



Attendance Policy

Prepared By:

L Houghton

Approved By:

FGB

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September 2024

Policy Statement and Guidelines

Vision

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. This policy is written in conjunction with the recommendations issued in the government's *'Improving attendance-support for schools and colleges – September 2022'* which gives guidance to schools and local authorities to support them to improve school attendance.

At Sholing Infant School 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. We also recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive. Our school will encourage good attendance (96.5%+) 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 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:-

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the relationship between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

At Sholing Infant School, Lisa Houghton-Head teacher will fulfil this role and will:

- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.



- Make clear to parents the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This includes displays in classrooms and in the wider school, in assemblies and in newsletters. This also includes praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- At Sholing Infant School, we will adopt the mantra, '**MISS SCHOOL-MISS OUT!**' and ensure that parents, pupils and staff know and use this mantra. School staff will ensure that children leave school each day, looking forward to something that is happening the following day.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Work with the LA and HAMWIC trust in supporting pupils to overcome any barriers to good attendance, ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled

Roles And Responsibilities

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

Parents

- Recognise that it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.
- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually, arriving from 8:45 and no later than 8:55am, when the register is taken and the school day begins. Any child arriving after 9:25 will be marked absent for the entire morning. The school day ends at 3pm when children should be collected by parents. Any change in the person collecting, should be notified to the class teacher at the start of the day. Any late changes must be reported to the school office before the end of the school day, and as soon as possible.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:55am by phoning 02380 447447 or emailing info@sholinginfantschool.org.uk
- Avoid any leave in term-time, plan holidays out of term and if absence in exceptional circumstances is requested, apply in advance using the correct form.
- call on staff for help when they need it
- communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support
- Contact out Family Support lead, Jane Harris, our ELSA, Sally Knight or Headteacher, Lisa Houghton should a child require support with attendance in relation to both in school and out of school barriers.
- Attend meetings in relation to attendance as required
- Participate in parenting support meetings and planning, and co-operate in support and interventions offered by the school or other agencies if required
- treat staff with respect
- actively support the work of the school

The Headteacher will:

- Prioritise attendance as a strategic ambition to achieve high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school
- Monitor and analyse attendance rigorously, using attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. At Sholing Infant School the head teacher will check absence daily with the attendance officer, as a safeguarding check. She will also look at patterns of individual



and group attendance weekly, ensuring that communication with parents whose children are persistently absent occurs weekly via the school MIS system.

- Use this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or for pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them. At Sholing Infant School parents will be invited to work on a support plan for attendance, should attendance fall to 90% or below.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Listen to and understand: Along with the attendance and pastoral team the head teacher will, when a pattern is spotted, discuss this with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- Facilitate support to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues
- Formalise support: where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
- Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, the Headteacher will enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Work in liaison with the attendance governor and provide a termly report on absence for governors, as well as providing an attendance update at each governing body meeting.

The Attendance Officer will:

- Ensure that the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.
- Proactively manage lateness. At Sholing Infant School, registers will close at 9:25am. Any pupil arriving after the close of registers will be marked absent for the morning session. Where this absence is not due to a medical appointment and is due to lateness, the session will be marked unauthorised for the morning session.
- Expect parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason. Where no contact is made by a parent, calls will be made by school to all contacts (all pupils must have four emergency contact numbers provided)
- Should no contact be possible, a home visit will be undertaken by the school for safeguarding purposes. Where a child has a social worker, the social worker will also be informed of the child's absence.
- Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents at Sholing Infant School are able to access their child's attendance via the Parent App, however paper reports will be sent out half termly to parents to ensure that all parents are updated as to their child's attendance

The Pastoral support (ELSA-Mrs Harris) team will:

- Monitor individual pupil's attendance weekly in liaison with the Headteacher
- Treat all pupils and parents with dignity to support the family. At Sholing Infant School our pastoral team will be the first point of contact for support and advice.
- Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

The School Business Manager will:

- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.

All school staff will:

- Know the importance of good attendance, and will be consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need
- Treat all pupils and parents with dignity and model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- In communicating with parents, discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- See pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff.



- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.
- Talk to parents and pupils regularly where attendance is a concern and any impact poor attendance is having on progress.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance through displays, assemblies or in registration periods. This may also include, with sensitivity, praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- Ensure that they explicitly reinforce the 'MISS SCHOOL_MISS OUT' mantra, reminding children why they need to be in school each day.
- Teachers will monitor individual and class attendance and will ensure that attendance is discussed with parents as part of progress meetings/co-production meetings (for IEPs)

Governors will:

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly.
- Appoint a governor with the specific role of monitoring attendance. At Sholing Infant School this governor is James Knight.
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy.
- Set aspirational targets for improving the school's attendance figures and monitor attendance, including that of different groups/years groups of pupils.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing criteria against which leave requests will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent.

