

# Sunning Hill Primary School



## Attendance Policy

**January 2024**

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

***Governing Body Review date:*** *January 2025*

## 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 their children are punctual and attend school every day.

Good attendance and punctuality is promoted and celebrated in school. We award certificates during weekly assemblies to recognise which class has had the best attendance, the class with the best half termly attendance visit the local park and individuals with 100% attendance are rewarded at the end of each term and the academic year. Attendance percentage are shared with parents on end of year reports.

We recognise that attendance problems can be an indicator of wider issues, therefore we monitor attendance carefully to ensure that we are safeguarding the welfare of all our pupils.

### The School Day

Sunning Hill Primary School expects good punctuality. Our school doors open at 8.45am for school age pupils. Pupils should enter school at 8.45am so that they can benefit from the morning learning activities that are set. Registers are completed by 9.00am. The main gates close at 8.55am. 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 before 9.20am this will be recorded as an authorised late mark. Any pupil arriving after this time will be recorded as an unauthorised late mark. Punctuality will be monitored by administration staff and any concerns reported to SLT. Parents/carers will be spoken to if lateness becomes persistent.

Any child arriving after 9:30am for any reason other than medical will be marked as unauthorised **Code U** (Late after registers closed).

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 parents are asked to collect their children from designated exits depending upon which class their child is in.

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. 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.

If a child is absent from school and we have received no notification as to the reason why, every effort will be made to contact an appropriate adult. The school requires up to date emergency contact phone numbers, home and email addresses. 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.

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

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provide evidence of the appointment through a letter, appointment card or appointment text via phone. The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable and has the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell, or if there is cause for concern.

### **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 9.20a.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; and
- Any family holiday.

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.

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, the criteria for issuing a penalty notice was reduced and a fine will be given where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms. If a child has 5 sessions of unauthorised absence, including unauthorised late marks, this will trigger a warning letter advising parents that they are at risk of receiving a fine.

***Please note that school will not authorise any absence for holidays during term time. School must be notified in writing, using our leave of absence request form, of any planned absence. Parents should be aware that 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>

### **Exceptional Circumstances/Leave of Absence**

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 other pupils 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 during term will not be authorised.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Sunning Hill School expects good attendance and punctuality and this will be monitored closely in a number of ways by Administration staff, teachers and 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 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 initially.
3. Administration staff will monitor attendance daily, recording both authorised and unauthorised absences and contact parents to clarify any attendance or punctuality queries.

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4. Any concerns will be followed up directly and further action taken if needed. Any necessary concerns and actions will be recorded on SIMs or if required our internal CPOMs system.
5. The percentage figures for each class will be monitored at the end of each week and attendance awards given during assembly.
6. Persistent absence will be monitored regularly with attendance percentages calculated at the end of every half term and more frequently as required. The school will work with parents to address any attendance barriers or concerns that may arise (please see 'Working together to improve attendance' below).
7. 5 sessions of unauthorised absence will trigger a warning letter.
8. 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms will result in a penalty notice being served by the LA.

### **Working together to improve school attendance**

Sunning Hill staff will work collaboratively with parents 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. 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 this is the case, parents should contact the school as soon as possible to arrange to speak to the class teacher. Parents can also 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.

Children with an attendance percentage below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category and the school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. When a child's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) a 'School Attendance Meeting' with parents will be arranged. The purpose of this meeting is for the parent and child (if appropriate) to meet with Mrs Rawlinson and/or other staff members to identify the reasons for absence, and to work together to resolve any concerns and 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 may be requested to proactively engage with more formal support offered including a voluntary Early Help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention. An Early Help will contain an improvement target, with set timescales and an overview of the support to be provided by the school to support the child and his/her family. The child's attendance will then be closely monitored. If required, the school may also consider implementing a Parenting Contract if the child continues to be absent. If your child's attendance does not improve, despite the support the school has put into place, a referral may be made to the Local Authority Early Intervention Team. Parent/carer failure to comply with any support given via Early Help or Parenting Contract then these may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute.

