

## **Jesmond Gardens Primary School**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Date: September 2017**

As you may know we have to follow specific guidelines from the Department of Education with regard to attendance and completion of registers. The guidelines have recently been modified and we now take the opportunity to brief you of our revised attendance policy.

Our school has always tried to maintain a high attendance rate, because we believe that young people who are absent from school are missing out educationally and socially. We feel that you support us on this principle. We realise that illness is unavoidable and there are times when children need to be at home.

#### **School Times**

##### **At Lower Foundation Stage**

Nursery attendance is either 8:45am to 11:45am or 12:15pm to 3:15pm

##### **At Upper Foundation Stage**

Reception attendance is 9am to 11:45am and 12:45pm to 3:15pm

##### **At Key Stage 1**

The school day is divided into two sessions, morning and afternoon. The morning session begins at 8.50 am ending at 12.00pm. The afternoon session begins at 1.00pm and ends at 3:10pm. Doors open at 8.40am which gives time for pupils to settle into class.

##### **At Key Stage 2**

The school day is divided into two sessions, morning and afternoon. The morning session begins at 8.50 am, ending at 12:15pm. The afternoon session begins at 1:15pm and ends at 3.15pm. Doors open at 8.40am.

We ask that all children in Key Stage 2 arrive by 8:40am so they can complete our mental maths scheme before registration. We appreciate parent's support for this very important additional learning time, which amounts to 50 minutes per week. Once the session begins only 5 minutes is given to registration purposes.

##### **Lateness**

It is important that children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a suitable condition to learn. Occasionally appointments have to be made which prevent children from arriving on time. Occasionally alarm clocks fail to operate. We would much rather a child arrives at school late than take a morning off school, though we do ask for your co-operation to ensure, wherever possible, a prompt arrival.

Children arriving after registration should report to the school office and sign the late book. They will be entered in the late book to record their presence in school in the event of an emergency evacuation. Similarly, parents wishing to collect their children from school early must report to the school office.

## **Absence**

Both the Local Authority and the school are committed to ensuring as high an attendance as possible. It is the responsibility of parents to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We need to receive notification as soon as your child is absent from school and would like to thank the many people who already do this. We do appreciate that not everyone has a telephone. If we have not heard from you we are required to follow up the absence.

The Head Teacher is required to decide whether or not absence may be authorised. Absences are authorised in cases of genuine illness and medical appointments and some religious festivals.

Where the school is not informed of the reasons for an absence, we have to record an unauthorised absence and where these become frequent inform the local authority that they may take legal action.

In addition, our attendance statistics are forwarded to the DFE who publish school league tables.

## **Attendance below 90%**

When a child's attendance falls below 90% they are referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer, unless there are special circumstances for their absence. Children are fast tracked by the LA for 4 weeks and if there is no improvement a meeting is held between the parents, school and the attendance team.

## **Holidays and Leave of Absence Forms**

Recent changes in regulations (September 2013) have now stated very clearly that there is no longer any statutory right to any holidays being taken during term time unless there are "special circumstances".

The Governing Body of Jesmond Gardens has agreed that special circumstances are as follows: -

- Sudden family crisis such as illness/accident/death of a close relative/friend
- A visit to another country on religious grounds
- A family gathering (funeral/wedding) of close family or friends
- A holiday that can only be taken in term time due to employers dictating to an employee when holidays are taken

In all of the above cases the Head Teacher is entitled to ask for further information/documentary evidence in order to satisfy his/herself that the criteria has been met. The Head Teacher will consider each request on its own merits.

If the above criterion is not met then the holiday request will be refused and the parents/carer informed by letter. If the holiday is then taken the absence will be referred to the LA attendance officer.

A penalty notice can be issued to parents for taking their child out of school for the purpose of a holiday, if the absence is not authorised by the Head Teacher. The Local Authority Attendance Officer would issue the penalty notice.

**Please request a full copy of our attendance policy**

**For further details or see our school website**