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<i>Approved by</i>	

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Statement: Attendance

This is a successful school and our children play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and children should be at school on time and every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. It is important therefore, that children attend regularly and this policy sets out how we together with parents will achieve this.

At Sholing Infant School we aim to:-

- Ensure that regular attendance and punctuality are given a high priority by all staff throughout the school;
- Establish effective procedures within the school to follow up unauthorised absences at the earliest opportunity;
- Convey a clear message to parents and pupils that regular attendance is vital and that unauthorised absences will be followed up;
- Comply with Government regulations on attendance;
- Keep records of all absences;
- Distinguish in those records between authorised and unauthorised absences;
- Establish clear communications with external agencies;
- Publish the school's record of absences
- State each child's attendance record in the pupil's **Annual Reports**.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Current Responsibilities and Requirements

Parents, schools and LAs share legal responsibility for school attendance. This document adopts the principles, procedures and good practice outlined in Hampshire County Council's booklet **Maintaining and Improving Attendance** (February 1996) which covers the requirements of the Education Act 1993. Parents of children of compulsory school age must ensure that they receive an efficient and suitable full-time education, either at school or otherwise.

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, a pupil must be marked present or absent. If absent, the mark must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. The publication of data on attendance forms part of the process of accountability to parents and the wider community.

Rates of unauthorised absence must be reported to parents through the annual report and the school prospectus. LAs must ensure that parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations regarding their children's attendance.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect his/her learning. Any pupil's absence or lateness disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is parents' legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

What does your child's attendance figure mean as learning time lost?

Attendance Figure	Days absent by the end of the school year	School time missed by the end of Year 11
100%	0	
95%	10	$\frac{1}{4}$ of a year
90%	20	$\frac{1}{2}$ of a year
85%	30	$\frac{3}{4}$ of a year
80%	40	1 whole year

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help focus on this, the school 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 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.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Reward good attendance for individuals and classes through the awarding of certificates and weekly class celebration of good attendance in assembly.
- 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.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This type of absence can lead to the authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and includes:-

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term-time.

Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may require further evidence from parents before an absence may be authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription or appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, occasionally a child may be reluctant to attend school and in this instance it is best to speak to the school to resolve the issue.

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 an Action Plan and work with the ELSA, Mrs Randall in individual incentive programmes, parenting contracts and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority School Attendance Team.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a child is absent, the parent must:-

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by telephone, email or calling into the school office to report a child's absence.

If a child is absent, the school will:-

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.00am.
- Should no reason for absence be obtained by 9.10am, the school ELSA will undertake a home visit to ensure that a child is safe.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority School Attendance Team where appropriate as per LA protocol.

There are times when the school will need to contact parents about lots of things including absence, so the school requires parents up-to-date contact numbers at all times. Please ensure you inform the school office of any change of number. The school sends text messages for important/useful information and therefore the school needs to be kept informed on up-to-date telephone numbers.

SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

(see appendix)

Parents are expected to engage with the school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. The school may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This includes:-

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, pastoral staff and the headteacher, including the ELSA, Mrs Randall
- Parenting contracts.
- Referral to outside agencies including the LA's Education Welfare Service.
- Penalty notices.
- Attendance audits with the Education Welfare Service.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TEAM

If attendance issues cannot be resolved using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare team. They will try to resolve the situation by agreement but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the case may be referred to

the Court Officers who can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the magistrate's court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the local authority.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons which can be distressing for the child and can in turn encourage absence. Being ten minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

Children are able to come into school from 8.45am. The school day starts officially at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at the time. The doors will be closed at this time for lessons to begin. Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists. If a child has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the headteacher to resolve the problem but parents can approach the school at any time if there are problems getting a child to school on time. Should persistent lateness not be improved following supportive meetings with parents, the school will seek advice from the LA's Education Welfare Service when a referral may be made and a penalty notice applied.

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.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

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.

