



South Ascot Village School

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. 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 the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Once a child is enrolled at school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which absence is authorised by the school.
- 1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.
- 1.4 Definition of 'authorised absence':
 - an absence is classified as authorised when the school has ascertained that a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by the school.
 - only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay away from school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- 1.5 Definition of 'unauthorised absence':
 - an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
 - therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:
- maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
 - ensure that pupils are safe and that their whereabouts are known;
 - eliminate unauthorised absence;
 - discourage families from arranging holidays during school terms;
 - ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
 - ensure that school staff and parents and carers are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness;
 - ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance;
 - make clear to parents and carers the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;
 - ensure that children enjoy coming to school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and consistently.

3 Procedure if a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

The school encourages parents to telephone the school to inform them of their child's absence through illness, on the first morning of absence. This prevents school office staff having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason. Parents should not use e-mail or text messaging to inform the school of a child's absence.

- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence or an absence slip completed, and confirm its duration, even if the parent telephoned the school on the first day of absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence for a child

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special religious or family event (such exceptional circumstances would not include normal events such as birthdays or regular religious ceremonies). We expect parents and carers to contact the school to obtain authorisation at least a week in advance. Normally such exceptional requests will be granted.
- 4.2 Parents and carers have no statutory right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their children are not required to be in school.

- 4.3 Our school considers pupils' continuous attendance at school to be so essential for their academic achievement that it is not our policy to routinely authorise an allocation of term time holiday days to families. Only where exceptional circumstances have resulted in a family being unable to take an annual holiday during the school holidays, will such requests be considered. Such exceptional requests for longer periods of absence should be made at least two weeks in advance. Each case will be considered individually by the headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that, where possible, the child can keep in touch with the learning going on in their class.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA) support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school, where possible.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss the reasons. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action, possibly resulting in a fixed penalty fine, against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 While the school would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children who, through illness or other circumstances, have been unavoidably absent from school, we do, from time to time, give attendance incentive rewards or certificates for children with 100 per cent attendance over a term or a whole school year, in order to maintain a focus on the importance of regular attendance.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors as part of our annual target-setting process. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they can be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and on the school website.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the

attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

9.5 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the governing body or sooner if necessary.

Signed:

Date: