



Sharman's Cross Junior School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Poor or erratic attendance can disadvantage children.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

If parents are consulted in relation to their child's attendance, improved attendance and time-keeping will be recognised.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key, whole-school improvement issue - it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To improve children's attainment through good attendance;
- to encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time;
- to make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers and governors;
- to continue to secure attendance in line with or above Solihull and national averages.

Those responsible for attendance issues in school

- The named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues is Miss Sara Wilkes, Headteacher, plus Mrs Jane Ferguson, Deputy Headteacher, assisted by Mrs Jo Whitcombe, Family Support Worker;
- Members of school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) also have responsibility for attendance issues in school;
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head, deputy head, members of the senior management team and family support worker;
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the governing body.

Government/legal requirements

- School is required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days: Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12;
- School must provide its attendance data to the DfE; our management information system is used to send data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

PROCEDURES

Register of pupils' admission to school

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

Expected First Day of Attendance

Staff will enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

Deletions from the Admission Register

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

The School will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial, both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Staff will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they will record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

School will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence and each subsequent day if no message has been received as to why a pupil is absent. Parents/carers will be contacted according to the priority lists and contact numbers they submit to school on the relevant form.

If a child is marked 'n' on the register, as no reason given for absence, parents will be telephoned by a member of the office staff by the close of register. If, by 10.30 am, notification or conformation has not been received the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted to report a child missing.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session (am/pm).

When a pupil arrives after the register closes it will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 9:25 am.

PARENTS

Absence

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school each day of the absence, before 8.55am.

Illness

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, parents' explanations that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

School can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

School has clear systems in place to address any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

Possible scenarios when medical evidence may be requested

- Attendance is persistently less than 90%;
- frequent odd days of absence are due to reported illness;
- the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated;
- there is a particular medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. Parents/carers should complete an absence request form [see Appendix 1] and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date the absence is requested. School will respond to the request within two weeks.

If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

DfE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term time should be regarded as exceptional, eg during the 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled, so for a specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave of absence for children of police officers affected by cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

If parents/carers consider they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete an absence request form and provide evidence of those circumstances. They may also be required to meet with the head teacher to discuss their request.

The leave of absence request form confirming whether or not the exceptional request has been authorised/unauthorised will be sent back to the parents and a copy will also be kept by the school.

Any leave of absence that has not been authorised will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupil's register and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service for consideration, possibly resulting in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 state that, where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register.

Other reasons for absence

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time a pupil is not in school; notes or telephone calls will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.

The school will follow DfE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child-minding. Examples of authorised absence may include days of religious observance, illness or medical appointments.

Medical appointments will require evidence e.g. hospital appointment letter and if the pupil is brought to school before 11 am then s/he will be given an L (late) mark. If there is no evidence provided, a U mark will be given.

Parents are advised to make appointments for dentists, doctors or opticians outside of school hours where possible.

How parents can support regular school attendance

- Ensure their child leaves home in plenty of time to arrive punctually;
- contact the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance;
- work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that surround their child's attendance;
- approach the school to be referred for further support if required;
- support and encourage their child by attending parents' meetings and other events.

EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

The class with the highest weekly attendance will be awarded a trophy during Friday assembly.

POOR ATTENDANCE

School attendance of 95.20% (NA 2013/14) or less is below the national average.

Those children whose attendance falls below 95% will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the parents of children whose attendance is consistently below this figure.

Registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

Individual pupil data will be analysed to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by school where their child's attendance causes concern. School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance. After school has attempted to address attendance concerns with parents but there is no improvement, the Education Welfare Service will be informed.

School will enable returning pupils to catch up on learning and re-integration.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Pupils with persistent absenteeism (more than 15%) will be identified and discussed with the Education Welfare Officer during her termly visit.

ATTENDANCE PANELS

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel - a formal meeting to discuss a child's school attendance, identify any barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve it.

An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present and may include anyone in school who is involved with your child, such as the family support worker. An Education Welfare Service representative will also be present. The best possible outcome for parents and pupils is intended.

DATA ANALYSIS

School will use data effectively to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.

Where attendance is a concern, school will use data to analyse it by year group, class, groups of pupils, eg of the same ethnicity or gender, to help highlight areas of concern.

School will use data to identify the main causes of absences within school and take action to address and improve those areas. Such interventions will be monitored and evaluated.

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

January 2015

Review: January 2016

Signed: HT

Chair of Governors