



Sidemoor First School and Nursery Attendance and Punctuality Policy

‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Aims

At Sidemoor First School we aim to:

- ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected;
- encourage all pupils to attend school regularly and on time;
- enable children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available;
- foster positive attitudes to learning;
- develop a positive and pro-active partnership with parents that supports good attendance and punctuality;
- ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality;
- keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance;
- identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them;
- To work with parents and external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rationale

Sidemoor First School aims to create a happy, welcoming and successful school where everyone is able to share in shaping future generations. We support and encourage the rights of parents to partner us in the education of their child. We value each child, their family and the wider community, of which the school is a part.

We do understand that there are sometimes genuine reasons for absence, such as sickness, and are sympathetic in these circumstances. However, we believe that children are only able to access the curriculum and develop to their full potential as learners and as part of the school community if they are regular and punctual attendees at school. Research shows that children who do attend school regularly are more likely to succeed than those who have a high level of absence.

Attendance at school until the end of the year in which they are 16 is a legal requirement, something this school wholeheartedly supports. It is the duty of the school, along with the Local Authority (LA), to monitor and report to the Government on attendance. The school in conjunction with the L.A's Education Welfare Service sets itself an annual attendance target which is challenging but attainable based on previous data and informed by national statistics.

As a school we are determined to work together with parents, children and outside agencies, such as the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and the LA to improve attendance at school

and to reduce the number of absences and late arrivals. This policy sets out to explain the measures undertaken to achieve our aims.

Statutory Duty of Schools

This policy has due regard to the DfE Departmental Advice on School Attendance – November 2013 (DFE-00257-2013) which summarises legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434 (1) (3) (4) and (6) and 458 (4) and (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If their child is ill or there are other circumstances that prevent the child from attending then it is the responsibility of the parents to inform school of these reasons. We ask that they contact us by telephone before 10am on the first day of absence and by letter on their return. The school will contact parents (on the 1st day of absence) in order to establish reasons if no call is received. We strongly urge that non-emergency medical and dental appointments are made outside school hours.

Governors monitor attendance and punctuality and have a named Governor who takes responsibility for this as part of their safeguarding brief.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Responsibilities

School will:

- register pupils accurately and efficiently at 8.55am and 1.05pm;
- set attendance targets;
- inform parents of expectations;
- contact parents or guardians when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
- monitor attendance and punctuality;
- report school attendance statistics.

Pupils should:

- attend school regularly and on time;
- know that attending school provides important opportunities for learning and personal development.

Parents should:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons;

- inform the school by 10am on the first day of absence, either by telephone or personal message;
- discuss planned absences with the school in advance;
- make medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible;
- provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school;
- work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Procedures

Information

School Session Times are stated in the school brochure. Morning registration ends at 9.30 am. If a child arrived after registration period he/she will be marked as late. It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in at the office. The class registers will be amended to reflect a child's attendance and it is vital it is kept up to date in case of fire.

Parents are informed of the dates and terms of holidays in the prospectus, on the school website, by an annual letter and reminders on regular newsletters. The dates are also available from the secretary on request.

Procedures for reporting absence are explained in the school brochure and reminders are given in newsletters.

Planned Absence in Term Time

Legal regulations make it clear that parents/ carers do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school. They do state that Head teachers in certain **exceptional** circumstances may grant up to 10 days leave of absence in a school year but parents should not expect such leave to be granted as a right. The Government's guidance can be found at the Gov.uk website.

Sidemoor School does not condone the taking of holidays during term time. In line with other local schools, The Governing Body has decided to withhold approval for holidays. In very exceptional circumstances requests may be considered, if put in writing to the Governors. Application should also be made to the Governors for any extended planned absence of more than two weeks during term time, following the Worcestershire CC guidelines. A Leave of Absence form should be obtained from the school office to make any request prior to any bookings being made.

It must be noted that the school understands that parents may still choose to take their child out of school for a vacation. These absences will be marked as unauthorised and may therefore have an adverse effect on our reported figures. This then shows the level of commitment this school has to ensuring children attend school for the maximum amount of time possible. These unauthorised absences remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in court action and a fine.

If a pupil does not return to school within ten days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll by referring the pupil to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team. The school has the right to do this under government legislation.

We hope that parents will work together with us in our commitment to reducing absence.

