The North Solihull Primary School's

Attendance Policy

Smith`s Wood Primary Academy

Updated July 2015
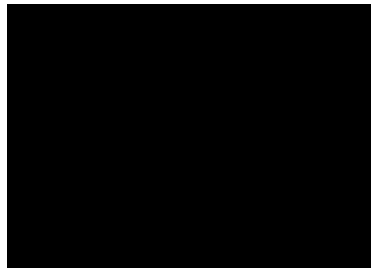
RATIONALE

Poor attendance disadvantages children.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

Children whose attendance is good will be rewarded regularly.

Improved attendance and time keeping will be recognised.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

AIMS
•To improve the overall attendance of children at school
•To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
•To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
•To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

Who is responsible for attendance issues in school

• The School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues. (J.Talbot)
•Members of school staff both teaching and non teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school. **See appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of these roles and responsibilities.**
•Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team.
•Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

Solihull Education Welfare Service Guidance for leave of absence requests

Government/legal requirements

•Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less that 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

•Schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE , most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

Whilst there is no longer a statutory requirement for schools to set whole school attendance targets it remains good practice for schools to have a whole school attendance target in line with national averages and Ofsted guidance. **The school currently has an attendance target of 95.5%.**

Its is also good practice to set targets for vulnerable groups and children who have below national average attendance

PROCEDURES

Registers-
An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a
solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Smith`s Wood Primary Academy use electronic registers and the procedures for marking registers are as follows :

Procedure	Person responsible
1. Registers **must** be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session	**Classteacher**
2. On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity. No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher	

3. Spaces must not be left in the register	
4.	
5.	
6.	

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Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory
school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Principal. [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

School has procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

Attendance registers may be kept manually or electronically. In the case of electronic registration the school must either produces a hard copy of the official register at least once a month or take an electronic back up at least once a month.

Electronic backs ups or printed sheets (bound at the end of the school year) must be kept like manual registers for at least 3 years.

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc.	Authorised absence

	appointments)	
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Parents –

Absence:

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the 1st day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

Illness:

It is a schools decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

However schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing addition services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness

The types of scenario's when medical evidence may be requested include:
- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated

- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Other reasons for absences :

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time, notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.

The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Examples of authorised absence may include, days of religious observance, Illness, and medical appointments.

Parents are advised to make appointments for dentist/doctor or optician outside of school hours where possible.

Parents can support regular school attendance by :

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.

- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents evenings and other events.

- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding thier child's attendance.

- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

At Smith`s Wood Primary Academy, the registration period is from 8.45-8.55. Any pupil arriving after 8.55 will be classified as late and be given an unauthorised absence mark. (Sept 13 start).

Poor attendance

School attendance of 94% or less is below average

Those children whose attendance falls below 94% will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance

All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance.

After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement the Education Welfare Service will be informed where the child's attendance remains a concern.

School has in place a system for enabling returning pupils to catch up on learning and re-integrate within the school.

Persistent Absences

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 15 % absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level (pupil profile).

Good and excellent attendance.

The school will reward good attendance and improved regularly through reward schemes and incentives. See appendix 2.

ATTENDANCE PANELS

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel. An attendance panel is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify and barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.

An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present this may include anyone in school who is involved with your child for an example a learning mentor. A representative from the education Welfare Service may also be present.

Data Analysis

School will use data effectively to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern.

Schools will use data to track the attendance of individual pupils.

Where attendance is a concern school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help illuminate areas of concern.

Schools will use data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and take action to address and improve those areas.

Schools will use data to monitor and evaluate these interventions

FAMILY HOLIDAY REQUESTS DURING TERM TIME

Due to changes in legislation the previous guidance issued by the Solihull Education Welfare Service for Family Holiday request in term time issued in 2005 has been withdrawn. This Guidance reflects the current legislative framework for parents requesting a leave of absence.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to **prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.**

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

- **All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional** . A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 1) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of **absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional**. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 1). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Principal.

- Where the Principal is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator (Appendix 4).

- A letter confirming that the exceptional request has been authorised/unauthorised will be sent to the parent/carer. *(Please see Appendices 2 and 3 for model pro-forma).*

Leave of absence that has not been authorised will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. These absences may be referred to the Education Welfare Service for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Solihull Education Welfare Service Guidance for leave of absence requests

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, his/her name may, following consultation with the Local Authority, be deleted from the admission register.

Where a request for leave of absence has been made and the school have sent written notification to parents that the absence will be unauthorised a penalty notice will be issued where the trigger of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence is met.

In all other cases of unauthorised absence accrued overtime a Warning letter will be issued by the Education Welfare Service prior to a penalty notice. The trigger for a Warning letter will be at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence.

