number of unauthorised absences. The reporting dates run from the beginning of the school year until the end of the first summer half term.

### **Requesting absence during term time**

Absence during term time has the potential to interrupt continuity of teaching and learning, as well as disrupt the educational progress of individual children. West Jesmond Primary School aims to minimise the amount of time lost to term time absence through a policy which actively discourages parents from arranging periods of absence during term time unless in *exceptional circumstances*.

This policy is intended to be a clear statement regarding the issue of term time absence, and to ensure that the amount of teaching and learning time lost to absence such as term time holidays, is as a result, minimized. The Head of School will be consistent in making robust and informed decisions with regard to the authorising /non-authorising of leave for absence to ensure that parents develop a consistent understanding of the response which they may expect.

The Head of School will decide what might constitute as "*exceptional circumstances*".

Such circumstances might include the following:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill;
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate period of absence might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.

### **Legislation and requests for term time absence**

Previously, regulations allowed the Head teacher to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days leave per year. The Head teacher was also permitted to grant extended leave for more than ten school days in 'exceptional circumstances'. From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, amendments to the 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Head teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.

Please note that holidays taken during term time, without prior permission from school, could result in legal sanctions for irregular attendance being taken. These legal sanctions are set out as amendments to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments will again come into force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedure for issuing penalty notices (a £60 fine payable within 21 days or £120 within 28 days) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school.

### **To support good attendance school expects parents to:**

Remember that parents have a legal, as well as moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory age attend on a regular and full time basis.

Ensure your child arrives on time each day. We do understand that there will occasionally be circumstances beyond your control when your child is late. If this is the case, we would much rather you bring your child to school late, than not at all.

The school monitors regular late arrivals as this can be unsettling for your child entering the class after the lesson has started and extremely disruptive for the rest of the children in the class. If your child is repeatedly late for school a letter will be sent reminding you of your commitments to the school.

Ensure that your child has everything they need ready for the school day e.g. school diary, reading book, spelling book, PE kit, musical instrument (if needed for a lesson). There will be a list of what is needed each day in your child's diary or on the half-termly year group booklets. There are also reminders on the Week Ahead letter sent out each Thursday.

If your child is unwell, please contact school to let us know the reason for the absence. You can contact us by email : **office@west jesmond.newcastle.sch.uk** or telephone school before **9:00a.m. on 0191 2810000** (you can leave a message on the answer phone), School should then be kept informed on a **daily** basis.

If you cannot get a medical appointment outside school hours please let the class teacher know, in advance, that he/she has an appointment so that we can have them ready for you. Please try to ensure that your child returns to school after the appointment in order to finish the school day.

**To support good attendance school expects your child to:**

Eat a balanced diet. Healthy eating is encouraged whilst at school. We offer children in Foundation and KS1 a piece of fruit each morning and invite KS2 children to bring a piece of fruit each day for a snack. All children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to drink throughout the day.

Take part in physical activity sessions both in lesson time and during extra-curricular clubs. There are balls and small games equipment available for children to play with during playtimes.

We encourage children to develop good sleep patterns so that they start the school day refreshed and full of energy.