**Marwood School**

**Attendance Policy**

**Policy Adopted at Full Governors meeting 13th Oct. 2015**

**1 Introduction**

All children have the right to an education, but to achieve educationally young people

must be safe, healthy and engaged.

Parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child (or children) is receiving suitable fulltime education if they are of compulsory school age (Children must be in fulltime education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday). The LA is responsible for ensuring that parents fulfil these responsibilities and the school has a duty to monitor children’s attendance. It is a priority issue for Ofsted and

it is the school’s duty to keep abreast of any circumstances that mean children are not in school.

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session,

as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage

the children to attend through an exciting curriculum and support for parents, and to

put in place appropriate procedures e.g. agreed holiday requests for exceptional

reasons and calling families on the first day of a child’s absence. We believe that the

most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive

attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and

rewarding experience for all children. We make the best provision we can for those

children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the

Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.3 Amendments have been made to the 2006 Regulations in the Education (Pupil

Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. This amendment removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments also make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**2 Definitions**

2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

**3 If a child is absent**

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher records the absence in the register. A teaching assistant or the administrator then endeavours to contact a parent/carer. If no contact can be made and it is not possible to establish the whereabouts and/or safety of a child, the police and/or Social Services may be contacted.

3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent/carer or a telephone call received to explain the absence.

3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

**4 Requests for leave of absence**

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

4.2 Whilst Parents/carers do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days during the course of a school year, this is something the school actively discourages as parents are expected to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods. We recognise however that in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. In such cases the school will consider the circumstances and make its decision on whether to authorise the absence on a case by case basis. Previous attendance records will also factor into the decision making.

When parents/carers choose to withdraw their children for holidays, teachers will not set, monitor or mark homework for that period. If pupils are on holiday on the day that homework is set, then the homework will not be set on an alternative day.

**5 Long-term absence**

5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school does all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school contacts support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

**6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

6.1 The school contacts the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers are asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school then contacts the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

6.3 Alternatively under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and the amendments made to the 2007 regulations in the Education (Penalty

Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 the parent/carer may be issued with a Penalty Notice if their child has more than 10 unauthorised absences from school during a six month period.

**7 Attendance targets**

7.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the head teacher and governors. The attendance targets are agreed with the Education Welfare Officer and the LA. The targets should be challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school will consider carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

**8 Monitoring and review**

8.1 The governors have the overall responsibility for the Attendance Policy and for monitoring overall attendance and as a minimum will request an annual report from the head teacher. The governors will examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

8.2 The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

8.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, using attendance printouts provided half-termly by the administrator, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they should contact the head teacher or administrator immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, who contacts the parents/carers.

Date of Review and Adoption: 13th October 2015

Next Review Due: Sept. 2018