

Shortlanesend Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

- All children should be ready to come into school at **8.50 a.m.** each day although children are entitled to enter the school from **8.35 a.m.** The register is taken twice a day at **8.55am and 1.00pm**. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.00a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.20 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00p.m.
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. 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.
- The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and 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 the Headteacher.

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office will endeavor to contact the parent or guardian, if no message has been received by 9.15am regarding the reason for the absence.
- Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.00a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

THE EDUCATION (PUPIL REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS 1995

Section 8(1) "Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school". Section 8(3) of this act gives the school discretionary powers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of annual holiday during term time.

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Authority, the Governors and the school.

HOLIDAYS

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. However, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Headteacher, the Headteacher may choose to grant leave of absence of **up to 10 days** in any calendar year. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to allow a longer planned absence. In all such cases, the return date must be agreed by the Headteacher as any child who is absent longer than 10 days after the agreed time can legally be removed from the school roll. The Headteacher will discuss requests for any absences of more than 10 days with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer, before deciding whether or not to grant permission.

- *All holiday requests should be discussed with the Headteacher before any bookings are made.*
- *An absence for holiday that has not been agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised.*
- *Authorisation will not be granted retrospectively.*
- ***Holiday requests will not be granted if the absence will push the child's attendance below 95% for the academic year.***

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MAY CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance. If a child has to miss school for a special family circumstance, then ideally the time when they will miss the least academic work is during the last week of a term.
- If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays, then this might constitute an exceptional circumstance.

To have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

CRITERIA BY WHICH THE HEADTEACHER WILL MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE AUTHORISATION OF HOLIDAY ABSENCE

- a) The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to "afford" to miss any further schooling.
- b) A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
- c)) The timing of the proposed holiday – one of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new school year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class; and for Year 6 pupils, in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests.

- d) Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is absent on holiday, but the child should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and may be reported to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the EWO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The LA has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE

All the children who have close to or achieve 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in assembly. There are special certificates for any child who has 100% for a whole year which will be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term. A reward will be given each term to the class with the best overall performance (e.g. additional playtime).

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Improvement Partner at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

Reviewed March 2013

Next review Spring 2015