



Sound & District Primary School

Our Children are our Future

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy written by:	Headteacher
Governor Committee:	Achievements and Standards
Date approved by Governing body:	November 2020
Review date:	November 2021

Mission Statement

Good attendance and punctuality is essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.

Sound & District Primary School aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, children, parents, the local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will maintain attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and liaise with home and other agencies when this is appropriate. Good attendance and punctuality will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school.

The attendance policy is based on the premise of equality for all.

Aims

- To improve the quality of school life.
- To create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is the 'norm'.
- To demonstrate to the children, parents and staff that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To recognise that good, regular attendance and punctuality is an achievement in itself.
- To be consistent in implementation both in terms of rewards and sanctions.
- To value the individual.

All staff will be given clear and detailed guidelines for:

- register keeping
- the organisation of registration.
- effective checks on absconding and internal truancy.

All staff will maintain a positive regard for the children and their circumstances while insisting on high standards of punctuality and attendance.

At all times communication with parents will be prompt (same day, if possible), with a record being made of any action taken at each stage. Class teachers are to inform the Headteacher at all times of any concerns or action taken. The Headteacher will take overall responsibility for attendance.

Attendance is monitored weekly when computer records are updated, using the SIMS Attendance Module. A list of unexplained absences is printed out and analysed. Necessary letters of absence are sent out to parents. If no response is received to the second letter that is sent home, telephone contact is made. If no response is forthcoming, the absence is marked in the register as 'unauthorised' and referrals are made to the Education Welfare Officers if appropriate.

Attendances of 80% or less over a half termly period are monitored and letters are sent to parents. Where necessary, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officers.

Contact

Parents are made aware through newsletters and general school policy that contact should be made with the school on a child's first day of absence. If a child is absent without explanation, then contact, if possible, is made by a member of school staff; usually the Administration Officer. On return from absence a letter/email of explanation is required and should be sent to the class teacher. This will then be retained in the class register.

Punctuality

The children enter the school at 8.45am. Registers are taken at 9.00am. Any children arriving later than the close of the register at 9.15am, will be marked as late by the class teacher or Administration Officer. Any child leaving or returning to the school site during the day for appointments (e.g. for the doctor/dentist) will be signed out, or signed in, in the folder kept on the Administration Officer's desk.

To promote good attendance, a special assembly is held at the end of each term in the hall. An award is given for those children who have achieved 100% attendance during the course of the year.

Definitions

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, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the

absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Nationally, Government policy is to encourage schools to minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of term time leave of absence and schools are now expected to adopt a much more challenging response to requests for leave for such absences. Schools are also legally required to set targets to reduce overall absence – term time 'holiday' absence is a particular category of absence on which schools are now expected to focus.

Amendments made by the DfE 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. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Whilst the Headteacher will be required to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, such circumstances might include the following:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.
- There has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation

As a rule, the financial factor – when a parent claims that he/she is unable to afford to book a holiday during the school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time – should not be taken as constituting an "exceptional circumstance".

Requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher, giving as much notice as possible. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance and to fill out the request form. The request will be considered by the Headteacher and the parent may be asked to discuss the request.

Should a parent/carer, after having a request for leave of absence turned down, still decide to take their child/children out of school during term time, the school will deem the absence as unauthorised. However, for the first 10 sessions (5 days) of the first unauthorised absence no fixed penalty notice will be issued. From the 6th day (11th Session) of any further unauthorised absence a letter will be

sent to the parent/carer informing them that they will be issued with a fixed penalty notice. This will be the case for all unauthorised absences after the 6th day of the first unauthorised absence. The fine will be £60 per parent and per child in the family and must be paid within 21 days. Should the fine not be paid within the 21 day period, it will rise to £120 per parent and per child in the family, to be paid within 28 days.

That means that if a family is comprised of two parents and three children the fine will be £60 x 5 = £300. After 21 days of non-payment, the fine will rise to £600.

Any fine served is collected by Cheshire East Council. No monies are retained by Sound & District Primary School.

Register Reviews

Registers are reviewed frequently to ensure that any attendance issues are highlighted at the earliest opportunity. Possible indicators of attendance issues are:

- unexplained absences
- continual broken weeks
- patterns of non-attendance on specific days
- attendance figures are below a certain agreed level, e.g. below 80%
- repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- persistent lateness.

A representative of the Education Welfare Office also carries out a register check on an annual basis.

Suggested Action

The Administration Officer, in conjunction with the class teacher, where appropriate, should ascertain the reasons for non-attendance. If this is not possible or the explanation given is unsatisfactory, the Headteacher should be alerted. If the Headteacher is unable to resolve matters with the parents and child/children concerned, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made.

Dual Registration for Traveller Children

The 1995 Regulations (Regulation 10), allow registration at more than one educational establishment where one of the establishments is either a Pupil Referral Unit (P.R.U.) or a Special School. Since January 1998, Traveller children can also be dually registered by law. The school that is normally attended when not travelling is regarded as the base school. However, Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. Base schools must keep a place open for Traveller children who are travelling, and record their absence as authorised while they are away travelling.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body on an annual basis.

