



# Sherborne C of E Primary School – Attendance Policy

Created by: John Moore  
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Date of next review:  
March 2018

Version	Date	Page	Description of Change	Origin of Change
1	07/03/2017	All	Created new Attendance Policy	John Moore

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher is responsible for updating this policy in line with any new developments in the school and new government guidance. All staff are expected to follow the policy and the Leadership Team will be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of practice across the school, reporting to the Performance and Standards Committee.

Discussed by the staff: March 2017

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussed by the Governing Body: March 2017

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

At Sherborne C of E Primary School it is recognised that the responsibility for promoting good attendance and punctuality is shared by all staff, governors, parents and carers and the pupil. As a school we aim to maintain a minimum attendance rate of 97% and maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- There is a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

### **Parental responsibility.**

Parents and Carers should:

- Ring school on the first morning of every absence to state the reason for the absence and the date their child is expected to return to school.
- Send a note to school to explain the reason for the absence when their child returns to school.
- Keep school updated by telephone or letter if their child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments out of school hours, or during school holidays.
- Understand that there is no entitlement for parents to take pupils on holiday during term time and that all holidays taken in school term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time. It is important to be on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. If your child misses this short but vital session, his/her work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals disrupt the whole class and often embarrass the late child.

## **School responsibility:**

The school shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences with phone calls as soon as possible.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, on the school website and the Home-School agreement.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on his/her annual school report.
- Let parents know if there are concerns regarding their child's attendance and offer support and advice.
- Make referrals to our Attendance Support Officer (ASO) who will consult with the Local Authority's Education Entitlement and Inclusion team who will consider taking legal action under the s444(1) of the 1996 Education Act.

The Headteacher shall:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data.
- Oversee attendance procedures.

The Governors shall

- With the Headteacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Report on attendance statistics in the Governors Annual Report to parents.

## **School Times**

We expect children to be in the playground by 8:50am in time for the start of morning registration at 8:55am

Lunchtime is between 12:00pm and 1:00pm for pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1, and between 12:15pm and 1:00pm for pupils in Key Stage 2.

School finishes at 3:15pm .

Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. In the unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day and we cannot contact parents/carers or emergency contacts, social services will be contacted.

## Registration

Schools must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

- Registration will take place between 8:55am and 9:00am for the morning session and between 1:00pm and 1:10pm for the afternoon session.
- Pupils arriving during registration will be marked with an **L** late which is a present mark. Registration will close 20 minutes after the register has been taken. Unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness the pupil will be marked with a **U** which is unauthorised absence mark authorised absence mark.
- The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the back of the register.

## Absences

The school has a legal responsibility to record pupil absence as either authorised or unauthorised. This information is reported to the Department for Education and in some circumstances the Local Authority. Only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

### Authorised Absence is when a pupil:

- Is absent with the prior permission of the school;
- Is too unwell to attend school;
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance;
- Has suffered a family bereavement;
- Has been excluded;
- Has an extenuating circumstance that has been considered and authorised by the Headteacher.

### Unauthorised absence is when:

- A pupil is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered;
- A pupil arrives after the registration period has closed without an acceptable reason;
- A pupil is away from school on a family holiday.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

## **Appointments**

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. Pupils leaving school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

## **Frequent absences for Medical reasons**

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons the school medical service will be consulted. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made.

## **Longer absences**

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

## **Term-time holiday**

Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

There is no entitlement to time off in term time and school can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice if absence is recorded as an unauthorised holiday. A written warning of this will usually be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

## **School Procedures**

After close of registration, registers will be returned to the office and checked.

Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9:00 am, a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for the absence and the date of expected return. Parents/carers will be asked to follow up with a written note on their child's return to school. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing by the administrator.

If school have been unable to make contact by telephone, a written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is no response a reminder will be sent on the 6th day of absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and school will refer to the Attendance

Support Officer. If school have been unable to make contact after the 10th day of absence the Headteacher will report the pupil as a ‘Child Missing Education’ to the Local Authority who will enforce their missing Child Missing Education protocol.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Headteacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues and if appropriate refer to the Parent Support Advisor or the Attendance Support Officer. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at the Local Authority.

## **The Law**

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children’s education;
- Maintained schools must allow the Local Authority to inspect their registers;
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly.

Gloucestershire’s Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the Local Authority of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period particularly when this absence is on account of:

- (a) Lateness after registration;
- (b) Unauthorised holiday

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60 after a warning has been issued by the school. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

## **Leavers**

If your child is leaving Sherborne C of E Primary School, other than to go on to Secondary School, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans: date of move; new address – or at least the town you will be moving to; new school and start date, when known; reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office).
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number.
- Take the school’s compliments slip so the new school can easily arrange for records to be transferred.
- Let the school know when you move.

If parents have not provided the above information and cannot be contacted, the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations that include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child. By providing the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Strategies**

To support our attendance policy we:

- Will treat attendance as a priority;
- Apply timely intervention/support and, if poor attendance continues, refer to the local authority's Education, Entitlement and Inclusion team to consider further action.
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity –at Parents evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc.
- Always use first day telephone contact;
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance;
- Set attendance targets for the school and for each year group;
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level;
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels;
- Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important.

### **Success Criteria**

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, the Local Authority etc.
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.