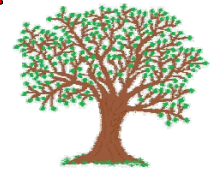




Weekly Newsletter The Tweeddales



Tweeddale Primary School
Friday 4th May 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

Changes to Attendance Policy

As I promised last week, I have attached our updated Attendance Policy for children attending Tweeddale Primary school, which will take effect from the beginning of the Autumn term 2012. It is important that you read this policy carefully as there are significant changes to your responsibility to ensure your children are attending school each school day and are arriving at school in good time.

Our target of 94% attendance is achievable this year and everyone in school and at home has worked hard to improve attendance and I am very pleased with our rise this year from 93% to 94% so far. However, parents and carers taking children out of school during term time are dramatically affecting their children's opportunities to make the most of their education and to make good progress. For this reason, it was vital to change the policy to ensure this practice is stopped and that all our children attend school for all school days. The major change is the requests for Authorised Absence during term time. In the present policy, parents and carers have been given greater freedom to take children on holiday during term time. This will no longer be authorised unless there are very unusual circumstances. Parents and carers who take their children out of school and this is not authorised, will receive a fixed penalty notice of £60.00 per parent.

This change in the policy is being adopted by many schools in Sutton and I have taken advice from our school Attendance Officer and have the support of our governing body. I hope you will agree that this will help to give our children the best possible chance to develop an understanding about the need to be responsible for achieving a good attendance and punctuality record and we will all help them to achieve this vital life skill. Please feel free to stop me in the mornings or to make an appointment if you wish to discuss this policy further.

Best wishes Geraldine Wood, Headteacher

Headteacher Awards

The following children have received Headteacher Awards over the last few weeks:

Archie Hart	Wesley Luigi	Ashley Taylor	Holly Wright
Kally Salmon	Dylan Ballard	Keelie Monckton	Nishi Amin
George Fry	Mackenzie Jenkins	Ruby Williams	Morgan Bryan
Sol Headley	Lucia Edwards	Holly Newton	Pirashana Pirabagaran
Aaron Dunbar	Karla Vista	Macey Leavy	Danny Bosdet
Neha Islam	Harriet Stockton	Asaiah Ntantu	Harry Harding
Amy-May Holloway	Arron Collender	Jay Coombes	Hermione Banyon
Emma Galvin	Hariram Gnanachandran	Lilly Whiting	Phoenix Hanton
Sadia Mushtaq	Lewis Hindle	Kiera Chandler	

Well done to you all

98.9%	Polar Bear Class		94.8%	Monkey Class		91.4%	Puffin Class
98.5%	Eagle Class		94.0%	Kestrel Class		90.0%	Turtle Class
97.8%	Hedgehog Class		92.3%	Cheetah Class		89.6%	Jaguar Class
95.7%	Ladybird Class		92.1%	Wombat Class		86.3%	Badger Class
95.0%	Panda Class		92.0%	Butterfly Class			

Parents drop-in sessions with the school nurse

Once a fortnight, the school nurse holds a drop-in session for parents/carers in the Round Room. If there is anything you would like to discuss with her, please go along to the Round Room after 2pm. There is no need to book.

Dates for the remainder of this half term are Tuesday 15th May and Tuesday 29th May.



Dates for your diary

Monday 7th May**Bank Holiday – School and Children’s Centre closed**

Thursday 10th May.....10:30am Polar Bear Class Assembly **POSTPONED**

Friday 11th May.....Reception classes trip to Chessington Zoo

w/c 14th May Year 6 SATs

Monday 21st MayClass Photos

Thursday 31st May.....Diamond Jubilee celebrations

Friday 1st June.....Break up for half term at normal time

Monday 11th June.....Return to school at normal time

Friday 29th June.....**INSET Day—School and Children’s Centre closed**

Friday 20th July.....Break up for Summer holidays

Term Dates 2012-2013

These are the London Borough of Sutton term dates for 2012-2013. **Please note there are still 5 INSET days to be scheduled.** The dates of these will be advised at the end of June 2012.

Tuesday 4th September 2012 - Start of Autumn Term

Thursday 28th March 2013 - Last day of term

w/c 29th October 2012 - Half term (1 week)

Monday 15th April 2013 - Start of Summer Term

Friday 21st December 2012 - Last day of term

w/c 27th May 2013 - Half term (1 week)

Monday 7th January 2013 - Start of Spring Term

Wednesday 24th July 2013 - Last day of term

w/c 18th February 2013 - Half Term (1 week)

Children’s Centre Information

A full timetable of our activities can be found in the file downloads area on the Tweeddale website www.tweeddaleprimary.sutton.sch.uk. You can also follow us on www.twitter.com/TweeddaleCC



Community Coffee Morning

This is your opportunity to come and find out about the new Tweeddale Centre and what it has to offer to our community. The group is open to all ages, and refreshments are available for a small price. 50p for a drink and 20p for biscuits or fruit.

