

# Attendance Policy

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**Date for review: Autumn 2019**

**STATUS: STATUTORY**

**REVIEW: ANNUALLY**

**Committee: PDBW**

## **Introduction:**

It is our task as teachers at Shere Infant and Nursery School to promote and support our children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. We endeavour to provide a school day that excites challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. Our organisation of their learning promotes enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline. We encourage the children to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of work and behaviour.

The school staff, alongside the Local Authority, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve **100%** attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

## **Key Objectives**

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or head teacher, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not take holidays in term time.

We expect that the school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- meet with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to resolve the situation, to the EWO for additional ongoing support and guidance
- work with the EWO and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary

## **Request for Leave of Absence**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance on the Surrey County Council website and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. The Head Teacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Head Teacher's authorisation, parents may be issued with a penalty notice as a result (see Penalty Notice below).

In the event of a pupil having unauthorised leave of absence for a period in excess of 20 days parents should be aware that there is a risk that the child might be taken off roll.

### **Dental and Medical Treatments**

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book dental and medical appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is **£60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. Parents should be aware that each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absence.**

### **Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued**

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on **Tuancy Patrols** and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

## **Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is stated above.

## **Responding to Non-Attendance**

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day via telephone;
- if there is no response to the phone call or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Head Teacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly;
- in line with the Education Regulations 2006 (Pupil Registration), all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority;
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school office will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the EWO when a formal referral may be made
- if a child has persistent absence or has been identified on truancy patrols and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the EWO / LA to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued;
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

## **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance when it is a cause for concern.

## **Responding to lateness**

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present. Registers open at 8.50am and are taken promptly. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 8.50am but before 9.15am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.15am, without a valid explanation, will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

## **Changing School**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible and follow Local Authority procedures in making an application to the new school. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.