A penalty notice may be issued, subsequent to a Warning letter, if there are a further five sessions or more unauthorised absences.

- **Please note 1 day equates to 2 sessions.**

SMITH`S WOOD PRIMARY ACADEMY
ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

<u>Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice</u>

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Pupil …………………………………..… Date of birth …………………………………….…	Class …………………..
Please detail below the **exceptional circumstance** why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the *please insert appropriate member of SLT* (please attaché your supporting evidence) ………………………………………………………………....... ……… …………………………………………………………………….. ………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………	
Address…………………………………………………………………………	
Leave of absence from date:………………….……. to date ….……………….…………. Number of schools days that your child will be absent from school …………….……….	
Signature …………………………………………………. Name of Parent/Carer ………………………………………..	Date …………………...

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.

For School Use:

Previous requests for leave of absence   Yes / No   Attendance
………….. %

Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance   Yes / No

Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer   Yes / No   Date & time
………...............

Authorised ☐ **Unauthorised** ☐ **By Headteacher**

Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter

TO THE PARENTS OF:-

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Requests for leave of absence are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstance.

Yours sincerely

Principal

cc Class Teacher/File

<u>Unauthorised Leave of Absence Request Standard Letter</u>

TO THE PARENTS OF:

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed leave of absence, (*pupil name)* absence will be marked as unauthorised. I should inform you that unauthorised absences are referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may under certain circumstances consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice in relation to these absences.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely

Principal

c.c. Class Teacher/File

Leave of Absence Calculation Chart

Name of Pupil…………………………….   UPN…………………………….….

To be used when the headteacher is satisfied that the leave of absence request is due to exceptional circumstances but requires further guidance.

	Points Possible	Points
When is the holiday planned for?	September = 2pts May and June= 2pts Other dates = 1pt	
Pupil's attendance level is? (Up until Autumn half term use the % figure from the previous year.)	Less than 70% = 7pts 70% to 85% = 6pts 85% to 90% = 5pts 90% to 94.5% = 4pts More than 94.5% = 2pts	
How close is the pupil to a SATs assessment or other examination?	Non-SATs/Exam Year = 1pt SAT's /Exam Year = 3pts less than 2 weeks = 4pts	
How much absence has already been taken in current academic year?*	8 or more = 4pts 5 to 7 days = 3pts 2 to 4 days = 2pts 1 to 3 days = 1pt	
	Subtotal	
Any special mitigating or aggravating circumstances.	Subtract or add 2 points.	
Details of mitigation/aggravation …		
	Total	
Request for leave where the total is 7 or more **should NOT be authorised**		
Completed by……………………………………………… Date…………………………		

Smith`s Wood Primary Academy
Roles and Responsibilities for school attendance

Name	Role	Responsibilities
	Schools Governors	• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (eg pupil registration, attendance registers) • Setting Attendance targets • Reviewing school attendance • Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy • Chairing attendance panels
	Principal Teacher	• Compliance with relevant legislation • Putting into practice school policy • Authorising/unauthorising absences • Leave of absence requests • Line management • Contact with parents : overview of clear and escalating interventions • Responsibility for links with Education Welfare Service • Attendance at attendance panels
	Senior member of school staff /Attendance lead	• Compliance with relevant legislation • Putting into practice school policy • Line management • Contact with parents : • overview of clear and escalating interventions • recording and evaluation of interventions • Data analysis • Responsibility for links with Education Welfare Service • Data analysis. • Promoting school attendance • Management of reward scheme • Pupil Profiles • Planning attendance panels
	Support Staff :	• First day calling • Late arrivals • Attendance targeting • Day to day responsibility for escalating approach
	Class teachers	• Marking registers • Promoting importance of regular schools attendance • Providing early warning of attendance concerns • Positive role modelling • Following policy and procedures
	School Office	• Maintaining registers • First day calling • Late arrivals • Attendance targeting • Process for clearing registers • Day to day responsibility for escalating approach

Appendix 2

Processes for rewarding good and improved attendance.

Positively Promoting School attendance

School has a display board that promotes the importance of school attendance with parents.

School uses class and whole school displays to promote attendance with pupils.

School assemblies are used to promote the importance of school attendance.

Classes have attendance targets to work towards.

Rewarding good attendance

Good class attendance is rewarded weekly through a class award (SAM bear/Class cup)

Good class attendance is rewarded termly.

Indiviual pupil attendance is rewarded termly by certificates for children with 95% and higher attendance

Individual good attendance is rewarded annually by book vouchers, presentation, certificates

Good attendance is recognised in the pupils school report.

Good attendance is recognised with parents through regular letters home.

Improved attendance is recognised

Individual rewards

Letters sent home to parents.