Thursday’s 11:30am-1:30pm at Tweeddale Children’s Centre



TWEEDDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the rationale: our aims and the strategies that will be used to ensure all pupils achieve maximum attendance. In addition we make recommendations to agencies to assist us in making this policy workable.

2. Rationale

We recognise that all the children have a right to education. A good education helps to give children the best possible start in life. Regular attendance and punctuality is important for all children whatever their age, and is essential for every child's academic, social and personal development. Evidence suggests that children out of school are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse and are more likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour. School analysis has confirmed that children who are not regular attenders achieve little or no progress.

If children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, they need to attend school regularly. Without this commitment pupils are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of realising their full potential. Poor attendance can greatly affect their future life chances.

Children who do not attend school regularly miss out not only on their education but also socially, making it harder to succeed and harder to make friends.

Children must learn that the importance of regular attendance and punctuality contribute towards employability-whatever their choice of profession.

We are aware that parents/carers are responsible for their children's punctuality and attendance and we are committed to working in partnership with them, seeking to overcome any issues or problems that are causing unacceptable levels of absence.

Maximising attendance rates is one of the school's major tasks, and we take seriously problems that lead to non-attendance.

3. Aim

Our aim is for all pupils to achieve full attendance. We are committed to putting systems in place that will result in the majority, if not all of pupils achieving 100% attendance.

4. How will we encourage good attendance?

Tweeddale will provide a teaching and learning environment that is welcoming, secure and stimulating, where pupils are respected and valued as individuals, encouraged to attend and, therefore, able to succeed. Additional support for more vulnerable groups is provided.

We will raise awareness of the importance of attendance through various awards and incentives. See Appendix 1 'Rewards for Attendance'.

5. Procedures and actions that will be taken

A consistent approach to managing attendance throughout the school will be applied and all absences will be challenged in a positive and supportive manner.

Class teachers will accurately complete registers a minimum of twice a day. Where no explanation is given for a pupil's absence, a telephone call will be made on the first day of absence by 10.00am to ascertain the reason for non-attendance. If no reason is obtained within two days a standard letter requesting explanation of absences (with dates) will then be generated and sent out to parents and carers. Additional action to contact families will be taken where a child is known to be at risk.

Attendance will be monitored fortnightly by the Deputy-head and the Borough School Attendance Officer and the headteacher. The Attendance Officer will monitor impact of strategies to raise attendance and punctuality monthly with the headteacher.

Where attendance continues to be poor and where attendance drops below 94%, notification will be given by the school that further absences will require authorisation by a doctor's certificate or other medical evidence. Efforts will continue to build a positive partnership with parents.

If there is no improvement in attendance despite support strategies being put into place, then a referral will be made to the Borough Attendance Officer.

Staff will provide support to pupils after absence, of whatever length, ensuring a positive, encouraging transition back into school.

Truancy and condoned absence will not be tolerated and will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

An authorised absence is one where the school has either given approval in advance, or an explanation offered afterward, has been accepted as a satisfactory justification for the absence.

Reasons for absence that may be authorised are:

- I Sickness
- M Medical, doctor, dentist, optician, psychologist, hospital appointment
- E Excluded by school
- H Authorised holiday (agreed)
- F Extended family holiday (agreed)
- R Religious observance
- T Travellers on the move
- C Any other authorised absence, including compassionate absence – for Headteacher to authorise absence agreed with family in exceptional circumstances of need

All other absences are deemed unauthorised. The school is not obliged to accept explanations such as 'minding the house', looking after other children or parent/carers illness. Shopping and birthday treats will not be acceptable as valid reasons. In these instances the absence will in most circumstances be deemed unauthorised. The same applies to no explanation being offered.

It is a parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. At Tweeddale Primary School the first day of an absence should be covered by a telephone call with details of the nature of the illness, and, when this can be predicted, the date the child is expected to be able to return to school. Otherwise, a letter should explain this on the child's return to school or a verbal explanation given to the class teacher/office staff.

If a pupil has been absent for more than 1 week with no plausible reason given, the Headteacher will write to enquire about the reason for absence. After 28 days, the headteacher will refer the matter to the Borough Attendance Service. If the child does not return, the school has the right to remove the child from the school roll 28 days from the date of the letter.

In cases of persistent non-attendance or poor attendance, the school will make a formal referral to the borough school attendance service.

Holidays during term time

We recognise that in some cases, parents may not be able to take family holidays during the school holiday period and although the Headteacher has discretion to authorise 10 days of absence during the school year, this will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances. All applications for more than 10 school days will need to be made to the governors for authorisation. You will be eligible to receive a Penalty Notice should you decide to take a holiday or leave of absence in term time which is unauthorised.

