

St Paul's C of E Primary School, Chipperfield



"Love to learn; Learn to love."

Attendance Policy

December 2019

General Statement

The school recognises the need for good attendance for all pupils in order that we can provide the best learning opportunities for all. We understand that consistent attendance provides continuity in the building of essential skills, in learning as well as in teaching. We see the whole school community as having responsibility for providing and maintaining good attendance; pupils, all staff and parents and carers.

Statutory Framework

Under the Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are registered as a pupil. The school is obliged, by law, to maintain accurate records of attendance and to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct/home-school agreement.
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings.

- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school. Absence is considered as being unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent or carer. Only the school, not the parent, can authorise an absence.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- should not book holidays during term time; family holidays during term time are not permitted.

Responsibilities of Schools

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers –

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Schools should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent, the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

The appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name using the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2).

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Registration and Policy for latecomers (Reception to Year 6)

- 8.50am The first whistle to signal that school is open is blown, upon which children may start to make their way to classrooms.
- 8.55am The second whistle is blown to show that the school day has officially begun and the gate to the playground is shut. Children must be on the premises and through the gate. The gate is only opened to allow the last parents to come back through from dropping-off.
- Any children arriving after 8.55am must report to the school office and will be marked as late.
- 9.15am Registers close. Children who arrive after the close of registers are marked as absent. These children are signed in the late arrivals book at the school office. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a

satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U).

- *Similarly children who have to leave early are signed out by a parent in the school office.*

Nursery

- The Nursery day starts at 8.45am.
- Procedures for lates are as above.

Registers are completed in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council Policy and are monitored by staff and by county for absences and lates.

Concerns about children who arrive after 8.55 am on a regular basis should be brought to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may feel it necessary to speak to the parents about punctuality. Parents and children are frequently reminded about punctuality in school communications. Both attendance and punctuality are reported on in the child's annual report.

A child is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90%. There is a process for monitoring and following-up persistent absentees (see below); a similar process may be taken if children are consistently recorded as late.

Staff will report any concerns regarding absences to the office staff, who will follow up any unexplained absences by telephone. If concern continues, the Headteacher will then be informed, who will then contact the parents for a satisfactory explanation. Parents are informed if a problem has been identified. Letters are then sent by the school to parents who do not provide evidence as to why their child has been absent. Letters are sent out at the end of each term to parents whose attendance is causing concern. The **Attendance Improvement Officer** monitors attendance and problems are discussed with the Headteacher. Where appropriate, links are made with other agencies and with partnership schools.

Every effort is made by the school to motivate good attendance by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued, supported and welcome.

Examples of authorised absences are:

- Illness.
- A special religious festival day observed by the family.
- Family bereavement.
- Medical appointments for the child.
- Participation in an approved performance.
- Other educational reasons.
- Exceptional special occasions such as the graduation of an older sibling.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- A shopping trip.
- Birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time.

Where unauthorised absences persist, or absence sessions reaches 15 (1 session = half a day) or more in the current and/or previous term, parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice. If a holiday is taken then this absence is classed as unauthorised and illegal leaving you at risk of a fixed term Penalty Notice without warning.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Penalty Notices

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested or requested and denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent for each child. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.

Process for Poor Attendance

- 1) Parents are informed through a whole-school letter every September about our attendance policy and process.
- 2) From the end of the autumn term, parents are informed in writing half-termly if a child's absence falls below 90%; this may be more frequent if there is a particular cause for concern. Any unauthorised absences will also be noted.
- 3) If attendance has been a cause for concern, parents will be informed by letter as to whether attendance has improved, not significantly improved or deteriorated. These letters may be sent out periodically (usually 4-8 weeks) as evidence of correspondence and monitoring attendance.
- 4) If attendance has been poor and doesn't improve, parents will receive a warning by letter that no further authorised absences will be recorded without evidence (such as a medical certificate). This may be sent out if attendance is persistently below 85% or a child has approximately 8 recorded unauthorised absences.
- 5) A penalty warning notice letter may be sent if a student has approximately 10 unauthorised absences.

The Headteacher gives termly updates and makes an annual report to Governors on attendance. The DfE monitor attendance in schools nationally.

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A request needs to be made in writing to the Headteacher. *NB: Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree leave for parents to visit their country of origin.*

This policy is reviewed at least every two years by the Governors' Pupil Committee.
Date of review: December 2021

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H1 - Application for Leave of Absence

As a parent/carer, you must fill in this form if you want to request leave of absence during term time. Parents/carers should not expect this to be granted as a right. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Permission will not be given if the leave has already taken place.

After completing the form, when possible please return it to the school office no less than 4 weeks before the date you want the period of absence to start. The Headteacher will respond in writing.

Please note that the school operates fixed penalty notices as follows:-

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested or requested and denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent for each child. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty.

Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.

Name of pupil:

Year group:

Dates of requested leave of absence:

I request that my child, who is currently a pupil at St Paul's C of E Primary School, be granted leave of absence. The reason for this request and why this cannot be taken during the 13 weeks of school holiday:

Name of parent/carer:

Signature:

Date:

For Office Use Only

Details of Previous Absence

% attendance for current academic year to date

% attendance for previous academic year

Leave of absence declined

Leave of absence is granted from

Date letter H2/H3 sent

Date:

Signature of Headteacher:

Date:

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school <i>NB: The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; Headteachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree leave for parents to visit their country of origin.</i>	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
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	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance