



# **SOWE VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

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### Introduction

We believe that children need to be in school and on time for all sessions so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised as even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Early poor attendance and punctuality habits follow through primary to secondary school and into employment.

We expect all children to be at school, on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend and we aim for a minimum of 95% attendance for all children.

At Sowe Valley Primary School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance and punctuality is the 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 reward those children whose attendance and punctuality is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

### 1. Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

- 1.1 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is 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 an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in Coventry are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.

1.4 Further guidance can be found in the schools Exceptional Leave Policy, but it should be noted that requests for leave of absence for the following will always be refused:

- Pupils in year 2 and 6
- Children with less than 95% attendance

1.5 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty, which is currently £60 per parent per child up to 28 days. After 28 days and up to 42 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child.

## 2. What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

### 2.1 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 the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence on the first day of absence. The parent should also indicate when the child will be returning to school.

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 make it an authorised absence.

### 2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. An absence is also unauthorised if no notification is received from a parent. If a child arrives to school after 9:15am this will be recorded as late after the register closes which is also unauthorised absence. Ten unauthorised absences within five weeks will result in a penalty notice of £60 per parent being issued.

If a child has

### Procedures

2.3 Our school day begins promptly at 8:55am

2.4 The register is taken at 8:55am. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark.

2.5 The afternoon session begins at 12:45pm and the same procedures apply.

### If a child is absent without notification

2.6 Where no notification of an absence has been received our learning mentor will contact the parents/carers to clarify the reason for the child's absence. If a reason for absence is not received the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

### Missing children

2.7 If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

### Written notification of absence

2.8 When a child returns to school following an absence, a note must be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence.

2.9 Where the absence is because of a medical appointment an appointment letter or card should be given to the school office where a copy will be taken for attendance records.

## 3. Requests for exceptional leave of absence

3.1 If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form at least four weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the school office.

3.2 The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application. For details see Exceptional Leave Policy.

## 4. Long-term absence through child's accident or illness

4.1 If a child is under the care of a hospital consultant and a consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## 5. Repeated unauthorised absences and persistent lateness

5.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences or a high number of late marks the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Local Authority support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

5.2 The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school every day, on time on a regular basis. Exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration and as a school we will support parents to improve attendance and punctuality before prosecution is considered.

## 6. Rewards for good attendance and punctuality

6.1 All children who have 100% attendance and/or punctuality in any one term will receive an excellence certificate awarded in assembly at the end of term.

## 7. Attendance and Punctuality Targets

7.1 The school sets attendance and punctuality targets each year. These are agreed by senior staff and governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

## 8. Monitoring

8.1 It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance and punctuality and the Head Teacher will produce an annual report. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance and punctuality meets the required levels.

8.2 The school will keep accurate attendance and punctuality records for a minimum period of three years.

8.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual Governors Report.

8.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class. If there is a longer term worry about the attendance and/or punctuality of a particular child, they must report this to the Learning Mentor, who will contact the parents or carers. If attendance and/or punctuality continues to cause concern this will be reported to the Head Teacher and to the Local Authority.

8.5 The Learning Mentor will take action on day to day absence, according to the schools procedures. The Learning Mentor will contact parents/carers if attendance drops below 95% and/or if a high number of late marks are recorded. The Learning Mentor will offer advice and support to improve attendance and punctuality.

8.6 Where attendance drops below 85% the school will seek advice and support from other professionals to ensure school attendance improves. The school may contact a child's GP regarding absences for illness and request medical evidence from parents to authorise any further absences. The school will also inform the Local Authorities Children and Families First Service of all children who have attendance below 85%.

## 9. Review

9.1 The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.



## Exceptional Leave Policy

### Exceptional leave during the School Day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom. On return to school during the day parents must inform the School Office so that the register can be adjusted accordingly. Parents should inform the School Office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

### Exceptional leave during Term Time

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time, which is not to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Children and Families First Service (see school's Attendance Policy). Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

### Requests for Exceptional Leave

Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an Exceptional Leave of Absence Form, which can be obtained from the school office.

Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Should the request fall outside the criteria set out in the school's Attendance Policy, the application will be considered by a Governor on behalf of the Governing Body. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

Requests for leave of absence where the following criterion applies will be refused;

- Pupils in Year 2 or Year 6
- Children with less than 95% attendance



## APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This application must be submitted to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks before the proposed period of exceptional leave. As recommended by the Local Authority, the school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to ALL the children of the school community. A copy of this and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the School Office and from the school's website. Please note that you are expected to take family holidays during the school holidays and your child's absence for this purpose will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

|  |       |        |
|--|-------|--------|
| Name of child:                                       |       | Class: |
| Proposed date(s) of absence                          | From: |        |
|  | To:   |        |
| Please give details and reason for proposed absence. |       |        |
| Signature of Parent/Carer                            |       | Date:  |

Your application will be considered by the Headteacher. If the reasons fall outside the criteria set out in the school's Attendance Policy, the request will be considered by a Governor on behalf of the Governing Body. Evidence of travel bookings may be required including return flights. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

**If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The school will apply to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice and this will result in you receiving a fine of £60. The fine increases to £120 if not paid within 28 days.**

|                               |                 |             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>For official use only:</b> |                 |             |
| <b>Action</b>                 | <b>Initials</b> | <b>Date</b> |
| Current attendance %          |                 |             |
| Seen by Headteacher           |                 |             |
| Headteacher's comments        |                 |             |