



## Attendance Policy

**Governors' Committee Responsible:**

**Nominated Lead Member of Staff:**

**Status & Review Cycle:**

**Next Review Date:**

**Children & Learning Committee**

**Headteacher / Attendance Leader**

**Statutory (Every 2 years)**

**Autumn 2020**

### Introduction

At Shottermill we will do all we can to encourage parents and guardians to ensure that the children in their care achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon. This Policy has been shared with the school's Education Welfare Officer for approval as well as with Governors.

This Attendance Policy has been written in accordance with **Improving Attendance at School** DFE-00036-2012, **School Attendance** DFE-00257-2013, **Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour** DFE-00256-2013 and most recently the Policy Paper entitled: **2010 – 2015 government policy: school behaviour and attendance**. These documents state that all maintained schools must have an Attendance Policy within their school, which should be made available to parents via the school website or in hard copies, if requested. This Policy also links to **The Equality Act 2010** and as a school the following equalities objectives have been published to show how we are committed to ensuring a fully inclusive working and learning environment for all:

- **Provide all children with appropriate access to learning experiences at our school and not disadvantage any child from taking part on the grounds of their gender, ethnicity, background or culture, Special Educational Need or Disability, or any other discriminatory factor.**
- **Provide a secure and supportive environment that empowers people to challenge discrimination should they encounter it.**
- **Ensure that any person visiting or working within our school environment does not suffer discrimination.**
- **Ensure prospective employees are treated fairly and do not suffer any form of discrimination in line with fair recruitment purposes.**
- **Promote and celebrate diversity of children and adults who visit or work within our school and promote equality through our actions and communications.**
- **Provide systems of monitoring to facilitate continuous improvement, learning and sharing of existing good practice, as overseen by the Governing Body and Local Authority.**
- **Work with all stakeholders or other local schools to develop cohesive communities with shared values that encompass equal opportunities.**
- **Work towards the elimination of discrimination and harassment through upholding our Core Values of: *Respect, Trust, Love of Learning, Communication, Creativity and Excellence.***

## Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities

### We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that deter them from attending school.

### We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence; contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

### We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence.
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service;
- ensure that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

## Leave of absence

**The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013**, which became law on **1 September 2013** state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

In accordance with the above Regulations, requests for leave of absence are treated sympathetically, but only in exceptional circumstances can they be approved. The policy of Surrey County Council to which this school has agreed, states that parents who take their child out of school for five days or more during term time, without the authority of the Headteacher, will each be liable to receive a penalty notice. Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority.

The cost of a penalty notice is £60 per parent per child (rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days) i.e. a family of 2 adults and 2 children could be fined £240 (or £480 if not paid within 28 days).

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

## Encouraging Attendance

Shottermill School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill;
- by publishing and displaying attendance and punctuality;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance;
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare service if the irregular attendance continues.

## Responding To Non-Attendance

The school gates open at **8:35am** but the official start time of the school day, that children are expected to arrive by, is **8:50am**. Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

Parents/carers should contact the school explaining every absence a child has, on the first day of absence as soon as possible. If no message is received it is considered to be an "unauthorised absence" and the total of such absences have to be published by law. **At 9.25am the registers will be closed.** In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. Please contact the school office if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Under **Section 444A and 444B Education Act 1996** as introduced by the **Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003**, penalty notices will now be issued in appropriate cases to combat poor attendance. If stopped by a Truancy Officer and the child is absent without authorisation penalty notices for £60 per parent per child (rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days) are issued by the Local Education Authority.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding issue.

## Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Shottermill school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## School Organisation

In order for school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupil's at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education. In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

**Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:**

- Adopt the whole school policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that the appropriate resources are provided;

- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and appropriate access to attendance data;
- Work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly register analysis;
- Institute an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards;
- Ensure that attendance percentages/ graphs are displayed around the school and to set whole school attendance targets;
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS;
- Offer support to parents, guardians and children in order to resolve issues of non-attendance;
- Ensure that any concern relating to the welfare of a child is quickly dealt with and the relevant agencies informed.
- Follow all safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

## **Class Teachers**

- To complete registers regularly and punctually at least twice daily;
- To follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- To record all reasons for absences in the register;
- To inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns or the DSL if appropriate;
- To be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher;
- Work proactively and in partnership with stakeholders or other agencies to ensure that non-attendance is improved for identified individuals.

## **Home School Link Worker**

- To assist with enquiries to determine why a child has not attended school;
- Impress upon parents and guardians the importance of good attendance and offer support to help them achieve this with their children;
- Be a point of liaison between the Headteacher, Class Teacher and parent / guardian to ensure that there is effective communication;
- Ensure that any concern relating to the welfare of a child is quickly dealt with and the relevant agencies informed.
- Follow all safeguarding policies and protocols to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

## **SHOTTERMILL INFANT & JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **REQUEST FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

As parents, you have the legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Holidays should only be taken during the school holiday period.

Please fill in this form if you would like to ask the Headteacher to authorise a leave of absence during term time.

You must ask well in advance and you are strongly advised to request leave of absence before you confirm your holiday arrangements. Under no circumstances will absences for family holidays in term time be authorised after they have happened. Unauthorised absence may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice to each parent, for each child absent.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully, taking into account the effect on the continuity of your child's learning, your child's overall attendance rate which includes sickness and medical appointments. The Headteacher can authorise up to 10 days of absence in exceptional cases only, such as service personnel who cannot take family holidays outside of term time or a request for attending a close family member's funeral.

The cost and availability of holidays is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance in the Surrey County Council guidance.

**Name of child**..... **Class**.....

**I/We request authorisation for school absence (total number of school days)**

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**From (first day of absence)** ..... **To (last day of absence)**

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**This holiday cannot be taken during the school holidays because: (please specify exceptional reasons below)**

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**Signature of Parent/Guardian**..... **Date**.....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE(S) WHERE YOUR CHILD ATTENDS**

**For Completion by the school:**

<b>Approved</b>		<b>The absence will be recorded as authorised</b>
<b>Not approved</b>		<b>The absence will be recorded as unauthorised</b>

**HEADTEACHERS SIGNATURE** ..... **Date**.....

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**Child's attendance during this academic year to date:**

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