Registers

Instructions for keeping registers are detailed on the first page of the register and in the Staff Guidance Notes. Each teacher is responsible for completing the register accordingly. Registers are called and then taken to the office at the beginning of each session. Electronic registers are completed by administrative staff and form the statutory record.

School attendance statistics are published in the school brochure and on the website. Parents are informed of their child's attendance rate as part of the individual annual report.

Rewards

As in other areas of school we promote a positive attitude to behaviour and try to recognise and reward excellent attendance. We do this by using a range of rewards such as:

- Giving stickers to individuals;
- Giving certificates to those who have achieved 100% attendance at the end of every term;
- Having a class reward of receiving the Timely Tim lion for the class with the highest weekly attendance;
- Having a marble in the jar for the class with the fewest late arrivals.

Action where there is cause for concern

- All absence is followed up by the school attendance administrative staff.
- If a child has been absent without the parent reporting a reason, a call will be made on the first day.
- Children at risk of falling below 90% attendance, or who are otherwise vulnerable, will receive a letter to raise awareness of the situation.
- Standard letters are sent out to follow up absence and to invite parents in to discuss any matter that gives cause for concern e.g. low attendance, patterns of absence, lateness.
- Evidence of medical appointments and treatment will be sought if necessary.
- The EWO will be asked to intervene if attendance does not improve.
- The Family Support Worker may offer support, where appropriate.
- Persistent absence may lead to prosecution.

The school recognises that reintegration for those children who have had a long-term absence or for those who have had shared provision may be problematic. We also recognise that there are other groups of children who may need support in coming into the school environment. These may include looked after children, asylum seekers and refugees. In accordance with our equal opportunities policy all of these cases will be supported by the school. As needs will depend on the individual, they will be addressed through an agreed individual pastoral and education plan.

If issues to do with absence are centred around allegations of bullying or racial abuse the school will draw on its equal opportunities and anti-bullying policies to work through these issues with both the parents and children concerned.

We strongly urge that non-emergency medical and dental appointments are made outside school hours.

Punctuality

Late arrival at school can be very distressing for some children and can cause them to be unnecessarily anxious. It is our belief that children settle into their learning more effectively when they are on time for school. It sets the whole tone for the day and allows them to be part of any initial discussions that take place with their peers and their teacher. Our data

analysis has also highlighted that children who regularly arrive late may not achieve as expected when compared with their peers.

The school day officially starts at 8.55am when the register is taken. If a child is not present by this time they will be marked as late when they do arrive and they need to be signed in at the office by an adult. If a child arrives in school after 9.30am then they are marked as late after registration has closed and therefore sustain an unauthorised absence mark. These are closely monitored and action is taken to address this issue in the same way as any other absence. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child is on time.

Missing children

Should a child leave the school without notice being given by the parent or without the school being advised by the parent as to which new school the child is to attend – i.e. should the child go ‘missing’ or become ‘lost’ – the school will first try to contact the parent on any mobile numbers available. If no response the school will immediately notify the Education Welfare Officer. If the child is also on a child protection plan, children’s social care will also be notified.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Weekly totals are monitored by the secretary and Assistant Headteacher. Any concerns regarding individual children are reported to the Headteacher who will inform the Education Welfare Officer if appropriate.

The Assistant Headteacher monitors attendance and discusses any issues as necessary with the Headteacher. Attendance issues are discussed at Pyramid Headteachers’ Meetings and Pyramid strategies to improve attendance are implemented.

The annual Raise online report provides comparison with national averages and the OFSTED report evaluates the possible impact of attendance figures on children’s learning and progress.

Attendance is discussed annually by the governors, including targets and the implementation of any new initiatives.

SIDEMOOR ATTENDANCE TARGETS

This document has highlighted the importance of attendance in the education of children. The school remains committed to working towards the goal of a 100% attendance for all. We expect children at Sidemoor to have attendance of 95% or more. The school has consistently achieved attendance rates of over 95% and sets annual targets for attendance in line with statutory requirements.

We are always happy to support and encourage parents and children to attend. At Sidemoor we operate an open-door policy and will address individual needs to the best of our ability. In return we hope for the support of both parents and children in achieving the best possible levels of attendance that we can.

2015 - 16

Attendance Target: 96%

Signed: *MJones*

Date: 20.1.16

Review Date: Spring 2018