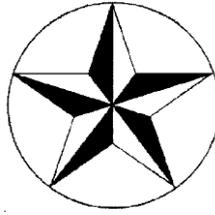


# SCANTABOUT PRIMARY SCHOOL



*Achieving our best together*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Rationale

At Scantabout Primary School, we believe that high attendance is essential if our children are to get the most from our school. It is our statutory duty to strive to achieve high attendance for all of our children.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities we offer, it is vital that children arrive at school on time every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work.

### Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between high achievement and attendance above 95%.

Children who attend regularly:

- make better progress, both socially and academically;
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- find learning more satisfying;
- are more successful in transferring between primary school and secondary school.

At Scantabout Primary School, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children. We pride ourselves with the fact that children who come here make strong progress.

To this end, we ensure that every lesson is pitched appropriately to make a difference and that it is built upon the outcomes of the last. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful.

Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled and parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Scantabout Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

### **Aims**

- To promote a welcoming atmosphere in school that makes pupils feel safe and valued
- To encourage good relationships between the school and parents
- To stress the importance of good attendance
- To ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and absence followed up quickly
- To ensure that all pupils receive suitable teaching and receive rewards for success.

### **Objectives**

- To ensure attendance and punctuality hold a high priority
- To meet legal requirements, especially the requirement to identify unauthorised absence
- To keep up-to-date and accurate figures on attendance
- To have procedures to detect and quickly follow up unauthorised absence and patterns of absence and to monitor these interventions effectively
- To have procedures to follow up long absences and repeated short absences
- To help children to settle in after long absences
- To be aware of anything that might affect children's attendance
- To communicate clearly with other agencies
- To deal with authorised and unauthorised absence fairly
- To liaise effectively when a pupil changes school
- To ensure parents and governors are aware of attendance matters
- Where appropriate to share good practice with other schools.

## **Guidelines**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leaders (Head Teacher & Inclusion Leader)**

A member of the Senior Leadership Team, supported by members of our school's administration team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

#### **Responsibilities of Administration Staff:**

- Ensure attendance information is entered correctly on SIMS on a daily basis;
- Call families (if absence is not notified) on the morning of the first day of absence by 10.00 am and inform a member of the leadership team if they are unable to ascertain a valid reason for attendance;
- Inform the head teacher of persistent absentees or anyone in danger of becoming a persistent absentee – providing a half termly attendance report to the Head Teacher and Inclusion Leader;
- Inform the head teacher if children who are persistently late;
- Inform the head teacher if any child is Missing in Education in accordance with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- Ensure that they have checked that any child moving schools is attending their transfer school (on the first day of transfer) and notify the head teacher promptly if this is not the case;
- Print and distribute attendance reports to parents in December; February, May and July every year;
- Maintain a record of leave requests;
- Ensure that any Fixed Penalty Notices are administered promptly;
- Log pupils who leave or enter the school during the school day.

#### **Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:**

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately and promptly at the start of the morning and after lunchtimes;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence;
- Talk to parents if they are worried about a child's attendance.

#### **Responsibilities of Pupils:**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.

### **Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence (by 10.00 am).
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone on the first day of absence, or by letter/email if a phone is unavailable.
- A further letter/email/phone call should be made if the absence is longer than a few days
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Accompany any requests for absence with the appropriate form which is available from the school office and website
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- Ensure that pupils arriving late or being collected at times other than the end of the school day are signed in/out via the school office

## **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

### **Recording**

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If children are late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **9am**.

At **9.05am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils should enter the school through the main entrance, so that the register can be marked accordingly. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

The register officially closes at **9.30am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked as late (after register closed). A reason for the lateness will need to be provided. All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. Pupils will be recorded as being present for fire regulations via the In/Out log in the school office.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. The school encourages parents, where possible, to make doctors and dentists appointments outside of school hours or during school holidays.

By **10.00am** the school admin staff will ring the parent of any pupil who is absent from school for whom no reason has been provided.

The register is returned to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken at 1pm.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone, letter or email. The school then decides if the absence should be recorded it as authorised or unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act. A set of standard codes is used for recording absence.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see Page 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school or the Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See below for further detail).

### **Absence from School**

#### **First Day Absence**

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is absent parents must contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

#### **Third Day Absence**

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. The school will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family etc.

#### **Ten Day's Absence**

The school has a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

#### **Continued or Ongoing Absence**

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such the school monitors all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If a child has had absence and their attendance

level is falling towards 90% we will contact parents and try to work together to resolve any issues.

If a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**.

#### **Request for Leave of Absence:**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.** Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

**Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.**

#### **Understanding types of absence:**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
  - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
  - truancy before or during the school day
  - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

#### **Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures:**

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### **Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

For national guidance refer to: '**Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance**' which covers legal measures for non-attendance

For county guidance refer to: '**Guidance for Schools on available support and procedures for pursuing legal action for non-attendance at school**' May 2015

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

### **Legal Measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence**

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

The code of conduct states that:

Schools on behalf of the Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
2. One or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

If the parents pay the Penalty Notice and the child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served due to unauthorised holiday and the child has more unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children. If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **Reluctance to attend school**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss any worries, which might be related to difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for any child's reluctance to attend school and work together with parents to tackle the problem.

## **Leavers**

If a child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the secondary school) parents are asked to give the admin officer comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and their new address and telephone numbers, the child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to us in writing

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then a child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies.

## **Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work & modelling.**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

## **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport.**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

## **Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

## **Record preservation**

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies

Agreed by staff and governors: Autumn 2018 Three year review due: Summer 2021
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