

## Policy for School and Preschool Attendance

### Attendance

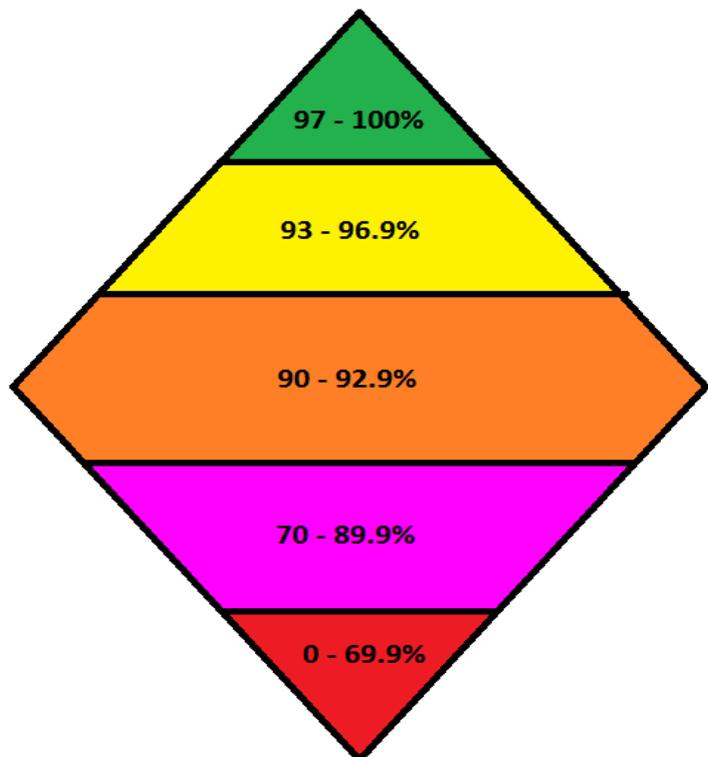
As an effective school, we convey our positive regard for regular attendance to parents, pupils and teachers. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective teaching and learning. **Attendance is important in supporting the children to prepare for employment, providing a positive work ethic, and helping our children in their next steps in life.** Parents are made aware of the need for regular and punctual attendance through the Home School Agreement which all parents are given when their child starts at the school.

#### Principles:

- The school makes all pupils feel valued and promotes positive attitudes to those children returning to school after absence.
- Staff ensure that they understand registration regulations.
- The Educational Welfare Officer, family support worker and Head Teacher monitor attendance and attendance procedures each term. Following this review the Head Teacher and /or family support worker contacts any family whose child is causing concern, regarding punctuality or regular attendance via a phone call, meeting or in writing. A meeting is suggested with a view to the school and family working together to resolve the situation. Details of all such correspondence and subsequent meetings are kept on file in the main office.
- The Educational Welfare Officer and Head Teacher set annual targets aimed at improving the attendance of pupils. These targets are presented to the full Governing Body members.
- Attendance figures for individual children are provided within the 2 interim and final annual Report sent to all parents.

### The Attendance Diamond

<b>Shortstown Primary School</b>
<b>Attendance Groups</b>
<b>GREEN: No concern</b>
<b>YELLOW: Concern</b>
<b>AMBER: Risk of underachievement</b>
<b>PINK: Severe risk of underachievement – Persistent Absentee</b>
<b>RED: Extreme concern</b>



#### Procedure.

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence)

If a child is absent, parents are advised that they must call the school on the first day **and everyday** of an absence before 9.00am if possible stating a reason. Absences are considered as “unauthorised” until a satisfactory explanation is received. It is not guaranteed that all reported absences will be authorised. **If reporting sickness, the specific reason or illness is required before authorisation will be considered. This information may be used to support safeguarding and track illness through the school, in order for preventative measures to be put in place early. Letters to parents may be distributed if a disease has been identified, sharing symptoms, course of action and when the child can be returned to school.**

If contact, explaining the child’s absence, fails to be made by our parents or carers, then the school contacts the home by telephone/text on the first day, **If there is no response, the school will continue to attempt contact. If concerns over attendance continues, support from EWO will be requested, there may be a referral to Early Help.** The Office Manager records this contact.

If there has been no telephone contact with a family during a period of absence, we ask for an explanatory note to be sent on the day the child returns to school. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence, retrospectively. If authorisation is refused, for instance if a child was kept off school for a birthday, then the parents are informed.

After 10 days of unexplained absence a referral is made to the Educational Welfare Officer and can incur a penalty notice.

If a child attends irregularly or if there is a pattern to the absences the Class Teacher informs the Head Teacher. At this point the Head Teacher requests a meeting with the parents. If the attendance fails to consistently improve a formal referral is made to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Authorisation for lateness or early collection may not be given when the reason is due to child care arrangements.

We positively promote children with **97%** or more attendance every term. The school will reward children with 100% attendance with a certificate and prize at an assembly in July.

Letters informing parents of concerns over attendance, when a child’s attendance hits **93%** or less will be sent. **Attendance figures are regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.** These will explain to parents the importance of attendance and offer a parent consultation meeting to review the situation. Attendance will be monitored for the next 2 weeks for signs of improvement. If improvements are not made and the child’s attendance shows 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) within a 12 week period, a referral to the EWO will be made. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the EWO, £60 per child, per parent. This could lead to legal action being taken.