Monitoring approach to attendance at Sholing Infant School:-

- Attendance is checked twice daily via morning and afternoon registration. Parent of pupils who are absent without explanation will be automatically contacted by 9:25am at the latest by the Attendance Officer, Miss Smith. If the school is not notified of the reason for a pupil's absence by 9:00am, parents will be seek a reason for absence and check that children are safe.
- Should no call be received, the school will systematically call each contact registered for a pupil to establish a reason for absence. Sholing Infant School requests that four emergency contacts are provided for each child.
- Should no reason be established through this process, Sholing Infant School will contact sibling schools and subsequently carry out a home visit for any pupil for whom we have no reason for absence.
- Social workers will be advised of the absence of any pupil with whom they are working.
- 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.
- The school will notify parents of their child's current attendance each half term.
- Where there are concerns regarding levels of absence , improvement will be achieved through our graduated approach to attendance (see Appendix 1)
- 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 and severe absence (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. Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight



across a full school year), Sholing Infant school will work with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

All our PA pupils and their parents are supported through an attendance support plan developed between school and parents, recognising both the strengths and barriers for each family.

Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school-severe absence).

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. A reason for lateness must be provided. Where a child is persistently late school will contact parent/carers by telephone to agree a support plan to improve punctuality.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore our attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority.. In all cases, we will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

Strategies to Encourage Good Attendance

Sholing Infant School recognises the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate pupil's attendance to parents regularly. In school we visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This includes through:

- Welcoming pupils into school positively and individually
- Making sure that the value of coming to school is explicit-MISS SCHOOL- MISS OUT!
- Displays,
- assemblies
- Praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.



- 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.
- Attendance charts are displayed in classes for children to earn weekly rewards if in school every day
- Attendance chart in the hall displayed to show comparative class data
- Attendance certificates presented in assemblies termly

Interventions to Address Poor Attendance

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

We will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- Initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures. This could include:
 - letters home
 - attendance clinics
 - engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
 - work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard to reach families and find methods that work and are understood
 - consideration if further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on [parental responsibility measures](#)
 - provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

Pupils who are persistently absent

We will:

- develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the local authority attendance team, external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments- attendance will be discussed as part of DSL monthly meetings.
- coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- work in partnership with local authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports on the impact of action plans and interventions

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 may be 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.

Sharing Information and Working Collaboratively

Sholing Infant School will work with the local community (including voluntary and community groups) to help remove the barriers to attendance that families experience. In some cases, families will experience the same or similar barriers to attendance for multiple children who attend different schools in the area. As such, we will work together with other schools where possible. This will be particularly beneficial in supporting transition between Sholing Infant and Junior school.

Local authorities and schools are expected to have a regular Targeting Support Meeting at least termly. We are also legally required to share information from our registers with the local authority, e.g. schools must share the name and address of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised.

Legal intervention

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance.



All local authorities are therefore expected to:

- Understand and make use of formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders and use them fairly and consistently.
- Set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used where voluntary support is not appropriate, or where absence was not for legitimate reasons and support has not been engaged with and/or been successful.
- Secure effective joint working between the School Attendance Support Team and statutory children's social care services to work together where there are safeguarding concerns or absence becomes severe.
- Issue fixed penalty notices in line with local codes of conduct where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- Take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.

Attendance Officer	Miss A Smith/Mrs J Stewart
ELSA	Mrs J Harris /Mrs Knight
SENCO	Miss J Rice
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	9:25am

Appendix 1 - Sholing Infant School Graduated Attendance Response – March 2022

All children

PP

SEN

	All children	PP	SEN
96.5%+ ↻	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award for above 96.5 % attendance in a term Award for 96.5% for whole year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award for 96.5% attendance in a term Award for 96.5% for whole year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Award for 96.5% attendance in a term Award for 96.5% for whole year
95%-96.5% ↻	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Parents informed that attendance is below expected % by email Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Parents informed that attendance is below expected % by email Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Parents informed that attendance is below expected % by email Award for improved attendance (if appropriate)
91%-95% ↻	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Email sent to parents to offer support and inform in terms of improvement required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Phone calls from ELSA fortnightly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor direction of attendance. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Phone calls from SENDCo fortnightly
90% and below ↻	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start PA procedures. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Attendance plan in place Weekly monitoring of attendance by Attendance Officer. Phone calls from attendance officer weekly Gather evidence for EWO referral Referral to EH where attendance drops below 85% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start PA procedures. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Attendance plan in place Weekly monitoring of attendance by ELSA Phone calls from ELSA weekly Gather evidence for EWO referral Referral to EH where attendance drops below 85% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start PA procedures. Award for improved attendance (if appropriate) Attendance plan in place Weekly monitoring of attendance by SENDCo Phone calls from SENDCo weekly Gather evidence for EWO referral Referral to EH where attendance drops below 85%

Ongoing Processes:

- Absence procedures followed daily by school office
- CME procedures followed if appropriate
- Support with attendance for vulnerable families
- Daily absence/reasons shared with HT by school office
- Headteacher to monitor attendance weekly

- Headteacher to meet monthly with ELSA/SENDCo to discuss concerns around absence and next steps
- Headteacher to share weekly attendance class by class in PDM
- Attendance class by class shared in celebration assembly- wall chart.
- Teachers to reinforce attendance message. Warm welcome. Reminders of missed learning

