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PLUMTREE SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Approved by: Phil Simpson

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Key School Contacts

Attendance Champion: Phil Simpson (Head Teacher)

1 Aims

- 1.1 This is the attendance policy of Plumtree School (the **school**) and applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.2 The school aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.
- 1.3 The Attendance Policy is written in line with Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024. It is framed not to act as a restriction, but as part of a whole-school commitment to maximising learning time. The aims of this policy are as follows:

- 1.3.1 to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- 1.3.2 to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the school is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school;
- 1.3.3 to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the school, reduce absence and set out the school's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- 1.3.4 to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- 1.3.5 to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

2 **Definitions and interpretation**

- 2.1 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:
 - 2.1.1 references to **attendance** include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.
 - 2.1.2 references to a **parent** means:
 - (a) all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - (b) any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
 - (c) any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).
 - 2.1.3 References to a **pupil** includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school

3 **The importance of good attendance**

- 3.1 Children below compulsory school age in Nursery are encouraged to develop good attendance in preparation for starting formal school in Reception.
- 3.2 The school recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:
 - 3.2.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
 - 3.2.2 the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;

- 3.2.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- 3.2.4 that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- 3.2.5 children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

4 School responsibilities

- 4.1 The school acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.
- 4.2 The school will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.
- 4.3 Where there are challenges to attendance, the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- 4.4 The school will respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the school's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- 4.5 The school will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

5 Staff responsibilities

SLT

- 5.1 The school's Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy and are widely publicised within school.
 - 5.1.1 The SLT's responsibilities are:
 - (a) to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
 - (b) to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
 - (c) to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;

- (d) to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- (e) to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.
- (f) to monitor, review and update this policy as required (at least annually)
- (g) to analyse attendance data (monthly)

5.2 **Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance:**

All staff have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:

- 5.2.1 have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- 5.2.2 record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;
- 5.2.3 seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to school;
- 5.2.4 make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with the pupils to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the school;
- 5.2.5 look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SLT of any specific concerns;
- 5.2.6 deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
- 5.2.7 consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the school's behaviour and discipline policies; and
- 5.2.8 discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.
- 5.2.9 All pupils are registered using Hubmis and are registered between 8.50am and 9.05am and 1.10pm and 1.25pm.

5.3 **All staff**

- 5.4 The school ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it.
- 5.5 The school provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

6 School arrangements

- 6.1 The school will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers will be kept electronically for pupils in Nursery– Year 6.

7 Monitoring attendance

- 7.1 The school will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis will include:
 - 7.1.1 monitoring and analysing attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
 - 7.1.2 using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
 - 7.1.3 undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;¹
 - 7.1.4 conducting thorough analysis of data to identify patterns and trends;
 - 7.1.5 benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
 - 7.1.6 devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
 - 7.1.7 monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
 - 7.1.8 providing data and reports to the Advisory Board to support its work.
 - 7.1.9 As pupils in Nursery are of non-compulsory school age attendance data will focus on absence due to illness and analysis of any patterns of absence across the whole Nursery.

8 Pupil responsibilities

- 8.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The school therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.
- 8.2 Pupils of compulsory school age should be aware that:
 - 8.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;

- 8.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- 8.2.3 they should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission or otherwise in accordance with school rules;
- 8.2.4 they should engage with the school's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
- 8.2.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- 8.2.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the school. This may take the form of:
 - (a) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
 - (b) communication with parents;
 - (c) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
 - (d) sanctions against them or their parents in line with the school's behaviour policies.
- 8.2.7 If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the school encourages them to speak to their class teacher. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

9 Additional needs

- 9.1 The school recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- 9.2 The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.
- 9.3 It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- 9.4 Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls, or the school become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- 9.5 Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.
- 9.6 Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

- 9.7 The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil of compulsory school age is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

10 Parent/carers responsibilities

- 10.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.
- 10.2 This means pupils must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.
- 10.3 The school will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- 10.4 Expectations the school places on parents can be found in 13.2 of this policy.
- 10.5 Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the home and school agreement and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the school about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the school unreasonably.

11 Training

- 11.1 **Staff:** The school ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:
- 11.1.1 the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and
 - 11.1.2 the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.
- 11.2 Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:
- 11.2.1 the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
 - 11.2.2 the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;

- 11.2.3 the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and
 - 11.2.4 any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.
- 11.3 The school maintains written records of all staff training.

12 Information sharing

- 12.1 Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.
- 12.2 The school, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familiar harms).
- 12.3 Where appropriate the schools will attend regular targeting support meetings.
- 12.4 The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:
- 12.4.1 New pupil and deletion returns;
 - 12.4.2 Attendance returns;
 - 12.4.3 Sickness returns.
- 12.5 The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the school's registers.
- 12.6 Where appropriate, the school is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

13 Record keeping and confidentiality

- 13.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 13.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The school's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The school has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the school will use personal data.

