



Simonside Primary School

Attendance Policy 2016 -2017



Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to maximise learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Rationale

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all *pupils* will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all *parents/carers* will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

We expect that *the school* will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- Provide all parents/carers with an Attendance Newsletter (including Nursery). This newsletter explains the implications of poor attendance and punctuality, as well as providing information about school procedures and expectations.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor every child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- meet regularly with the Attendance Officers to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, or parental prosecution.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The school has, by law, to classify every absence mark a child has as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. Schools have to report their absences termly to the Educational Welfare Service at the Local Authority who may contact parents about high rates of absence.

Authorised Absences

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Medical/Dental (we may ask to see an appointment card)
- ✓ Bereavement
- ✓ Agreed special occasion or exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised Absences

School cannot authorise absences for:

- ✗ Going to the shops or hairdressers
- ✗ Going on holidays
- ✗ Visiting relatives
- ✗ Children not wanting to come to school

- ✗ Staying off because a sibling is off poorly
- ✗ Birthdays
- ✗ Oversleeping because of a late night
- ✗ Getting up late and not wanting to come into school for that day
- ✗ Keeping your child off because you are ill
- ✗ Appointments for other family members

Illness

We know that young children can be susceptible to illness and understand that if they are poorly they may need time off to recover. This is reflected in our school target for every child to have at least 95% attendance.

In all cases of absence parents should:

- Only keep their child away from school if really necessary.
- Telephone school on the first day of absence. If no contact has been made by 9.30am from parents/carers, school will phone. If contact can still not be made, the information will be passed onto our Attendance Officers who may come and visit children's homes to investigate why they are not in.
- Keep school informed if more than one day's absence is necessary.
- Avoid medical appointments in school time, but if absolutely necessary, bring their child to school before and/or after the appointment.
- Speak to the class teacher who will be able to provide parents with work for their child if appropriate.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time at 8.55am.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

Registration takes place as soon as the children come into class. Any child arriving after 9:00am will receive a late mark. Any children who are late must report to the main reception and report to Miss Monaghan or Mrs Dodds to receive their mark and give the reason why they are late.

Holidays

Holidays should not be taken during term time. In line with Government policy on school attendance, we will NOT authorise any holiday absences unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If parents would like their child to have time off school for any reason- including holidays and medical appointments- they are required to:

- Collect a form (Application for Leave of Absence) from the school office BEFORE the absence
- Complete the form with as much information as they can about why they want to take their child out of school and return it to school

Medical/Dental Appointments should be supported by evidence i.e. appointment card/hospital letter.

Parents are advised that we always look at every case individually and take into account their child's attendance record over the previous year before making a decision about whether the absence will be authorised or not. The Head Teacher may want to talk to them about it before making a decision. If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 the Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

Working with parents and families

Simonside staff are very willing and able to help parents/carers who are experiencing difficulties with attendance or punctuality. Some of the ways in which staff can help are:

- Offering to meet and discuss parental/pupils needs with class teacher, head teacher or our Attendance Officers.
- Parents will receive termly letters informing them of their child's attendance percentage. These are colour coded red, amber and green.
- Helping parents link up with other parents who may be able to bring their child to school on occasions.
- Contacting the school nurse about medical issues they may be worried about.
- Working with their child to help them understand how important it is to get ready quickly in the mornings and not "play up!"
- Putting parents in touch with parenting advice groups who offer support.

- Rewarding children with good or improved attendance and punctuality with certificates.

Incentives

As part of our commitment to raising attendance levels in our school, we have introduced a number of different initiatives.

- A trophy is awarded to the class each week in Friday's assembly which has the best attendance. Classes collect points every day for attendance:
20 points if everyone is in and on time
15 points if everyone is in but some are late
10 points if one person is absent
5 points if more than one person is absent
These points form a total at the end of the week and the running total is recorded on an excel spreadsheet. These spreadsheets are displayed to the children in Friday's award ceremony, and the school celebrate the winning class.
- Classes are given a letter for every day they have 100% attendance. When they have the 13 letters to spell out 'Star Attenders' that class will have pizza as a treat.
- 'In it to win it!' Children who have 100% attendance and have been on time all week get a raffle ticket at the end of the week to put in a box. Each half term, a winning ticket(s) is pulled out and that child/children receive a prize such as a scooter, vouchers etc. The children vote on what prizes they would like to have each half term: sometimes they prefer a weekly £10 prize; sometimes they prefer a big prize at the end of the half term.
- Classes who have an attendance percentage of 95% or over each week receive an extra play time.
- Termly parties for 100% attenders.
- Termly certificates for children with 95% or above attendance.
- For children who are considered 'persistent absentees' a separate individual award initiative may be used.

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Appendix One

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances. Amendments to the 2006 regulations 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. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013. The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing

penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days. Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

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Next review Date: September 2017 (review cycle annual)