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 apply in advance using the correct form.
- Attendance at meetings in school.
- Participation 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 against the school criteria, 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 following Absence Flowcharts 1, 2 and 3 (see appendix) and using parent contracts where appropriate.

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.

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.

SCHOOL TARGETS

The school has targets to improve attendance and children have an important role to play in meeting these targets. The minimum expected level of attendance for the school is 97% attendance and we will keep

parents updated regularly about progress to this level and how children's attendance compares. Our aim is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. The school monitors each pupils attendance based on a diamond model, used at both the Sholing Technology College and other cluster primary schools.

The target attendance figure for all students is a **minimum of 97%** attendance. Based on current attendance figures the school will place your child in one of the following groups below. You will be informed of his/her Attendance group each half term to ensure that you have a clear picture of your child's attendance. You will also receive a half termly attendance report.

Group 1: No Concern - Green Group

The child attends for 97% - 100% of the time.

Group 2: Concern - Yellow Group

The child attends for 95% - 96.9% of the time.

Group 3: Risk of Underachievement - Amber Group

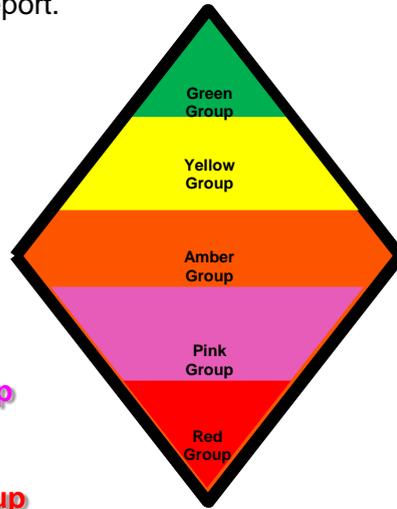
The child attends for 93% - 94.9% of the time.

Group 4: Severe Risk of Underachievement - Pink Group

The child attends for 90% - 92.9% of the time.

Group 5: Extreme Risk of Underachievement - Red Group

The child attends for 0% - 89.9% of the time.

