



## Somerford Primary School

### Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Updated: January 2018

Review: January 2020

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's child protection policy.

#### Aims

To ensure all children attend school regularly and punctually in order to make rapid progress and achieve their potential

To work collaboratively with parents and support them in ensuring their child attends school regularly and develop good habits

#### Statutory Duties

***The Education Act 1996 requires all parents to secure full time education for children of compulsory school age. School records attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session, and once at the start of the afternoon session. The law requires that all schools must show the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence. Definitions of these can be found in Appendix A.***

#### Absence from school

Children are required to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year.

Somerford Primary School defines 'regular attendance' as attending every session of every school day. Schools are not allowed to authorise any absence from school during these days except in exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not an exceptional circumstance.

If a child is unwell, parents are requested to inform school on the first day of illness by 9.30am and every other day thereafter. Parents are requested to make medial and dental appointments outside of the school day.

#### Lateness

Registration begins at 8.45am and all pupils are expected to be in class by this time. Pupils arriving late should enter through the main reception. They will be marked as present but late in the register and then sent to class. Any child arriving after 9.15am, when the registers close, will be marked with an unauthorised absence for that session.

#### Expectations

##### **We expect that all children will:**

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school on time

##### **We expect that all parents will:**

- Ensure their child attends school every day
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time
- Ensure they contact school on the first day of any absence and every other day thereafter

- Contact the school promptly to discuss any problem that may keep their child away from school
- Make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day
- Book holidays outside of term time

**We expect that school staff will:**

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children twice a day
- Monitor every child's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Encourage good attendance
- Challenge poor attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children that is safe
- Provide a sympathetic response to any concerns from parents and carers
- Consult with Dorset County Council, through the Attendance Team, if legal action, such as fines and prosecution are appropriate in cases of persistent absence

**Promoting good attendance and challenging poor attendance**

The school believes both promoting good attendance and challenging poor attendance is important. The procedures for both of these are detailed in appendices B and C.

**What will be done when children stop attending school, schools have been unable to contact those children and they are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school or the children are missing.**

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority. These enquiries will include but not be limited to:

- Making telephone contact with parents, relatives and neighbours.
- Writing to the known addresses
- Making informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child
- Referring to the LA Attendance Officer for support
- Checking local databases within the LA
- Checking Key to Success or school2school systems
- Making enquiries via other local databases and agencies
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and / or the Border Force
- Checking with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with the LA and school from which the child moved originally
- Checking with the LA and school to which the child may have moved
- On receipt of such a referral the Locality Social Worker will complete checks to locate the child.
- If the child has been missing, with no contact from parents or carers and no information as to where the child is for 10 days, a Child Missing Education form will be completed and sent to DCC.
- If the school has any Child Protection concerns about the child it will follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact social care **immediately**.

Absence is monitored on a monthly basis by the Head of School, Pastoral Worker and Attendance Officer and patterns of absence are explored. Monthly meetings with parents explore reasons for absence and any concerns are discussed with Family Support Services as appropriate.

The Attendance Officer will notify the Local Authority Admissions Team when removing a child from the Admission Register. The reasons for this will be discussed and any further action required will be agreed.

### Persistent Absentees (PAs)

Any child whose attendance falls below 90% is considered a 'persistent absentee' (PA). The Head of School, Pastoral Worker and Attendance Officer will identify these children on a weekly basis and the following action plan will be put in place:

- Class teachers will be informed of the child becoming a PA
- Class teachers will inform the Head of School if the child is absent by the close of registers each day
- The Pastoral Worker will telephone the child's parents to establish a reason for the absence and encourage them to send the child to school if possible
- An attendance meeting will be held with the Head of School, Pastoral Worker and the parents to establish any reasons for the absences and agree actions to support the family in raising attendance. A review period will be agreed.
- The parents will be informed that no illness or medical absence will be authorised without medical proof until the child's attendance raises above 90%
- If attendance does not improve after the review period, the parents will be invited to an Attendance Panel meeting with the LA Attendance Officer and further actions will be advised by them including the possibility of legal action

At the start of an academic year, class teachers are informed of any children who were PAs the previous year so this action plan can commence immediately.

### Appendices

Please see appendices attached:

- Appendix A – definition of terms
- Appendix B – promoting good attendance
- Appendix C – challenging poor attendance
- Appendix D – attendance targets

### References

Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for LAs September 2016 DfE

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 DfE

Education Act 1996

Dorset County Council Attendance Policy

## **Appendix A: Definitions of Terms**

### **Authorised Absence**

This can be:

- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside of the school day
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances such as a family funeral. This decision is at the Executive Headteacher's discretion.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

This can be:

- Truancy
- Illness, where there is no medical evidence provided by the parent
- Staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having hair cut
- Family holiday taken during term time
- No transport to get the child to or from school
- The pupil's or relative's birthday

The decision as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised lies with the Executive Headteacher.

## **Appendix B: Promoting Good Attendance**

Promoting good attendance is a high priority at Somerford Primary School.

We regularly promote good attendance through:

- Sharing the school's attendance on the school newsletter
  - Information leaflets for parents
  - Assemblies promoting good attendance
  - A PowerPoint and display in the main reception area
- Rewards for children for good and improved attendance throughout the year
  - Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance termly
    - Reviewing attendance of each pupil weekly
- Phase Cups for the class with the best attendance the previous week
  - Individual attendance plans for key pupils
  - Stockers, bugs and prizes for improved attendance
- Attendance assemblies termly to reward children over 96%

### **Appendix C: Challenging Poor Attendance**

- The school's Attendance Team, led by the Head of School, will review the attendance and punctuality of every pupil every week. A report will be given to the Executive Head teacher and Governing Body termly.
- Termly attendance reports for each child will be sent home to parents
- If a child's attendance drops below 96%, a letter will be sent home expressing concern and offering support
- If a child's attendance drops below 90%, a letter will be sent home requesting that the parents attend an attendance meeting with the Head of School and Pastoral Worker to discuss the situation
- If a child's attendance drops below 85%, they will be invited to an Attendance Panel meeting with the LA Attendance Team and actions will be advised by them, including the possibility of legal action
- Attendance will be regularly discussed with parents at the end of the school day, at parent consultations and in weekly newsletters

**Appendix D: Attendance Targets**

By July 2017	96.5%
By July 2018	97%