### **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.

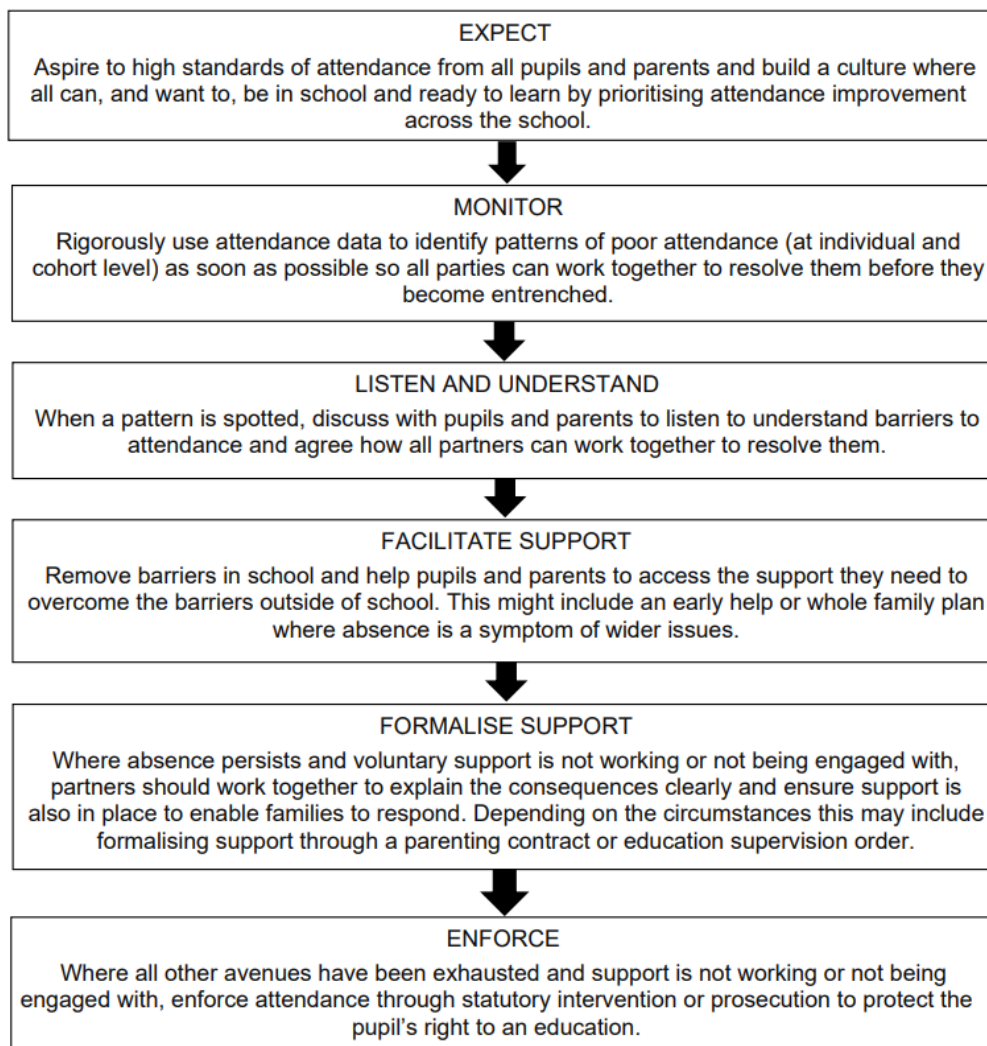
Sunning Hill staff reserve the right to either contact parents directly or make an immediate referral to Early Intervention, Children's Services or the Police if they feel a pupil is potentially at risk by being taken out of school during term time. The school will seek advice from the Local Authority 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.

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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.

All partners will work together to improve attendance: *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE September 2022)*



Additional Information:

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.***