



SHUTTLEWORTH COLLEGE

Attendance Policy

Status :

Statutory

Date of next revision :

September 2021

Reviewed and monitored by:

Sally Sagar

Approved by :

Full Governing Body

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon', is positioned above the text 'Signed by'.

Signed by

Simon Davies

Chair of Governing Body

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to achieve their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. 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. One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our students and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. We encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Head teacher, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts students at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents at each parents' consultation meeting, through the report cycle and more frequently where there are concerns.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Students are expected to arrive up to 10 minutes before the start of their first session, when the doors are open and children go to class. All students who arrive late must 'sign in' in the Community Café.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the Pastoral Leader or one of the Attendance Team will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child. If we are unable to make contact we will conduct a home visit on the first day of absence.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
- 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.
- For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- When a student's attendance drops below 95% it raises concern – medical evidence (appointment card) will be required for further absences.

The Role of the School Staff

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark students present, absent or late. Student attendance is monitored weekly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

Attendance Officer:

Miss Amanda Sadler - Attendance Strategy Manager

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:

Attendance and lateness records are up to date. If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained.

Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised. The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register Action for Low Attendance

- 98%+ Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
- 95 - 97% Average – Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 98%+
- 94 - 91% Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School will contact parents directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance.
- Below 90% Unacceptable – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called.

Supporting Good Attendance

- Discussions surrounding attendance issues
- The 5 Week Challenge
- Attendance Focus Group

- Referral via TAF to relevant agencies as appropriate
- Referral to the school nurse
- Reintegration package through Student Support Team
- Attendance Contract

Rewarding Good Attendance

- Celebration Assemblies
- Certificates for Attendance and Punctuality through Rewards

Children Missing Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

Students are expected to arrive at college up to 10 minutes before their first session starts. All entrances apart from the front entrance are closed at the start of the sessions; students arriving after this time must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The student will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close 20 minutes after the start of the first session. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Attendance team. Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice. Persistent lateness will result in a punctuality report issued by a member of the Attendance Team.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

If there are 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term the school will make a request to the Court Officer for a Penalty Notice. Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 42 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the Head teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping students off college unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the college day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Leave of absence that has not been agreed as exceptional.
- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one student is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get students to college – emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over college dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Student's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

'Leave of Absence' and exceptional circumstances

There is NO entitlement to a holiday in term time. All requests for a holiday absence will be declined. Any holidays that are taken will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, and Parents/Carers may be served with a penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act and the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act. This is a £120 fine per child per parent.

A Leave of Absence may be given in exceptional circumstances. This must be requested in advance of the absence. It cannot be authorised retrospectively. An application must be made to the Head teacher in writing to request any leave of absence.

Attendance and Lateness

If a new student has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held and targets for attendance will be set. For all children, the school monitors absence and lateness and has a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully.

- Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all students.
- Identification of students with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in student attendance and lateness; Attendance team support as appropriate.
- Request from school for parent/carer to meet with school staff
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access support from other agencies

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a student's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school must consider the following:

- Virtual meeting or socially distanced meeting with family
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Legal Intervention

Penalties for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices may be issued for 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in one term, or 14 or more sessions in two consecutive terms. Penalty Notices are issued by the Court Officer in accordance with the LA Code of Conduct.

Penalty Notices will be considered in the following circumstances or as a result of reaching the above trigger levels through a combination of these factors:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Unauthorised leave during term time

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 42 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 42 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Prosecution (444) (1)

The school may also seek prosecution through the courts under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act for the parents/carers of students with poor attendance.

September 2020