



<i>Date written</i>	<i>September 2017</i>
<i>Date of renewal</i>	<i>September 2020</i>
<i>Date approved</i>	
<i>Approved by</i>	<i>Headteacher</i>

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

---

### Policy Statement and Guidelines

#### **Vision**

At Sholing Infant School regular attendance and punctuality are recognised as being key to securing good pupil outcomes. We know that children with high attendance are more likely to make excellent progress. Equally, children who do not attend school regularly and on time, are more likely to make less progress and have their future life opportunities reduced. Our school will encourage good attendance and we will be robust in monitoring attendance, celebrating high levels of attendance, and taking action when your child's attendance causes concern and impacts negatively on their progress.

#### **Aims**

- To maximise good attendance across the whole school including EYFS by encouraging, recognising and rewarding good attendance
- To investigate individual absences making it very clear to pupils and parents that unauthorised absence is not acceptable at Sholing Infant School.

To achieve this we will:-

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Give details on attendance in regular newsletters.
- Report to parents every half-term on their child's attendance.
- Report to parents termly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- Carry out transition work with pupils moving between nursery/pre-school and reception and before leaving for the junior school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Share attendance information for the whole school and specific groups with partnership schools to work on improvement strategies jointly
- Reward good and improving attendance for individuals and classes
- Ensure the children understand the importance of good attendance and how absence impacts on learning.
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance.
- Support pupils and parents where attendance is below expected through the work of the ELSA.
- Work with other agencies and the Local Authority to support good school attendance.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in school are:-

### Parents

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence.
- Avoid any leave in term-time and if absence is requested, apply in advance using the correct form.
- Attend meetings as required in school.
- Participate in parenting contracts and co-operate in support and interventions offered by the school or other agencies.

### Pupils

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school e.g. early bedtimes.
- Attend school and registration punctually.
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance.
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies.

### Headteacher

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile with the school.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters.
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.
- Consider each request for leave, decide whether some or all the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there may be ambiguity regarding absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence or to request further evidence to support the decision making process.

### Designated staff

- First day response – contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided.
- Input and update the attendance registers.
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups.
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance
- ELSA and SENCO communicate with parents weekly where needed
- ELSA and SENCO available to work with parents to put in place strategies to support good attendance, removing any barriers.
- ELSA to do home visits where needed.

### All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment.
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff.
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.
- Talk to parents regularly where attendance is a concern and any impact poor attendance is having on progress.

### Governors

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly.
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy.
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures.
- Work with the headteacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent.

Absence can be a symptom of:-

- Wider safeguarding concerns- domestic violence, hidden harm, neglect etc.
- Low aspirations
- Health or medical needs
- Lack of regard of the importance of Primary School education
- A pupil experiencing anxiety around school, which requires additional support.

The Legal Framework:-

- It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take problems seriously that may lead to non-attendance.
- Penalty notices may be issued under the Local Authority's (LA) Code of Conduct for the use of penalty notices in cases of non-attendance at school. A copy of this conduct can be obtained from the Attendance Officer or the Education Welfare Service.

Monitoring approach to attendance at Sholing Infant School:-

- Attendance is checked twice daily. Parent of pupils who are absent without explanation will be automatically contacted by 9:30am at the latest by the Attendance Officer, Mrs J Stewart. If the school is not notified of the reason for a pupil's absence by 9:00am, parents should expect a call as we seek a reason for absence and check that children are safe. The school may conduct home visits at any opportunity to ensure safeguarding of our pupils. We will carry out a home visit for all

pupils for whom we have no reason for absence. We will also carry out home visits for pupils whose attendance is causing concern. Home visits are carried out by Mrs J Harris-ELSA or on occasions, Mrs Houghton. Parents may be asked to provide medical notes for absence; this could be a prescription, appointment cards or prescribed medicine labels.

- The authorisation of any absence is at the headteacher's discretion. If a pupil is regularly absent due to illness, the school reserves the right not to authorise the absence and to request medical evidence. With parents' permission the school may contact the pupil's doctor.
- The school will send home a letter informing parents of their child's current attendance each half term. If a child's attendance falls below 96.5% parents will be informed. If the attendance continues to fall the Head teacher will request a meeting to address the issues contributing to the poor attendance. In some cases the school may choose to meet parents with the Education Welfare Officer/ELSA or conduct a home visit.
- All unauthorised absence will put parents at risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice, or legal proceedings being instigated for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school. Unauthorised absence includes absence where the school has not been notified and a reason for absence provided by parents.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason (that is if they attend for 90% or less). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Therefore, any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold, will be given priority consideration and parents will be informed of this immediately. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to weekly monitoring by our ELSA, Mrs Harris. Individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. Parents of pupils who are PAs will be contacted on a weekly basis by the ELSA to support improved attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

Our SENCo, Miss Jelley, will monitor the attendance of pupils with SEN. A carefully designed programme of support is provided to all pupils with SEN and missed interventions/programmes will impact negatively on progress. Miss Jelley will contact any parents of pupils with SEN, where attendance is a concern through a weekly telephone call.

Mrs Harris will make weekly phone calls to parents of non SEN pupils for whom absence is a concern.

