

SLADEFIELD INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

February 2017

INTRODUCTION

At Sladefield Infant School, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. All children benefit from well-planned sequences of lessons designed to ensure that they make the best possible progress. If they are frequently absent, this learning is disrupted and makes it difficult for progress to be maintained.

Everyone that comes to Sladefield Infant School is expected to aim for 97% attendance. We understand that everyone gets sick from time to time but minor coughs, colds or aches and pains should not stop a child from coming to school.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all our children. We shall reward children whose attendance is good. We shall also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the education regulations 1995 the governing body are 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.

Sladefield Infant School bases its Attendance Policy on the Guidelines set out by Birmingham LA.

RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every member of staff in school is responsible for ensuring good attendance punctuality of all children.

The Pastoral Team specifically work to improve children's attendance; this includes the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, the Inclusion Manager, and the Learning Mentor. The team also regularly liaise with the School Nurse and the school office staff to ensure that attendance concerns are being raised with immediacy.

Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school each day that school is open, and school has a legal duty to monitor and report the attendance of all children. In accordance with LA policy, leave of absence in term time is only granted in exceptional circumstances, eg. a close family bereavement. Each case is reviewed by the Head Teacher on its merits, and records of leave are kept for individual children. It is school

policy that no holiday or extended holiday absence is authorised under any circumstances.

Whilst parents of children in Reception classes do not have a legal duty to send their children to school until they are five years old, at Sladefield Infant School, we believe that expectations of attendance and behaviour are laid down from a very early age, and will therefore monitor attendance from as soon as a child begins at the school, and endeavour to work with parents to improve it where necessary.

We believe that a partnership approach to attendance is vital: senior management, governors and the Pastoral Team will work with parents and pupils, and support services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

ROLES OF CORE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SCHOOL

Governors

- To monitor progress towards school targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Pastoral Team

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately record individual pupil, group and whole school patterns.
- To discuss and disseminate to class teachers the attendance of children whose attendance is causing concern.
- To analyse attendance codes to inform action planning.
- To contact parents and meet with them to discuss how their child's attendance could be improved, providing support for the parent or child where appropriate.
- To ensure that those children with expected attendance, or improving attendance, are rewarded as outlined in the policy.
- To ensure appropriate support and intervention for pupils with low attendance to reduce impact on learning.
- To feedback to Governors and provide information for them to evaluate the success of the policy and practice.

Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the attendance module in SIMs.
- To prepare attendance reports when requested by the Head Teacher.
- To record names of pupils who arrive late via the Inventory System. Pupils late after 9.30am will receive a 'U' mark meaning they are considered absent for that session.
- To record reasons for absence on the system.
- To send a text message, and then, if necessary, call parents on first day of absence if no reason has been given, ensuring that priority is given firstly to those children considered 'vulnerable'.

- To ask parents for evidence of illness if required and record on pupil's attendance.
- Follow the 'Missing Children' Policy if required.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class, completing the register twice daily at the designated time.
- To promote good attendance.
- To notify the Pastoral Team should a child's attendance cause a concern.
- To ensure that children who experience difficulties with attendance and/or punctuality receive targeted support to minimise the impact on their learning.

PROCEDURES

The bell goes for the start of the school day at 8.45am. A second bell is rung at 8.55am to indicate that the doors and gates providing access to the school will be closed. Class teachers register children in class at 9.00am. If a child arrives after the register has been electronically sent, they are marked as late. Children who arrive late or after the register has closed report to the main reception, where they are signed in by their parents using our electronic system; a reason for their lateness is requested. **Children who are late after 9.30am will receive a 'U' mark, meaning they are considered absent for that session.**

ABSENCE

- Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents) as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for legitimate reasons and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher records the absence in the register. On return to the office, the register is checked against the absence slips and a telephone call home is made.
- Parents are asked to let the school know if their child is going to be absent. An absence slip is completed for all telephone messages regarding a child's non-attendance at school.
- Where children are absent for registration, and we have not been notified of an absence, parents are sent a text message or telephoned by a designated member of our office staff to request a reason for absence. All reasons for absence are recorded onto our SIMs system.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher takes immediate action by notifying the school office. The school then tries to make contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check the safety of the child.

Requests for Leave of absence/extended leave.

- The Governing Body have agreed that holidays will not be permitted during term time.
- Parents/carers should be strongly discouraged from arranging holidays here or abroad, or visits to their country of family origin, during term time. If they do go then they need to provide school with a copy of the tickets for both the outward journey and the return journey.
- Information regarding this is available to parents in the school prospectus and when a child is admitted into school.

Following new guidelines introduced by Birmingham City Council (from February 2017) (see Appendix 1), the school will follow procedures whereby parents might be issued with a Penalty Notice should a child's leave of absence reach levels as indicated in the guidelines.

