

Silverstone CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Silverstone CE Primary takes its responsibilities very seriously in promoting and maintaining the regular attendance of all its pupils. We believe that regular attendance and punctuality are crucial to the working ethos in every year group.

The importance of regular attendance and punctuality cannot be underestimated for they give children an all-important routine to keep to, enable the children to take full advantage of the many educational opportunities within the schools and at the same time maximising their life chances. Irregular attendance and coming into school after sessions have begun seriously disrupts continuity of learning, can undermine educational progress and impedes a child's ability to develop lasting friendships within the schools.

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 increase 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

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 by 8:50am at the latest 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. The school office should be informed by 9:30am at the latest.

What you can expect from Silverstone CE Primary:

- To make attendance and punctuality procedures, a priority for all those associated with Silverstone CE Primary including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop an understanding for parents and pupils that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and therefore successful learning.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To discourage holiday absence by making parents clear that holiday absence in term time is unauthorised.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To reward and celebrate high levels of attendance with individual children and classes, including termly attendance awards.
- To promote effective partnerships with Northamptonshire Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning the return following significant periods of absence.
- To inform parents of attendance rates in annual reports to parents.
- If attendance falls below 90% each half term - contact parents half termly and, if required, put into place agreed actions.
- If attendance is between 90% and 95% - inform parents of attendance rate.
- To clarify the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- To clarify the procedure for parents with regards to lateness or absence.
- To ensure clearly defined late registration procedures for parents and pupils.
- To respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- To review attendance regularly.
- To highlight the importance of attendance for children through:
 - PSHE lessons
 - Assembliesand for parents:
 - in Parents' meetings
- To report to Governors termly:
 - Attendance Rate %
 - Authorised Absence rate %
 - Unauthorised Absence rate %
- To promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents

Examples of Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
Genuine illness of the pupil	Family holiday
Hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil	Shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park
Major religious observances	A birthday treat
Visits to prospective new schools	Oversleeping due to a late night
External exams or educational assessments	Looking after other children / other family member
Exclusion	Appointments for other family members

Holiday in Term Time

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the Federation schools where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

The Penalty Notice is £120 per parent/adult for each student to be paid within 28 days, decreasing to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Leave for the purpose of a family holiday will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence.

The head reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which *might* include the following:

- A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday
- There has recently been a death or other significant 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 they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, should not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Similarly, **the nature of the proposed holiday** should not be taken as exceptional circumstances.

We will not grant leave if:

- A child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the academy calendar.

How do I apply for 'Exceptional circumstances' absence?

'Exceptional circumstances', means that the parent must make out the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm.

The circumstances of each case should be taken in to account. In any case, if a parent is planning holiday absence for a child, a leave of absence request form must be completed prior to the absence taking place and handed in to the school office for the attention for the Headteacher.

In an exceptional case, where the Headteacher has agreed holiday absence, this will be authorised. Unauthorised absences will be recorded where this has not been the case. There is no appeal process but parents can chose to follow our complaints policy.

Special Occasions

Only exceptional occasions warrant authorised absence e.g. attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or shopping trip would not.

The birth of another baby within the family can be seen as a special occasion, though each case must be considered individually.

Lateness

At 8:55am the school gate closes and the class teacher will take a register recording who is present.

At 9:00am the registers are closed. Any child arriving after the gate has closed at 8:55am but before 9:00am should report to the school office and will be marked as 'L' in the register – late whilst the register is open.

Children who arrive after 9:00am will be marked as 'U' - late after the register has closed, and the parent will be asked for a reason for the lateness. This will count against the overall attendance rate in the same way as an absence.

We ask parents to accompany any child who arrives at school after 9:00am to ensure they are handed over to a member of staff in the school office.

All staff are aware that any child arriving late MUST register at the office for Health & Safety purposes including fire regulations.

Medical Appointments

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as 'M' - having an authorised absence. Permission must be sought beforehand. These marks also count against the attendance rate.