Appendix 1 School Arrangements

1 Managing attendance

- 1.1 The school monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance and as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively. The admission and attendance registers will be kept electronically and retained by the school for five years.
- 1.2 The school expects all pupils to be present at school for the whole of the school day, usually from registration to the published end of school day, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips.

2 The role of parents / carers

- 2.1 The school expects all parents to:
 - 2.1.1 make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
 - 2.1.2 notify the school of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and
 - 2.1.3 cooperate with the school to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.
- 2.2 Parents of pupils should ensure their child attends school by 08:50am for morning registration.

3 Registration and attendance checks

- 3.1 Morning registration is at 08:50am. The registers will remain open for fifteen minutes after the start of morning registration.
- 3.2 Afternoon registration will be at 1:10pm and registers will be kept open for fifteen minutes.
- 3.3 Reasons for absence are logged on CPOMS for monitoring purposes.
- 3.4 Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom/lesson.

- 3.5 If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed, they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L)
- 3.6 If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given/not given will be recorded.

4 **Reporting absence**

- 4.1 If a pupil is to be absent from school for any reason, the parent / carer should contact:
 - 4.1.1 The school via email:
plumtreeschooloffice@gmail.com
 - 4.1.2 The school via phone (leave voicemail if unanswered):
0115 9375 859
- 4.2 Where a pupil is ill, the school must be notified of the nature of the illness.

5 **Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence**

- 5.1 Absence will be recorded on the Attendance Register as set out in Appendix 3.

6 **Managing absence**

The staff check absentees before any further action is taken. If the pupil is still unaccounted for, the staff contact home to establish the whereabouts of a pupil.

If parents are not responding to phone calls, an e-mail will be sent and subsequently by a member of the SLT.

If contact is unable to be made, administrative staff will escalate the matter to the Head Teacher.

7 **Authorised absences**

- 7.1 Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

8 **Applications for an authorised leave of absence**

- 8.1 Applications for authorised leave of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Head Teacher. As pupils in Nursery are of non- compulsory school age holidays are permitted during term time but parents should inform staff via email.

- 8.2 The school will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.
- 8.3 Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head Teacher.
- 8.4 Dental or medical appointments should be made during school holidays or after the school day except in cases of emergency when the following staff should be informed.
- 8.5 If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the relevant member of staff to determine the length of the time the pupil is or was permitted to be away from school. It will be recorded as an authorised absence. See section 3 of Appendix 3 for more details.
- 8.6 A leave of absence may be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.
- 8.7 Parents are regularly reminded in the weekly newsletter that holidays should not be taken during term time and any absence for this reason would be unauthorised (code G) unless in exceptional circumstances.

9 Reporting duties

- 9.1 The school has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend their absence is unauthorised. The school must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.
- 9.2 Action will also be taken in accordance with the missing child procedures and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the school gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Appendix 2 Admission Register

1 Admission Register

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the school Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the school will:
 - 1.1.1 maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the school (also known as the school roll); and
 - 1.1.2 inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the school's admission register at non-standard transition points.
- 1.2 The admission register will be kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. The school will ensure that every entry in the school's admission register is preserved for at least six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.
- 1.3 The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school, including their date of admission, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school they last attended and whether each pupil is a boarder or day pupil.
- 1.4 A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the school Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.
- 1.5 Where the school notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide it with the following information:
 - 1.5.1 the full name of the pupil;
 - 1.5.2 the address of the pupil;
 - 1.5.3 the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
 - 1.5.4 at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
 - 1.5.5 the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
 - 1.5.6 name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
 - 1.5.7 the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 3 Attendance Register

1 Attendance Register

- 1.1 The school records and monitors the attendance of all pupils including boarders in accordance with the school Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024
- 1.2 The school uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations.
- 1.3 The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic copy.
- 1.4 The school will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and Parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
- 1.5 On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:
 - 1.5.1 physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
 - 1.5.2 absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
 - 1.5.3 attending a place other than the school; or
 - 1.5.4 absent.
- 1.6 The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:
 - 1.6.1 Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
 - 1.6.2 For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
 - 1.6.3 Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
 - 1.6.4 Attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;
 - 1.6.5 Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

2 Recording absence

2.1 Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the school Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

2.1.1 leaves of absence;

2.1.2 other authorised reasons;

2.1.3 unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;

2.1.4 unauthorised absence.

3 Remote education

3.1 The school does not provide remote education but will endeavour to set work, when appropriate to do so, to assist absent pupils with keeping up with education if they are unable to attend but able to undertake work.

4 Unauthorised absence

4.1 The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the school is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

4.1.1 holiday has not been authorised by the school or is in excess of the period determined by the member of staff authorised to grant permission;

4.1.2 the reason for absence has not been provided;

4.1.3 a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;

4.1.4 a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.