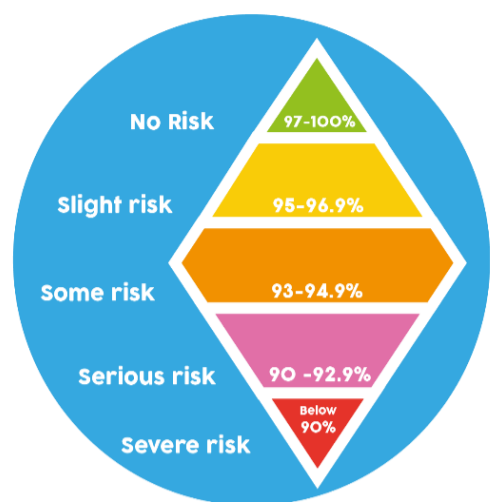




ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2024



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 Primary 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 support the learning of individuals

The School Day

Drop off times

- Nursery & Reception: Gates open 8.35am for 8.45am start
- Years 1 & 2: Gates open 8.25am for 8.30am start
- Years 3 - 6: Gates open 8.30am for 8.35am start

Collection times, Monday to Thursday (and Friday if you have booked Friday childcare club)

- Nursery: 3.20pm
- Reception: 3.25pm
- Year 1 & 2: 3.30pm
- Years 3 - 6: 3.35pm

Collection times, Friday

- Nursery & Reception: 1.00pm
- Years 1 & 2: 1.05pm
- Years 3 - 6: 1.10pm

Any child who has not been picked up promptly by the end of the normal school day will be taken to the school office. If they remain uncollected by 3.20pm and 1.15pm on Fridays (South Pole) and 3.35pm and 1.25pm on Fridays (North Pole), parents will be charged a late fee of £5 for every 5 minutes they are late. The fee also applies for late collection at Scotties immediately from the session end time (4.30pm or 5.30pm)

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; a message must be left on the school's absence line by 8.30am on every day they are absent – 01234 352630. 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. An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required. 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.

If your child is absent due to vomiting/diarrhoea, 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.

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.

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: Mrs. J Crofts

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 standard response will be appropriate in every case.

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 Headteacher 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 8.40am at the North Pole and 8.35am at the South Pole, 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 9.00am. 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 or lateness is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence or lateness 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 28 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 Headteacher. 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.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher 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
- Holidays, long weekends and days out
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school)
- 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

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. This will need to be supported by a letter from your line manager or HR department.
- 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 £160 (or £80 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 28 days of issue, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

Attendance and Lateness

For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. 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. 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 92%, 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: 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
- 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 £160 to be paid within 42 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Rewards for Positive Attendance

Scott Primary 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.

Good attendance is celebrated on a weekly basis with the class with the best attendance being rewarded with Jimbo Bear in Years 1&2 and the Attendance Trophy in Years 3-6.

Posters are displayed in school and shared on Dojo weekly to celebrate the classes with the best attendance.

Each class has a traffic light displayed on its 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 hits the attendance target will be shown as GREEN.

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.

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

Equal Opportunities

There is a commitment to inclusive practice. Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone in school. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2010 provide a revised statutory framework for inclusion. It strengthens the right of children with SEN to attend a mainstream school, unless parents choose otherwise or if this is incompatible with "efficient education for other children" and there are no "reasonable steps" which the school and LEA can take to prevent that incompatibility. Alongside the act, the Equality Act 2010 places new duties on schools not to treat disabled pupils less favourably than others and to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure they are not disadvantaged. At Scott we strive to ensure that all children have access to teaching and learning that is appropriate to their needs.