



*Together we succeed; Today we achieve.*

# **New Marske Primary School**

## **Attendance and Holiday Policy**

**Approved: September 2015**

**Review: September 2017**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights-respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships.

## **NEW MARSKE PRIMARY SCHOOL Attendance Policy 2011**

### **1. Introduction and background**

At New Marske Primary School Primary School we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school

Ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **2. Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance (96%).
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

## **3. 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 cause of any absence is always required.

### **Authorised absences:**

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

### **Examples of Authorised Absence**

- genuine illness of a pupil
- hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil
- major religious observances
- visits to prospective new schools
- external exams or educational assessments

### **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:

### **Examples of Unauthorised Absence**

- Family holiday, except in exceptional circumstances
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- 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 resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse or involved the school's Parent Support Worker.

#### **4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the Parental Support worker, School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

#### **5. Absence Procedures:**

**If your child is absent parents/carers must follow the following procedures:**

Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call or they can call into school and report to reception.

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

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If appropriate, invite you in to discuss the situation with the Head Teacher and the attendance officer
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 95%

#### **6. The Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's 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.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

## **7. Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils may disrupt lessons which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.45am**. We expect pupils to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the bell sounds. Pupils can arrive for school at **8:30am** when a member of the school staff will be available to supervise the playground.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school by that time.

At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher to resolve the problem. *Parents can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child/children to school on time.*

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality. This is rewarded through 'Beat the Bell' activities, individual certificates and prize draws.

## **8. Holidays in Term Time:**

Since implementation of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 regarding absence within primary school, head teachers are only allowed to authorise leave of absence in 'exceptional circumstances'. These regulations changed the previous discretion head teachers had to allow ten days of authorised absence. The Government, the LA and the School acknowledge the financial and work pressures some families are subject to but recognise the importance of good attendance to ensure children make progress within school. Most parents recognise the need for absences to be managed carefully to avoid having a detrimental effect on their child's education and do co-operate with the schools, however, a significant minority of parents take their children out of school without authority.

The government has introduced legislation allowing the LA to issue penalty notices to parents who fail to ensure their children attend school and this is incorporated within our school attendance procedures. All schools within the Borough are encouraged to adopt a common leave of absence policy to ensure legal compliance;

Parents should provide at least one month's advance notice in writing of any planned absence, the head teacher has the discretion to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. This 'Leave of Absence Request' form' can be collected from the school office.

The school **will** recommend further action when unauthorised leave of absence is taken at the following critical times and circumstances, if deemed to be in the public interest.

- a) At any time in September
- b) For any student whose attendance is causing concern (including authorised and unauthorised absence within the previous 12 months).
- c) At any time during formal external examination periods, e.g. Year 1 phonic tests year 2 and year 6 SATs.
- d) Attendance is 96% and below during the previous 12 months will receive a warning letter. Warning letters will also be issued, at the head teacher's request, for pupils failing to achieve their academic attainment/potential, patterns of previous attendance concerns/punctuality, or any other concerns that impact on their learning.

Following a decision by the governing body of New Marske Primary School in October 2014, the target for attendance for any child at New Marske Primary School is 96%. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress. Our target is to achieve better than this 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. A review of absence and attendance will take place at the end of every term, with children who fall below the school's attendance target being notified about the issue.

## **9. People responsible for this policy and its implementation**

Head Teacher and the Governing Body

## **10. Targets**

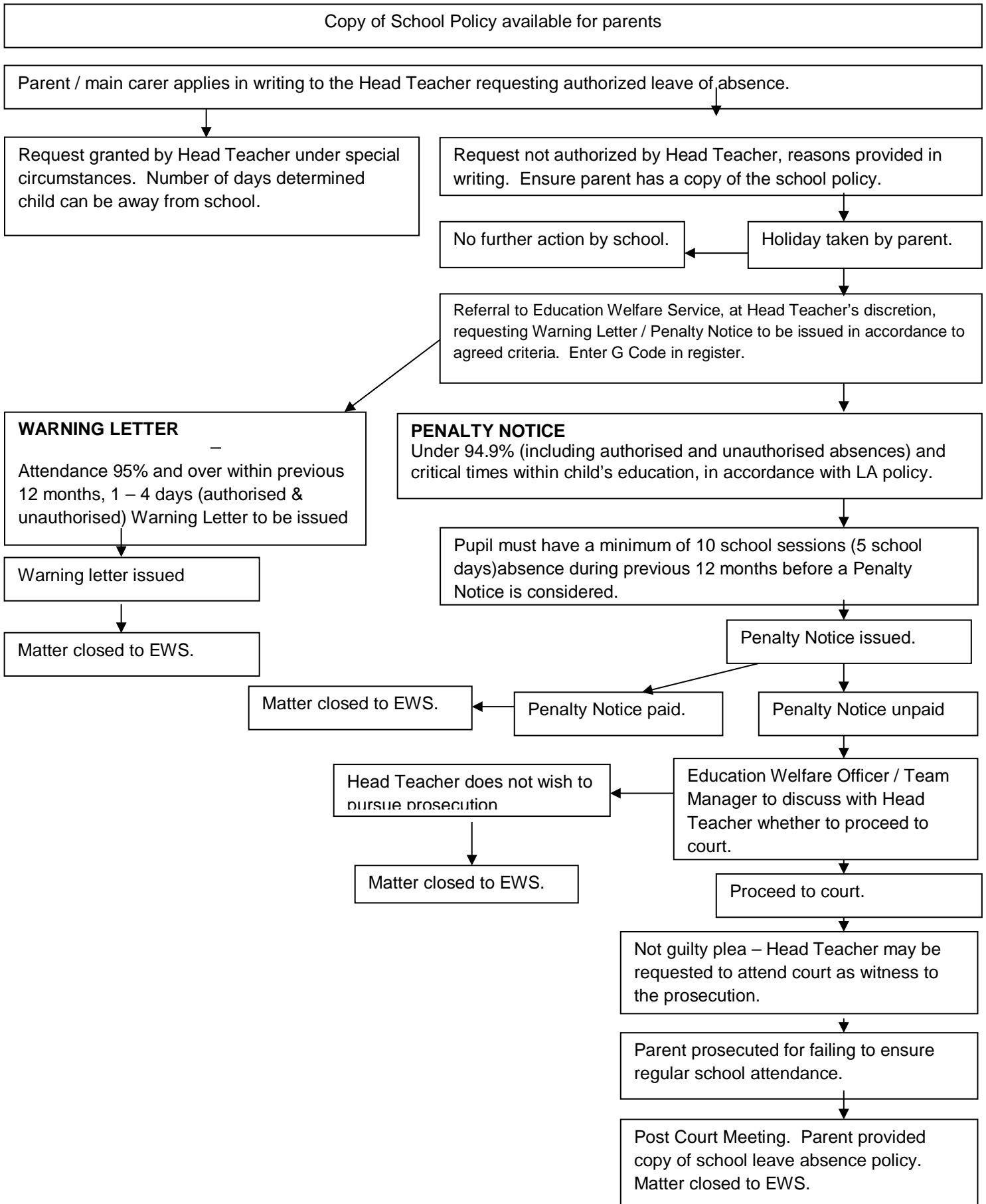
The target for individual pupils is 96% attendance. The Governors set this target for whole school attendance each year which is regularly reviewed and monitored.

## **11. 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 school. 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.

Mr J. Dooris  
Head Teacher  
September 2015

**REDCAR & CLEVELAND EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE  
 FLOW CHART APPLICATIONS TO SCHOOLS FOR AUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE / REFERRALS TO  
 EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**



**Head Teachers are accountable for their decision should this be challenged by parents.**