

Sunning Hill Primary School



Attendance Policy

September 2024

***Linked Documents:** Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE)
Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Home School
Agreement.*

***Governing Body Review date:** October 2024*

Attendance POLICY

General Principles

Sunning Hill Primary School expects good attendance from its pupils in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that school has to offer. We believe that children achieve their full potential when in school and we rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that children are punctual and attend school every day.

Good attendance and punctuality is promoted and celebrated by all staff as the best vehicle for accelerating learning. We also celebrate attendance with certificates during weekly assemblies to recognise which class has had the best attendance. The class with the highest half termly attendance is rewarded with a visit to a local park. Individual children with 100% attendance at the end of each term receive certificates and a medal for 100% attendance at the end of the year. Attendance percentage are shared with parents on end of year reports and are discussed with parents at parents' evenings as required.

At Sunning Hill we believe that all children have a right to a full and rewarding education so therefore promote high attendance expectations for all our children. This policy will be applied fairly throughout school, however we recognise that we have to take into account the specific need of certain pupils or cohorts. We also recognise that attendance problems can sometimes be an indicator of other or wider issues so we monitor attendance carefully to ensure that we are safeguarding the welfare of all our children.

The School Day

Sunning Hill Primary School expects good punctuality. Our school doors open at 8.30am for Nursery children and 12.15pm (12.30pm Friday) for children who attend in the afternoon.

For school age pupils our doors open at 8.45am. Pupils should enter school at 8.45am so that they can benefit from the morning learning activities that are prepared. The school gates are closed at 8.55am and registers are completed by 9.00am. Pupils who are not present for registration will be marked as absent initially.

Any child arriving after 8.55am must enter school via the school office and be signed in. If a pupil arrives late, this will be recorded as an authorised late mark if it is before 9.30am. Any child arriving after 9.30am for any reason other than a medical appointment, then this will be marked as an unauthorised **Code U** (late after registers closed). Punctuality will be monitored closely by administration staff and any concerns will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team who will speak with parents/carers if lateness becomes persistent.

Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the school day must be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult.

Punctuality also applies to parents/carers when collecting their child. The school day finishes at 3.30pm and at 2.30pm on Fridays. Parents are asked to collect their children from designated exits depending upon which class their child is in by this time.

Parents who regularly pick their child up late after school will be charged £1, per child, for every 5 minutes after 3.45pm (Mon –Thurs) 2.45p.m (Fri). Parents will be given an initial warning before these charges are applied. The school will contact Bolton Safeguarding Board for any children not collected by 4.00pm where no parent/carer or emergency named person can be contacted.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

*Under the 1996 Education Act, parents/carers commit an **offence** if a child does not attend school regularly.*

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents/carers. If a child cannot come to school because of illness, parents must contact school before 8.30am, and EACH subsequent day of absence thereafter. If a parent fails to inform the school as to why their child is not in school this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

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If a child is absent and school has received no notification as to the reason why, every effort will be made to contact an appropriate adult. It is therefore important that school has up-to-date contact home phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact numbers. When contact is made with parents, the school will determine if the absence is authorised or unauthorised; if no contact is made it will be assumed that the child is absent without permission and an unauthorised **Code O** (absent in other or unknown circumstances) will be recorded.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance and provide evidence of the appointment through a letter, appointment card or appointment text via phone.

Authorised absence includes:

- Sickness;
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (where possible routine appointments should be booked around the school day);
- Days of religious observance; and
- Other exceptional circumstances authorised by the head teacher.

Unauthorised absence is:

- Any absence which the school has not been informed about;
- Arriving late after 9.30a.m. without an authorised reason;
- Truancy, e.g. staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives; any other non-educational activity e.g. visiting relatives, weddings; or any family holiday.

Monitoring Attendance

Sunning Hill expects good attendance and punctuality. Teaching staff, administration staff and senior leaders therefore monitor attendance and attendance data closely. Attendance is overseen by the Deputy Head teacher, Mrs Rawlinson, who can be contacted via the school office.

School will record and monitor attendance in the following ways:

1. Attendance registers will be completed every morning and afternoon.
2. Parents should ring school, on 01204 333588, on the first day of absence and EACH subsequent day of absence thereafter to either leave a message or speak to a member of our administration team to explain why their child cannot come to school. If no reason is given then an unauthorised mark will be given.
3. Administration staff will monitor attendance daily, recording both authorised and unauthorised absences and contact parents to clarify any attendance or punctuality queries.
4. Any concerns will be followed up directly and further action taken if needed. Any necessary concerns and actions will be recorded on Bromcom or as required on our internal safeguarding CPOMs system.
5. The percentage figures for each class will be monitored at the end of each week and attendance awards given during school assemblies.
6. Attendance data will be monitored closely and calculated at the end of every half term and more frequently as required to identify any pupils who are classed as persistent absence (where attendance falls below 90%).
7. SLT will analyse data on a termly basis to identify any pupil or group trends that require further support to improve attendance.
8. The school will inform parents if their child's attendance falls below 93% to address any attendance barriers or concerns that may arise.
9. If a child's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) parents will be invited to attend an attendance meeting with Mrs Rawlinson.
10. In the case of severe absenteeism, parents will receive a 'Notice to Improve' letter and may be requested to proactively engage with more formal support to prevent the need for a penalty notice.
11. 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over a rolling period of ten weeks will result in a penalty notice being served by the LA.