Lateness

The law states that schools must make it their policy to discourage late arrival. Persistent lateness disadvantages children, as they are likely to miss important information and work and is also disruptive to pupils already involved in the lesson. Morning registers are taken at 8.55. Children receive a late mark (L) if they arrive after this time.

All lateness and the reasons are recorded. Continual lateness is unacceptable and will result in the school contacting parents. If there is no improvement then a referral will be made to the Borough School Attendance Officer and appropriate action will be taken.

At Tweeddale Primary school, registers are kept open for 30 minutes. Children who arrive after this time are marked U (late after registration), which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. For registration to mean anything at all, a firm line must be taken on late arrivals. Persistent lateness without a valid reason could lead to prosecution or a penalty notice being served by the Borough School Attendance Service.

At Tweeddale Primary School

- Frequent late arrivals are sent a letter reminding parents of their obligation to get their child to school on time.
- If there is no improvement, a second letter requests that parents supply an explanation for a series of late arrivals at school.

- If there is still no improvement a meeting is requested with parent to ascertain the problem behind persistent lateness.

The Borough School Attendance Officer will become involved in cases of continual late arrival after registers close.

6. Partnership between schools and parents or carers

Tweeddale Primary School has a Home-School Agreement with parents and carers. This agreement outlines how the school and parents or carers work in partnership for the benefit of children. Supporting good attendance is a part of the agreement and most parents ensure good attendance by their child.

Parents/carers role is to:

- Show they value their child's right to education. Education Act 1996 (section 444)
- Ensure that children go to school regularly, arrive on time and do not miss school for unacceptable reasons
- Help children to understand the importance of going to school and make it clear that absences from school for no good reason will not be supported.
- Praise children for good or improved attendance.
- Ensure that the school is aware of any issues or problems that are affecting attendance and work with the school to resolve these.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The children's attendance is monitored daily by a dedicated administrative assistant and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who collects attendance data on a fortnightly and termly basis. The headteacher will evaluate the success of the policy annually.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Where children of compulsory school age are registered at a school, the law states that they should attend regularly. Where such a child is absent, the school register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

All schools are required by law to report to the Local Authority (LA) continual pupil absence or where pupils fail to attend regularly. The Borough School Attendance Service is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. The officers are able to bring to the assistance of the schools a wide range of skills. Through their home visiting they may be well placed to assess a non-attender's problems in the wider family context.

Borough School Attendance Officers should be consulted where schools are experiencing difficulty in determining whether absences are justified.

An education supervision order is used when a child is registered at a school but is not attending regularly or at all. A parent/carer can also be prosecuted and a fine of up to £2,500 or three months in prison, for irregular attendance of their child at school. Also, parents/carers can be served with a fixed penalty notice of £60-£120 for persistent non-attendance or lateness.

This policy to be read in conjunction with:

1. Behaviour Policy
2. School Prospectus
3. Home/School agreements
4. Newsletters
5. School website
6. Staff Handbook
7. The Tweeddales Development Plan
8. Performance Management policy

Reviewed and amended March 2012

APPENDIX 1

Rewards for Attendance

We will reward good attendance and raise the importance of attendance through:

WEEKLY AWARDS

The children who have attended school all week will receive a 100% sticker, each week this is achieved, next to their names on the class sticker chart.

Certificates will be given in assembly to the class or classes that have the 1st, 2nd and 3rd best attendance.

The best attendance class wins Annie Attendwell Bear for the week.

TERMLY

Children who have significantly improved their attendance, or achieved 95% or more will be rewarded with a certificate.

Children who achieve 100% attendance for 4, 8 or 12 weeks (shown by 4, 8 or 12 stickers on the sticker chart) will be praised and receive a 4, 8 or 12 week attendance award certificate.

At the end of each term children who have 100% attendance will be praised and receive a 100% certificate.

A prize draw will be held at the end of each term with three prizes. This will be open to all children who have achieved 94% attendance each term (with no more than three late marks) in a term.

For the reception classes a similar draw for children who achieve 94% attendance will be held with the same criteria applying, but a prize will also be given to the parents of the winning children.

Each term the most improved attendee receives a reward.

Each term, the class with best attendance chooses a whole class activity as a reward. E.g. ten pin bowling.

Each term, the class with best attendance receives the Tweeddale Attendance Cup.

Parents of children who have improved their child's attendance go into a draw to receive a gift voucher in Attendance assembly.

ANNUALLY

Children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole school year will be praised and awarded with a certificate in the assembly.

A prize draw will be held for the children who have achieved 100% attendance throughout the school year.

The best attending class in the year will receive The Tweeddale Attendance shield.