## **Safeguarding**

Any concerns relating to attendance will be reported to the child protection officer in order to liaise with the Head Teacher and EWO. The child protection officer may at any point refer the concern to the Intake and assessment team if additional evidence of concerns have been reported.

## **Completing the Register**

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Staff are aware that registers:

- Provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils.
- They are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.
- They also contribute to pupil’s end of term reports and to records of achievement.

The guidelines for marking the register are stuck to the front of each register to ensure consistency in the completion of registers.

- To be completed in pen
- Diagonal line to denote presence.
- 0 if child not present and no notification has been given. This is an unauthorised absence.
- L to denote late before close of registration
- U to denote late following the close of registration at 9.20a.m. and is an unauthorised absence.
- Relevant symbol to show reason for authorised absence.

## Family Holidays During Term Time

The law says that parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

The Head Teacher will not grant any holidays during term time. A leave of absence may be granted for **exceptional** circumstances. For the request and an application is made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.

If you take a holiday without the school's permission or if your child fails to return from a leave of absence by the agreed date, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and noted on your child's records.

The school may also ask the Education Welfare Service to consider a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days or £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If you do not pay a Penalty Notice, you will be prosecuted in Court.

## What parents/carers can do

You should request time off for your child as soon as possible and always before the holiday. However please do not expect the school to grant your request unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. It is important to carefully consider the implications of taking your child out of school during term time. There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available for holidays which would not have a negative effect on your child's education.

If the school grants a leave of absence in term time due to **exceptional** circumstances, please discuss with the Head Teacher how you will help your child to catch up with the missing hours of education lost.

5 days absence reduces the potential annual attendance from 100% to 97.4%  
 10 days absence reduces the potential annual attendance from 100% to 94.7% =Cause for concern

All leave of absence forms can be obtained from the reception areas.

## Religious Celebrations and Festivals

Authorised leave may be granted for 1 day, if it is a main day set apart for religious observance by the religious body the child belongs to and only if it falls on a school day.

## Lateness

School begins at 8.55 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 9.00 a.m will be noted as late. Any child arriving later than 9.00 should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the School Office. Parents / Carers will be asked to complete a late form explaining the reason for the lateness. A late slip will be issued and recorded. Persistent late arrivals will be monitored and may be referred to the EWO. Children will be marked as late in the register.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern parents are always contacted.

Children arriving after 9.20am are officially unauthorised. 10 unauthorised absences in a 12 week period may result in a penalty notice being issued.

## Late collection of children after school.

See collection of children from school policy.

## Early collection of children

The school day finishes at 3.20p.m. Children are working in class until this time. Early collection disturbs theirs and others learning. Appointments not related to the individual is not a reason for early collection, alternative arrangements should be made.

## Persistent Absence

Persistence absence is recognised as children who have a less the **90% attendance**, regardless of whether this is authorised or unauthorised. A persistent absence will be referred to the EWO and meetings will be arranged with the parents to set targets for improvement.

**90% attendance is the equivalent of missing 4 weeks of the child's education. This can severely affect the attainment and progress across all curriculum areas. It can also affect the child's wellbeing as their friendship and emotional stability can be disrupted.**

## Medical appointments

All routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school time. Routine appointments in school time may be unauthorised.

Requests for absence may be granted for Consultant or Hospital appointments where the appointment card is for the child and where these appointments can not be changed. If a child has a specific medical need which may affect their attendance, it is the responsibility of the parent to communicate this to the school, with medical evidence and requirements for the care of the child.

The appointment card should be shown at the office, where a release slip for the child will be written. This should be kept by the parent showing permission for the child to be out of school should they be questioned.

Absence will not be authorised for medical appointments of other family members or friends.

## Sickness

It is accepted that children may become ill over the course of the year. The procedures for reporting absence are highlighted above and should be followed. After 3 consecutive days of absence, due to sickness, a doctor's note may be requested by the school, before authorisation is given.

It is important to return the child to school as soon as possible following illness. If the staff are concerned about the child's wellbeing they will contact the parent/carer to collect them.

A 24 hour absence following sickness and diarrhoea is expected.

## Rewards for good attendance

The school has a number of initiatives to reward good attendance.

- Children can collect wrist bands for 100% attendance through the 3 terms. Bronze for the Autumn term, silver with Spring and Autumn term, Gold for 3 terms in a year. There is also a pen and pencil gift set and enamel badge awarded at the end of the year for 100% attendance.
- Children with **97%** or above, and those with no late marks through the year receive acknowledgement of their achievement with certificates and small rewards.
- The class attendance trophy is given out termly for the class with the highest attendance.

## Analysing attendance

The school monitors attendance closely and provides parents with an attendance vs progress report in September with information from the previous year. Attendance figures are compared against Bedford Borough and national expectations for the school and vulnerable groups. This information is used to decide on possible intervention strategies and amendments to policy and procedure to ensure good attendance is maintained and support provided early to all families. The Family support worker uses attendance of individuals as one guide to show impact of work with the families.

Vulnerable groups will be analysed to identify any aspects of attendance concerns, which will be addressed through school policy and interventions.