

Southwold Primary School and Early Years' Centre



Attendance and Holiday Policy 2022



Overall Attendance and Aims:

Southwold Primary School tracks the attendance of each child closely, including punctuality. The governors and staff are committed to raising the educational attainment of pupils and recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality and how this impacts on children's achievement and progress in school. Children can only achieve their full potential if they attend school regularly and on time; poor attendance and late arrival disadvantages children – its effect can become apparent in their achievement as early as Foundation Stage. It is therefore essential that your child attends school, on time, every day, unless their absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at primary school closely mirror those that will be expected of them throughout their education and in the world of work.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- a. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- b. Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- c. act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

All pupils are to be punctual to their lessons.

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

Punctuality

- ❖ Pupils in our Early Years' Centre start at 8:45 am
- ❖ Pupils in KS1 and KS2 start at 8:45 am

We operate a soft start from 8:40 am where pupils are able to enter their classrooms ready for the start of the school day.

Doors are closed promptly at 8:55am

The registration period is from 8.55am until 9.05 am, when the registers are sent to the office. 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. Ten unauthorised codes in 10 weeks is considered as persistent lateness and will result in further actions, including penalty notices.

Absence

Engagement in education at this stage of a child's development is crucial; irrespective of whether your child is of statutory school age, regular attendance is encouraged from the outset to help establish good



habits. This message, communicated early to all families, underpins the statutory requirements which apply from the term following their child's fifth birthday.

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:**
Nottingham is a vibrant and diverse city which promotes respect for the faiths and values of all its communities. A variety of faiths are celebrated across the school and we will always recognise the diversity of our population.
In Nottingham City one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any academic year) may be recorded as authorised absence. The Pupil Regulations 2006 require that absence for religious observance should be treated as authorised absence 'on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs'. Additional days off for extended celebrations will be treated as unauthorised absence.
- **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 a child attends but is not well enough to be in school, we will always contact parents/carers straight away, so if in any doubt, bring them in! 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. We will ask for evidence to support the authorisation of absence for illness, particularly where there are existing concerns about a child's attendance, or where there are frequent odd days for reported illness, the same reasons for absence are repeated, or where absences occur either side of a school holiday, or weekend.
- **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. Children are expected to attend school before and/or after their medical appointment.

Proof of the appointment must be shown e.g. doctor's medical card or letter, hospital appointment card or letter.

All other absences are unauthorised.

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, a member of the school staff may make an unannounced home visit.



If a child's attendance is a cause for concern then a letter will be sent to the parent/carer of the child to inform them of the school's concern regarding attendance and that their child's attendance will be closely monitored. If there is still no improvement following on from the letter, then a letter will be sent to invite the parent/carer into school to attend a meeting to discuss the absences further. If after the meeting the child's attendance has failed to improve then a further letter informing the parent/carer that a referral will be made to EWS (Education Welfare Service).

Penalty Notices

If a child has unauthorised absences recorded a request will be made to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice or consideration of legal intervention. Parents will be informed of the request being submitted by letter.

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.

The definition of parental responsibility from the DfE is below:

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The Local Authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Leave of Absence: Holidays within term time

Term-time holiday:

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.

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The Headteacher will not be authorising any term time holidays and will request a penalty notice from the Local authority.

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 will be referred to the EWS, Children Missing Education officers.

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 a referral will be made to the EWS, Children Missing Education officers.

If parents do want to make a request to take a child on holiday during term-time they can collect a leave of absence 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 non-uniform day on the following Friday for the class. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance during the term, are awarded with an attendance certificate and medal during Achievement Assembly. Certificates progress from Bronze to Silver and then Gold).

WHAT ELSE WOULD WE LIKE TO DO?

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme. The Learning Mentor for Behaviour and Attendance is responsible for reporting to the governors' regarding implementation and its impact on attendance. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

Signed: R. Stone

Date: July 2022

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