



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Issue No 6

Date 13.04.16

Purpose

We believe that we can improve the life chances of all pupils by ensuring that all staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of the importance of and take responsibility for regular attendance. We encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others.

The Governors and Head teacher, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Aims

At Scott Lower School we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

- Pupils are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain at the highest possible level.
- Everyone is valued, praised and rewarded.
- Positive relationships are promoted.
- Everyone has the right to feel safe.
- The curriculum will be designed to reflect the interests and needs of the pupils ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning.
- There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success.
- The monitoring and evaluating of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals

The School Day

8.35am Children filter into school

8.45am Doors closed - School day begins and register is taken

9.15am Registers officially closed

1.00pm Afternoon registers taken for nursery

1.10pm Afternoon registers taken – Reception, KS1 and KS2

3.10pm Nursery and reception finish

3.15pm KS1 and KS2 finish

No parent or child should arrive at school before 8.35am unless prior arrangements are in place or they attend the breakfast club (Scotties)

Children should be supervised at all times on the school grounds until they are safely in their classrooms or parents see them go safely through the gate.

All pupils who arrive after 8.45am must report to the school office where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

End Of School Day Arrangements

Parents or carers of children in Years 1 – 4 should pick their children up at the end of the school day from the main playground.

Reception and Nursery parents should collect their children at the end of the school day from their child's classroom door.

Any child who has not been picked up promptly by the end of the school day will be taken to the school office. If they remain uncollected by 3.30pm they will be taken to Scotties and parents will be charged accordingly.

If a child is not collected from school by 5.30pm and it is not possible to contact the parents, Children's Services will be contacted as the child is technically classed as "abandoned".

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, it is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence; a message can be left on the schools absence line. This is a safeguarding matter so that everyone knows that your child is safe. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

1. An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
2. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
3. If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
4. For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
5. Medical certificates are required for absence greater than five days.

The Role of the School Staff

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored half termly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern. Attendance Officer:

- Overall Attendance Officer: Miss S Schobs

It is the responsibility of the school attendance officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- All absences not reported by parents are followed up
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register

Action for Low Attendance

Low and Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. The school uses the following guide for attendance:



Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

1. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
2. Prior to the engagement of the EWO, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for EWO involvement.

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

The class register is taken at 8.45 am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded.

The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

If there are 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term the school will make a referral to the Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter. The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child). Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days of issue, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

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 carer.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays not agreed.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform

- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Holiday absence

Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead, MUST be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct. The Attendance Service is notified that a request for a term time holiday is not authorised. The Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child). If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 42 days of issue, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held and targets for attendance will be set. For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully considering:

- Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils
- Discussion with Attendance Service to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness; EWO support as appropriate
- Request from school for parent/carer to meet with school staff
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access support from other agencies
- Referral to Attendance Service. Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings MUST be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school must consider the following: Education Welfare Officer Actions This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance Penalty Notices are issued by the Attendance Service in accordance with their Code of Conduct.
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child) Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:
 - Truancy
 - Parentally-condoned absences
 - Persistent lateness after the register has closed
 - Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion. Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be

£120 to be paid within 42 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Rewards for Positive Attendance

Scott Lower School is committed to giving our pupils the best education available. This is why we want to highlight the link between good attendance and educational achievement. Our aim is to promote regular attendance and good punctuality in order to ensure all students achieve their potential.

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

Individual Children

Certificates and wristbands are awarded at the end of each term for 100% attendance. This is celebrated in the final whole school assembly for that term. Children will also be able to attend school in mufti on the last day of term if they have achieved 100% attendance.

Where positive impact is required, all staff in contact with the child must take extra care to welcome the child each morning, praise punctual attendance and acknowledge the effort the child has made. It is also appropriate to recognise the effort the parent has made to secure the child's attendance.

Where children have achieved 100% attendance for the whole year, a book voucher will be awarded at the end of year assembly.

Whole Classes

Each class has a traffic light displayed on it's door. If the class attendance for that week is below our target of 97% they will be shown to be on AMBER ALERT. Attendance below 92% will be marked as RED ALERT. A class who hit the attendance target will be shown as GREEN.

The class with the very best overall weekly attendance get to keep Jimbo, our attendance bear in their classroom for the week.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities Policy and Safeguarding Policy