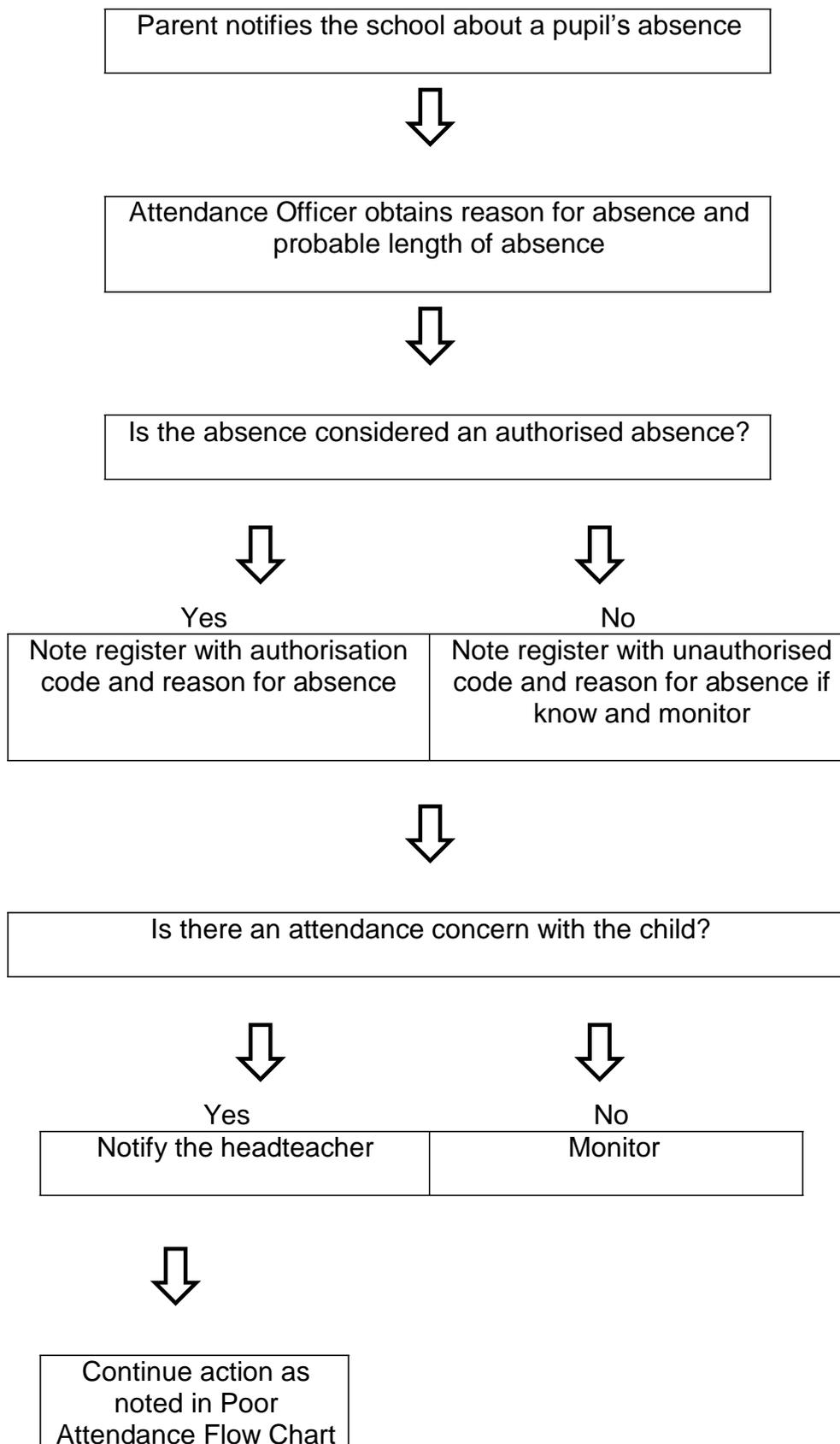


Through the school year, the school monitors absences and punctuality to show where improvements can be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in newsletters. The school requests full support from parents/carers.

SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

PUPIL ABSENCE NOTIFICATION



POOR ATTENDANCE IDENTIFIED

Poor attendance letter sent to parents



Is there an improvement?



Yes

Continue to monitor



No

Second attendance letter sent
Inviting parents to review
meeting with headteacher and
EWO



Is there an improvement?



Yes

Continue to monitor



No

Is attendance below 85%



No

Send third attendance letter
outlining improvement required
and monitor for six weeks

Yes

Parent meeting with headteacher
and EWO. Parents informed that a
penalty notice letter will be issued
after two weeks if no improvement
and referral to EWS via



Is there an improvement?



Yes

Monitor and
review

No

Parent meeting with
headteacher and EWO.
Parents informed that
letter to be issued after two
weeks if no improvement and
referral to EWS via ...

Yes

Monitor and review

No

Refer to EWS and if
appropriate apply
penalty notice

<p>Yes Monitor and review</p>	<p>No Parent meeting with headteacher and EWO. Parents informed that letter to be issued after two weeks if no improvement and referral to EWS via ...</p>	<p>Yes Monitor and review</p>	<p>No Refer to EWS and if appropriate apply penalty notice</p>
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PERSISTENT LATE ATTENDANCE

Has the pupil accumulated ten late marks in one half-term or three late marks in three consecutive weeks?



Yes



No

Attendance Officer to inform class teacher who is required to speak to the parent about persistent lateness and obtain underlying reason if appropriate	No further action apart from monitoring
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Has this resulted in an improvement?



No

Attendance Officer will issue a letter to parent about the school's concern on late arrival



Has this resulted in an improvement?



No

Attendance Officer will issue a second letter to parent and notify the EWO to arrange a supportive meeting



Has this resulted in an improvement?



Yes



No

Monitor	Penalty notice warning letter issued to parent
	If still no improvement school to issue penalty notice and refer to EWS