Whole school pupil attendance data is reviewed, analysed and acted upon on a weekly basis.

When a child has attendance below 90%, they have 'Persistent Absence' which is a sign of parental neglect. Children with such low attendance are at risk of academic underachievement.

Our school has clear procedures and triggers for action based upon data analysis and contextual information for attendance.

- 1st letter: a general attendance letter expressing concern is sent when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.
- 2nd letter: When attendance fails to improve to above 90%, a second letter is sent inviting parents to a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team. At this point, we also request that written medical evidence be provided for any further periods of illness. They will discuss the reasons for absence and offer support and guidance in order to improve their child's attendance.
- Pupils whose attendance is below 90% without any noticeable reason will be placed on a Persistent Absence Action Plan. This will be reviewed regularly within the Pastoral Team.

Failure to attend the meeting, or if pupil attendance doesn't improve, may trigger a range of options.

- New meeting requested.
- Home visit by a member of the SLT or the Learning Mentor.
- The pupil is placed on Spotlight programme which may result in legal action.
- Referral to Family Support or initiation of an Early Help procedure.
- Referral made to Children's Services.

We follow the LA policy of allowing authorised absence for Religious observance. The Guideline states "A school must treat absences as authorised when it is due to Religious Observance." Any other days taken for travelling or continuing celebrations will not be authorised by the school.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

In order to maintain the high importance of attendance, throughout the year there are:

- **Weekly reflections** on attendance during SLT-led assemblies.
- **Attendance figures published** in the school newsletter and on the school's electronic noticeboard.
- **Attendance display boards** and charts the hall to support the promotion of high attendance.
- **Classroom Attendance Displays** - including 'Magic 20' charts.
- **Visits to individual classes by a member of the Pastoral Team** to praise good attendance or encourage improvement.

REWARDS

We use a range of rewards and incentives - a differentiated reward system ensures that every child, every day, has an attendance reward to work towards.

- **'Magic 20'** - an ongoing display chart can be found in each classroom monitoring attendance. When any child attends school for 20 consecutive days, they win a small prize from the Attendance box in each class.
- **Class Attendance Prize** - The class with the best weekly attendance gets a token. When the class has collected 5 tokens the children in that class can choose a prize.
- **Weekly Raffle** - A raffle will take place in each Celebration Assembly. One child will be chosen at random from the register list; if they have attended for the whole week, on time, they will win a book. Should they have been late or absent, then another child will be chosen.
- **'Persistent Absence' personalisation** - Children being monitored due to 'Persistent Absence' will be set personalised challenges, rewarded if they are successful.
- **'Attendance Golden Ticket'** - All children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the end of term assembly. These children will also receive a reward as part of the 'Golden Ticket' initiative.
- **'Family Fun' Prizes** - There will be a termly prize in each Year Group for families to win. All children with 100% attendance will be placed into the draw with the winning child in each Year Group winning a prize that can be suitable for the whole family (eg. gift voucher for Sea Life Centre or the cinema).
- **'Best Class'** - The best class in each Year Group is awarded with a class plaque for the term, and a class prize.
- **Whole year 100% attendance** - Children who have 100% for the year receive a special award.

WORKING WITH OUR PARENTS

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child comes to school. We talk to our parents about how they can make sure their children are fit enough to come to school during the induction meetings at the beginning of term.

SAFEGUARDING

When a child is not at school there can be safeguarding risk. The Safeguarding of pupils is one of Sladfield Infant School's highest priorities. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for general safeguarding issues and procedures.

The attendance of all children considered vulnerable or potentially vulnerable will be checked on a daily basis by a nominated member of staff (Pastoral Team/Office

Administrator) to safeguard the children and to maintain an up to date analysis. If no contact can be made by the school, the DSL will assess if further action is required, this may include making a home visit or contacting external agencies.

When attendance falls below 90% without any reasonable circumstances, or there is a pattern of continual absence on certain days, the case will be referred to the DSL.

All applications for holiday/extended leave will be assessed in terms of safeguarding risks. This particularly includes the risk of FGM (female genital mutilation) or being exposed to radicalisation or extremism (see The Prevent Strategy). Any applications considered high risk would be referred to the DSL.

In certain circumstances there may be a need to contact other agencies without first contacting parents. This decision will be made in partnership between Education Services and Social Care Services and is a legal obligation, not a personal decision.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Absence is monitored daily via text messages or phone calls for all absences where the school has not been notified.

Spreadsheets are in place to track weekly figures for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence.

Weekly overviews are monitored for each class, and individuals within those classes.

Termly analysis is made of data for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence. This includes analysing for different groups including gender, SEN, ethnicity and free school meals. This analysis will influence future action taken.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing Body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

Review March 2019