### Strategies to Encourage Good Attendance

We believe that pupils who do achieve good attendance should be recognised and rewarded; thus providing them with positive reinforcement and providing other pupils with incentives to improve their attendance. Rewards are issued for excellent attendance termly. Children with attendance of 96.7%+ will receive an attendance certificate, and a wristband. Wristbands are coloured red, orange, yellow, green, blue indigo bronze silver, gold- a colour for each term, and children can work their way through the attendance rainbow. This means that if a child has been absent in any one term resulting in attendance of below 97% he/she will have a chance to earn the wristbands in subsequent terms working from red to gold.

Children with medical conditions will have their attendance calculated without hospital appointments as long as we have seen proof they are attending appointments. This does not include routine GP/Dentist appointments. Children with improved attendance from a low starting point will be rewarded with certificates too.

Positive messages about good attendance are always delivered in class time, assemblies and meetings with parents. Good attendance is shared in assembly and winning/improved classes awarded the school trophy. Up-to-date attendance data is always available from the Attendance Officer or school office.

### **Interventions to Address Poor Attendance**

Sholing Infant School employs a wide range of strategies to support pupils who have unacceptably low levels of attendance. The Attendance Officer, who is responsible for attendance, keeps detailed records of concerns and regularly analyses data in order to target resources. The school always seeks to tackle poor attendance at the earliest opportunity. Strategies include:-

- telephone calls
- letters home,
- meetings with parents in school
- work with our ELSA to support parents and sometimes children who are struggling to come to school for whatever reason
- home visits by the ELSA, Mrs Harris or the Headteacher.
- Referral to other services if needed e.g. school nursing service

Parents will automatically be contacted by the school if their child's attendance starts to fall. Following these initial interventions, if the issue of poor attendance has not been addressed, we will request a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer to support parents in discussing a suitable action plan to get the pupil back into full time education.

As a final measure, where the non-attendance of a pupil is not solved by the interventions detailed we will refer to the Local Authority (LA) who will seek legal advice and may pursue legal action to enforce attendance through the courts. The Local Authority convenes annual attendance conferences and network meetings

and is working closely with the Health Service professionals to improve attendance across the city

### Legal interventions

Fixed Penalty Notices:-

Fixed Penalty Notices were brought in by Southampton LA in September 2005 as an alternative to prosecution. All students who have 10 instances of unauthorised attendance (i.e. 5 days) may be liable. A full copy of the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at School can be obtained from the school office.

### The Importance of Registration

All schools must keep an attendance register in which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, students are marked present or absent. Sholing Infant School opens its doors at 8.45am with official registration at 8:55am. The registers close at 9:00am. If a child arrives after 8:55am the child will receive an 'L' mark. The registers remain open for 25 minutes after school opens. Pupils who arrive after this time, must sign in at the school office. The late arrival will be marked present with a 'U' and statistically this code counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Absences will also be recorded as unauthorised if no reason for absence is provided by parents either by phoning the school before 9:00am, leaving a voicemail, emailing [info@sholinginfantschool.org.uk](mailto:info@sholinginfantschool.org.uk) or in person at the school office. If the school office has to contact you to ask for the reason for absence this too will be unauthorised. Persistent lateness will result in strategies to address the lateness; consequently persistent lateness also places parents at risk of a Penalty Notice being issued. It is essential that the registers are accurate and secure.

### Punctuality

In order to receive a present mark, pupils should arrive in time to attend registration. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will have to sign into the office. Parents must sign children in and select a lunch choice. A reason for lateness must be provided. Your child will walk to class from reception. If your child is late twice in the same academic week the Attendance Officer will contact parent/carers by telephone and send a letter informing the parent of the punctuality issue. The school will monitor the child's punctuality if there are any more instances of late arrival the school will request the parent to attend a meeting to ascertain the cause of the poor punctuality.

### **LEAVE IN TERM-TIME**

Taking a child out of school in term-time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and the school expect parents to support us by not taking children away in school time. Any savings parents think they may make by taking a holiday in school time is offset by the cost to the child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.

All applications for leave must be made well in advance by the parent of residence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form from the school office. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be

exceptional. The school does not deem a holiday as an exceptional circumstance. Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school but it is important for parents to understand that leave in term-time will not be agreed by the school at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced by parents to be exceptional. In considering the request the school will also look at various factors such as:-

- The timing of the request. When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible. Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs, phonic screening or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had either during the current or previous academic year.

In cases where overseas travel has been booked in advance of a request, the school may request sight of travel documentation and where no return travel arrangements have been made, the student maybe removed from the school roll on the last day of their attendance, in consultation with the school's admissions authority. *Any requests for leave of absence that have not been agreed by the school, but are subsequently taken will put parents at risk of a Penalty Notice or prosecution.* In cases where a leave of absence request is declined the school will enter a "G" code in the register which denotes an unauthorised absence.

### **RELIGIOUS ABSENCE**

The school will authorise one day's leave (the day set aside the Religious Body of which the parent is a member) per religious festival e.g. Eid but no more than three days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance.

### School Attendance Policy

This policy is monitored as a matter of course by those responsible for its day-to-day operation and is reviewed annually.

### Criteria for Success

- Attendance rate increases
- Authorised absence rate decreases
- Unauthorised absence rate decreases
- Improvement in individuals' attendance
- The profile of good attendance within the school community

Attendance Officer	Mrs J Stewart
ELSA	Mrs J Harris
SENCO	Miss J Jelley

School Starts	8:45am for registration at 8:55
Present mark given until	8.55am
Late mark given between	8.55-9:00am
U code, unauthorised absence, applied after	9:30am