



Attendance Policy

Introduction

“Excellent Attendance =Excellent Progress”

Punctuality and good attendance are crucial to the success of our pupils and to the smooth running and organisation of the school, for the benefit of all. In law, parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school and are punctual. It is the responsibility of the school to support and encourage full attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Our policy is to:

- Emphasise the positive reasons for full attendance
- Recognise and acknowledge good attendance, including attendance achieved in very difficult circumstances (e.g. chronic illness)
- Identify and act upon difficulties at the earliest stage, working closely with parents or carers
- Avoid acrimony and disappointment in connection with requests for absence, through clarity and consistency

The school greatly appreciates the steps taken by families to secure good attendance, and the willingness of parents to share information about circumstances which may give rise to difficulties.

100% attendance is celebrated with children at termly intervals in Celebration Assembly.

First Day Contact and Notification on Return.

Parents will be informed of their responsibility to inform the school of reasons for absence on the first day of any absence. At Sylvan, administrative staff will contact parents on any day a registered pupil is absent without explanation. This will be by telephone. Parents will be asked to keep the office informed of current daily contact numbers. If contact cannot be made, a message will be left and a letter will be sent on day three of non-contact. This requires the Headteacher's signature. Where children are registered as "at risk", Children and Family Services will be informed of the absence on the same day. On their return to school, parents will be asked to confirm the reason for absence with a letter. If the Headteacher has any cause for concern about the reason for absence, this will remain unauthorised until these have been discussed with the parents and a satisfactory explanation secured. If the school does not accept the reason given, the absence will remain unauthorised. The intention of the legislation is that, for the absence to be authorised, there must have been no reasonable way in which the child could have managed to come to school.

Requests for Authorised Absence

From time to time, parents will wish to request absence from school. The Head teacher has discretionary power under special circumstances, to grant leave of absence, for up to 10 school days. No parent can demand such absence as a right. The Headteacher may authorise absence of more than 10 school days only under exceptional circumstances and parents are advised to time such visits in consultation with the school. Holidays are not considered to be exceptional circumstances and under Government Advice and Guidance from the Borough of Poole we are unable to authorise **any** holidays in term time.

A form is available for requests for authorised absence. A form must be returned and authorisation obtained, before any booking is made. Requests made after booking will automatically result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. Holiday dates for each school year will be advertised to parents before the end of the previous school year.

Legislation makes it clear that the burden is on the parent to show why requested absences should be authorised. The Headteacher will consider the following (and may contact the parents to discuss their request in detail):

- The nature and purpose of the absence, and the reason for the request
- The duration of the absence and its likely impact on the education and progress of the child
- The circumstances of the family and the wishes of the parents
- The distance of any journey involved

- Whether the absence is seen by the family as a rare event, not to be repeated
- The attendance record of the child (attendance of less than 90% triggers a meeting)

Parents will be advised that, while applying the above criteria, the following requests may be considered as reasonable:

- Medical or dental appointments e.g. in hospital clinics (proof of appointment letters)
- Family bereavement
- Special family occasions e.g. weddings on school days
- Days of obligatory family religious observance
- Interviews and examinations e.g. in connection with school transfer, musical tuition. The school will expect the child to return to school after the examination.

Where an absence is authorised and families fail to abide by any agreement, additional absences will be unauthorised and future requests refused. Absences taken without consultation will be unauthorised. Absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Traveller Children

Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 acknowledges the special position of Traveller Children. The Headteacher will consult the Education Welfare Officer if there are concerns.

Off-Site Tuition

Where a child's special educational needs are recognised by the school, and special tuition/therapy not available in school is required, the Headteacher may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside school.

Absence for Performance

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence for approved public performances considering the following:

- The nature and purpose of the performance
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress
- The child's attendance record

Where a child is paid for their performance, a license must be obtained from the LA, and absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the license. Any concerns will be communicated to the EWO.

Monitoring and Support of Attendance

Where concerns arise, the Headteacher will liaise closely with the assigned Education Welfare Officer (EWO).The Headteacher and EWO will undertake a termly attendance audit, identifying and considering pupils with less than 90% attendance for the most recent term and/or the school year to date. Where concerns arise, the parents/guardians will be invited to discuss these with the EWO at school .The EWO's RAG rated letters monitor the impact of meetings and allow escalation of enforcing attendance by the LA to happen. LA Fast Track processes are a last resort and are implemented by the LA.

Sylvan Infant School Attendance Policy

Approved by governors at the
FGB meeting on:

17th July 2014

Signed on behalf of governors:

Next Review Due::

July 2016