



**Overall Attendance and Aims:**

Southwold Primary School tracks the attendance of each child closely, including punctuality. The governors and staff recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality and how this impacts on children's achievement and progress in school.

Good attendance is expected at all times from our Early Years unit through to year 6:

- To ensure that all our children are safeguarded by consistent monitoring of attendance and punctuality.
- To improve our whole school attendance target, following our last Ofsted inspection.
- To ensure that we keep accurate, up to date records and that we monitor and identify any child's attendance that is a cause for concern and act upon it accordingly.

The government guideline for pupil attendance is 95%. All children's attendance is monitored but when the percentage attendance is below 90%, the child is considered a persistent absentee and the child will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Below is the persistent absence criteria:

Half term	10%
Half term 1	7 sessions
Half term 2	14 sessions
Half term 3	20 sessions
Half term 4	25 sessions
Half term 5	31 sessions
Half term 6	38 sessions

**Punctuality**

An Ofsted expectation of school is to:

**'Improve punctuality and reduce the amount of times where pupils are taken out of school before the end of the day'.**

Southwold Primary School starts at 8:55am (9:00am in the Early Years' Centre). We follow the procedure, 'Get in Line at Ten to 9'. The children should make their way promptly to their class lines at 8:50 when the whistle is blown. The whistle is blown again at 8:55am and teachers count the number of children in each class line. The class with the highest punctuality by Thursday will be rewarded with a non-uniform day on the following Friday.

The school doors are opened at 8.55am. The registration period is from 8.55am until 9.05 am, when the registers will be closed. Registers will be sent through to the office at 9.05am and any child arriving after this time must enter through the main entrance, where they will be marked as late (L code) and self-register using the electronic system. After 9.15 am, any

child arriving late will be marked as unauthorised absence, (U code) due to the amount of learning time already missed. Families that choose to attend out of the catchment area are expected to attend punctually and are not exempt from the agreed sanctions. Five unauthorised codes in two weeks is considered as persistent lateness and will result in further actions, including penalty notices.

To increase punctuality further, the school follows a 'Late Gate' procedure on selected days. If a child is late and needs to enter school through the main entrance, they will be handed a 'Late Slip'. If a child receives three Late Slips in one half term, their parent(s) are asked to attend a meeting in school to explain why the child is being late.

### **Absence**

Absences at school are of two types - authorised or unauthorised. All absences are unauthorised until a satisfactory reason for the absence is given, however it is the school's responsibility and final decision to authorise any absence. The only satisfactory reasons for absence are:

- Observance of a religious festival: pupils who celebrate Eid are allowed to take 2 days in total (1 day for Big Eid and 1 day for Little Eid) as authorised absence during the year. Any further absences over the Eid period would be recorded as unauthorised.
- Illness. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has been sick, there must be 24 hours since the last bout of sickness before the child can return to school. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. Regular illness may need to be substantiated by a medical certificate. A referral to the school nurse may be made if symptoms persist or if the child is regularly ill.
- Medical appointments. Medical appointments should be, where possible, made out of school time. Southwold Primary and Early Years' Centre appreciates that this is not always possible and authorisation of the missed session(s) will be at the school's discretion. Proof of the appointment must be shown e.g. doctor's medical card or letter, hospital appointment card or letter.
- Text messages are sent out for any child that is absent from school. A follow up phone call may be made.
- If there is a concern about punctuality or absence, the school's attendance officer will make a home visit.
- We will be closely monitoring children being taken out of school before the end of the day. If we are concerned regarding the frequency of this, then parents may be contacted to attend a meeting to discuss this further.

All other absences are unauthorised.

### **Penalty Notices**

If a child has unauthorised absence recorded, it may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

### **Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:**

Penalty notices may be issued per parent, per child, who has unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.

If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: "If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order. Please note that:

Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.

Parent includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her. These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

### **Leave of Absence: Holidays within term time**

A main priority for the school that came from the Ofsted inspection in March 2013 was to: 'Improve pupils' attendance and the continuity of their education by encouraging parents not to take family holidays during term time'.

The Department of Education has brought in new rules regarding term time absence. Please read the extract below from their recent article:

#### *Amendments to school attendance regulations:*

#### ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Updated: 15 April 2013***

#### ***Term-time holiday:***

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 **currently** allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year.*

***Amendments to the 2006 regulations from September 2013 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.***

Therefore we will not be authorising any term time holidays and will have to serve fixed penalty notices when necessary.

The Government regulations stress that, cheaper holiday prices, availability of desired accommodation and poor weather during school holidays, are **not** special reasons to grant a request for a term-time holiday.

- No holidays during term time will be authorised if the attendance of the child/ children is below 95%. If parents/carers still take their child out of school for a holiday, they will receive a fixed penalty notice.
- Any extended leave during term time will only be considered if there are extreme exceptional circumstances\*
- One month from the day absence is unauthorised, the child/children may be removed from the school's roll and a statutory penalty fine will be imposed.

### **\*Extended leave during term-time**

Any extended leave during term-time will only be considered if there are **extreme exceptional circumstances** and the reasons fit the above criteria. Any requests for an extended leave must be made to the Head teacher in person and there will be a meeting of the school's Attendance Panel to decide if the request can be granted.

For any extended leave requests, an appointment must be made with the Head teacher. All details regarding dates, length of stay, return dates, must be given at that meeting. The Head's decision will be conveyed in a written reply to parents after a meeting of the Attendance Panel. Any requests of more than twenty days will **not** be granted.

If a pupil is taken out of school for extended leave without the school's prior consent then the school may remove the child's name from the school roll and impose statutory penalty fine.

If leave is agreed, due to exceptional circumstances, evidence for this will be requested such as tickets, booking forms, family documents.

If a pupil does not return to school from extended leave on the agreed date, and an acceptable reason has not been forwarded to the Head teacher, then the child's name will be removed from the school roll and a penalty fine imposed.

If parents do want to make a request to take a child on holiday during term-time they can collect a Holiday Request Form from the school office.

### **Attendance Rewards**

Southwold Primary School realises that many children do have high attendance figures and we reward good attendance. These rewards include:

- Weekly class award of attendance certificate and trophy to class with highest attendance figures; end of term reward for the class which has won the trophy the highest number of times during that term
- Half-termly raffle for 100% attenders and their parents to win vouchers
- Half-termly class attendance rewards
- Termly certificates and medals for those children with 100% attendance
- Attendance raffle at the end of the year for those children with 100% attendance