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Working together to improve school attendance

For good attendance, pupils should have an attendance percentage of **96% or more**.

Sunning Hill staff will work collaboratively with parents, children and local partners to successfully treat the root causes of absence and remove any barriers from school, home or any wider issues that are preventing good attendance. Parents can support their child's punctuality and attendance by talking positively about school and ensuring good bedtime and morning routines with parents and pupils sharing the responsibility. Sometimes children can be anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell parents that they feel unwell or give another reason not to attend. Parents may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If you have any concerns that you would like to discuss further please contact school as soon as possible to speak to your child's class teacher, Mrs Mohamed in the office or Mrs Rawlinson, Deputy Head Teacher who will be happy to help.

GREEN Pupils with attendance from 96% to 100%
AMBER Pupils with attendance from 90% to 95.9%
RED Pupils with attendance Below 90%

During the school year, parents will be alerted via our school messaging service when their child's attendance falls below 93% in order to encourage improvements in attendance. Children with an attendance percentage that goes below 90% fall into the 'persistent absentee' category. School has a responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance falls below 90%. If a child's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) parents will be invited to attend an attendance meeting with Mrs Rawlinson and/or other staff members to identify the reasons for absence, and to work together to resolve any concerns to improve attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, school will help signpost families to appropriate services. Parents are expected to work with the school to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance and proactively engage with any support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

In the case of severe absenteeism, parents will receive a 'Notice to Improve' letter and may be requested to proactively engage with more formal support to prevent the need for a penalty notice or legal intervention. The notice to improve will include details of your child's absence and the support school has already put in place. The child's attendance will continue to be closely monitored and this is parent/carers opportunity to work with school to improve attendance and avoid the need for a penalty notice, referral to the Local Authority Early Intervention Team or legal intervention. Parent/carer failure to comply with any support given may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute.

Leave of Absence/Exceptional Circumstances

Parents should only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and where possible this should be requested in advance by completing our leave of absence request form.

1. In exceptional circumstances, the head teacher, may authorise pupils to take a total of up to 5 days authorised leave of absence during their entire time at school. Any additional time taken will usually be unauthorised.
2. Extended unauthorised absence, including holidays, may result in the school place of the pupil concerned being withdrawn to enable another pupil to take up a place in school.
3. Any parent wishing to request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should first seek permission and complete a leave of absence request form. Family visits or holidays, during term time, will not be authorised.

From 19th August 2024, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice was updated in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' document. Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child, of compulsory school age, regularly attends the school where they are registered. The threshold for a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 weeks). These sessions can be consecutive or not consecutive. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

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Penalty notices are £160 (per parent, per child) if paid within 28 days of receipt of the penalty notice, reducing to £80 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days. With any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the amount will be charged at £160 with no option to pay at the lower rate of £80. There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period. 3rd or subsequent offences will be considered for progression to prosecution.

Please note that school will not authorise any absence for holidays during term time. Parents should be aware that under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents or carers may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and their absence is unauthorised (as the school cannot or has not given permission for them to be off school). A penalty notice will be issued in line with Bolton Council's Policy and/or the child's place withdrawn, depending on circumstances.

*Additional guidance about penalty notices can be found on Bolton Council's website:

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Truancy.aspx>

Safeguarding and Children Missing in Education

KSIE 2023 highlights that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning signs of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

Sunning Hill staff reserve the right to either contact parents directly or make an immediate referral to Early Intervention, Children's Services or the Police if they feel a pupil is potentially at risk by being taken out of school during term time. The school will seek advice from the Local Authority if a pupil fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school has made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil or their family.

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

The school will notify the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly or who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of five days. The school will demonstrate that reasonable enquiries have been made to ascertain the whereabouts of children who would be considered 'missing', and will invoke Child Missing in Education (CME) procedures to potentially remove the child from roll under such circumstances, in consultation with the Local Authority.

Additional Information:

All partners will work together to improve attendance: *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE February 2024)*

The Law states:

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 States: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- To his age, ability and aptitude.
- To any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to indicate those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

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Register and Admission Roll Keeping:

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations, 2006.

Our school aims to support all families and the wider community. Any queries or concerns regarding individual policies will be considered on an individual basis.