**Bensham Grove Community Nursery School**

**Attendance Policy**

**Rationale**

At Bensham Grove Community Nursery School, we aim to provide highest quality early years education for each individual children, working in partnership with parents/carers. This policy is in recognition of research that highlights the significant impact high quality early years education has upon the child’s future education as well as the recognition of the fundamental importance of good attendance for improving pupil achievement and for reducing social exclusion in the future. While attendance is non statutory until the age of five we recognise that when a young child starts Nursery school he or she needs to feel secure, building strong relationships, and confident within consistent daily routines to support the young child’s learning and development. Therefore if a child has a long period of absence, or is absent regularly, this will impact upon those relationships and his/her learning and development within the Nursery School. This is recognised within the effective collaboration between the Local Authority (LA) and feeder schools. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell. We believe that early years education is about the whole holistic child and a child’s health is very important. We will endeavour to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance while working with parents/carers and health professionals.

**Role of Parents and pupils**

We believe attendance is important for effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, and therefore it is important to work in partnership with our parents/carers.

Parents are asked to report their child's absence from school on the first day of absence via telephone. If a parent does not contact the school, we will ring the parent to establish the reason for the absence. If we do not hear from the parent by the third day of absence the keyperson, where possible, and Headteacher will visit the home to establish that there are no serious concerns. If there is no one at home the staff will leave a letter asking the parent to contact the school so that we can support.

If a parent requests a Leave of Absence from school for their child), an appropriate form will needed to be completed and given to the child’s keyperson.

When a child is of statutory school age parents are expected to support school attendance by avoiding family holidays during term time. Due to amendments (April 2013) that have been made to the Department for Education’s Pupil Registration Regulations to address attendance issues, it has been made clear to headteachers that they should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. It is a common misconception that pupils are allowed to take up to ten days holiday in term time during any academic year. At Bensham Grove we recognise that Nursery education is non statutory but we would ask parents to be careful of how much time their child is absent from Nursery as this can impact upon how secure the child may feel returning after a holiday within the Nursery. We do recognise how valuable holiday family time is for a young child but in preparation for the next stage in education. We use a child’s holiday as a focus for discussion – Me, my family my world.

**The keyperson**

Keyperson have an important role to play in supporting a child’s attendance. They will discuss with the head teacher any attendance concerns. They will discuss with the parent any concerns and how the school can support.

Keyperson will welcome the child back to school following their return from absence and discuss with other staff members if a child is experiencing particular difficulties.

**The Headteacher**

The headteacher has the day to day responsibility for attendance.

The headteacher will ensure that parents are aware of the importance of regular attendance. This will be supported in the signing of the Home-School Agreement.

**The Governing Body**

The governing body has responsibility for school policies and procedures.

They will receive a report on attendance from the headteacher at each termly governing body meeting in order to monitor attendance.

**The Local Authority**

We recognise that attendance at a maintained Nursery school is non statutory but as a Gateshead school we believe we do need to prepare our children for the next steps in their education. Gateshead LA is committed to supporting schools and families to achieve and maintain good pupil attendance at school. In order to fulfil this commitment, the LA has adopted the following aims for children of statutory school age.

To support schools to identify and implement effective strategies to improve attendance.

To support co-operative relationships between schools and families as necessary to ensure good attendance.

To promote the early identification of school attendance problems.

To provide support and advice for school staff to identify and respond appropriately to

attendance problems.

To ensure that individual children who are failing to attend school are assessed and appropriate support plans to improve attendance are implemented.

To make arrangements to ensure that children are referred to appropriate support agencies as necessary to address attendance problems.

To carry out its duty to take action against parents who fail to ensure that their children attend

school regularly and punctually through the agency of its Education Welfare Service

**Management and Monitoring Systems**

1. School will keep an Admission Register and an Attendance Register, which will contain the details of children in the school, along with dates of admission or re-admission.

2. School will monitor the admission and attendance registers from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend school.

3. In the event of any child being deleted from the admission or attendance register the school must inform the Local Authority.

5.Contact is made on the first morning that the child(ren) is/are absent and every subsequent day of absence . On the third day a visit to the home will be made to establish the reason for the absence and offer any support. A letter will be left asking the parent to contact the school if unable to speak to anyone.

6. Attendance is monitored daily and any concerns reported to Headteacher

8. Percentage attendance is printed every month, and attendances for children highlighted as a concern are highlighted and monitored.

9. If attendance is a concern the keyperson will discuss with the parent to establish the cause and offer any support.

10. If the absence continues the Head teacher will discuss with the parent to establish the cause and offer any support.

11. If the absence continues the Head teacher will discuss with the parent whether it is in the child’s best interests to be attending the Nursery School.

**Partnerships**

At Bensham Grove Community Nursery School we believe in working in partnership with parents/carers in order to provide the highest quality early years education and we will discuss with the parents any concerns and welcome parents discussing their concerns with the school in the best interests of the child.

**United Nations Convention of the Rights of the child – relevant articles.**

Article 3The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 28 Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries to achieve this.

Article 4 Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights.

Article 31 Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 5 Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to direct and guide their children as they grow up, so that they can enjoy their rights properly.