



Attendance and Punctuality Policy Sandhill Primary School September 2020

The Staff and Governors at Sandhill Primary School are committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our school and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

All of our school stakeholders need to work in partnership to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities in our aim to promote high standards of attendance and punctuality.

The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance. Therefore, any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons.

Why Regular Attendance is important

Any absence, including family holidays, negatively affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect learning and achievement. It can also have a de-motivating effect if they are unable to access parts of the curriculum following absences. **Every school day matters.**

Our school will seek to build on partnerships with parents/carers by informing them about attendance and punctuality concerns at an early stage.

Our Office Staff are responsible for making daily calls with regard to children's non-attendance to parents and carers. Also part of this role is to record absence correctly on the attendance system (SIMS) for our school.

Good attendance and punctuality is recognised and rewarded in school in various ways.

Parent/Carer Responsibility

All Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or through other suitable arrangements (section 7 Education Act 1996).

Good Attendance

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the Parent /Carer. Therefore, any absence from school without a valid or significant reason may be seen as an offence resulting in legal action.

Parents and Carers can request at any time a copy of their child's registration certificate showing their attendance to date. Your child's attendance will be shared at Parent/Carer consultations in the Autumn and Spring term. A copy of your child's registration certificate will also be included in their end of year report

Make sure your child has good attendance:

- From starting at nursery, your child should know the importance of good attendance and getting to school on time every day.
- Show an interest and ask about what they are doing at school.
- Encourage them to take part in school activities.
- Inform their teacher or Headteacher about anything of concern.
- Can time off school for minor ailments be avoided? Particularly those which would not stop you from going to work.
- Where possible, make appointments after school, at weekends, or during school holidays.
- Take family holidays outside of term time and speak with school if this is not possible.

The definition of a persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance).

The school Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work alongside the Attendance Officer to address pupil related issues that may be affecting their attendance at school. If a child is referred to the EWO under the Local Authority guidelines and the Education Act 1996, the EWO will work with the parents/carers and school to address the issues.

Registration

It is a legal requirement that a register has to be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, this enables school to:

- **Monitor attendance on a regular basis.**
- **Evaluate information and set targets/tackle areas of concern as early as possible.**
- **Target absence, punctuality and truancy and communicate with pupils and parents/carers about expectations.**
- **Have the ability to publicise the above data.**
- **Have the ability to give a clear and accurate picture to parents, carers and guardians.**
- **Have the ability to encourage and reward good attendance.**

Punctuality ~ Lateness

It is important that all children arrive at school in good time as it is disruptive for the child and the whole class if they arrive late. Reading, Writing and Maths takes place at the beginning of each school day. Regular lateness can mean that these important lessons are missed.

Since the return after lockdown schools have had to implement a staggered start. For families with siblings children can be dropped off at the earliest start time and collected at the later time so that classes are not disrupted with children coming out of class early

8:30am Start Grey / Snowy /Elf	8:40am Start Owletts & Spotty	8:50am Start Tawny / Sooty / Barn	9:00am Hawk & Eagle
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School Doors Open at 8:30am

Late before register closes

Late Mark recorded - between 9:00am – 9:30am

Late after the register has closed

Children arriving after 9:30am after the register has closed are marked as an unauthorised absence and this **impacts on their attendance**. If your child is late to school, please enter via the Main Office where you will be asked to complete a late arrival record.

It is recognised that on occasions there may be genuine reasons for late arrival such as public transport difficulties. If there is a particular reason for your child being late, Parents/Carers should discuss this with the Attendance Officer who may be able to assist with any difficulties.

If your child needs to be collected earlier than the end of the school day or you may be late collecting your child, please inform the School Office regarding these exceptional circumstances.

Medical Appointments

We appreciate that children may be required to attend medical appointments during the school day. However, please note the following:

- Appointments should be made outside school hours wherever possible.
- If your child attends an appointment during the school day, wherever possible, please bring your child back to school for the remainder of the school day.
- Siblings are expected to attend school and their attendance should not be affected by other family member's appointments.
- School should be informed of the appointment prior to the absence where possible.
- If the appointment is during school time, then medical evidence **SHOULD BE PROVIDED** e.g. an appointment card, letter or text message from the relevant organisation.
- If we do not receive a copy of the medical evidence, this may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and we may seek EWO's advice as required.

Leave of Absence Requests

A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the first date of absence.

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and on a case by case basis.

School will respond to the request and it is possible that a Penalty Notice may be issued.

If the school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed, appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

School Attendance and Punctuality Procedures

Attendance and punctuality checks take place daily by the Office Staff and Attendance Officer. When a child's attendance and/or punctuality is a concern, parents/carers will be informed via the following procedures:

- Sandhill Primary School operates a 'First Day Contact' procedure and expects parents/carers to communicate the reasons for a child's absence or lateness.
- The school has a dedicated phone line (option 1) so that you can leave a message with details of your child, class and their reason for absence or lateness.
- Where possible, please give an indication of the likely date of return.
- If no communication has been received, Parents/Carers will be contacted by school. If no reason can be determined for the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised (O).
- We also carry out home visits to check on the well-being of children who are absent from school. If also deemed appropriate, the Education Welfare Officer may make the home visit.

This contact is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school and enables school to communicate quickly and effectively with Parents and Carers.

All contact with home is recorded and monitored by the Attendance Officer and the Safeguarding Team.

Attendance and Punctuality Letters

Letters will be sent to inform parents/carers of potential concerns and to ask for their support and co-operation in trying to improve their child's attendance and/or punctuality. This could be followed by a second letter if no improvement has been seen.

Parents/Carers may be invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance and/or punctuality. At this meeting:

- The School Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will offer any relevant support or guidance to the family as required.
- Clear targets may be set for improvement and monitoring of attendance and/or punctuality.
- Expectations will be made clear.
- A copy of the School Attendance Policy will be shared.

Legal Action

The School and Governing Body do not wish to take legal action against Parents/Carers for unauthorised absences or persistent lateness. However, we may consider legal action as our aim is to ensure that every child is in school every day.

Re-occurring unauthorised absence may be referred to the EWO and this can lead to legal intervention and a formal assessment.

Unauthorised absence may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued through the Local Authority. The penalty will be £60 per child if paid within 21 days; payment after this time, but within 28 days, is £120.

Persistent unauthorised absence and/or failure to pay a fixed Penalty Notice may render you liable to criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

School Governors / Governing Body

The Governing Body work alongside the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Attendance Officer to ensure that the Attendance Systems are effective.

Attendance data and the overall effectiveness of school attendance procedures are provided to the Governing Body at their termly meetings to support the monitoring of this across school.

The Governing Body:

- Ensures that the legal requirements for registration are complied with.
- Reviews the school Attendance Policy on an annual basis.
- Provides input into the school attendance targets.
- Receives reports and statistics.
- Supports the need for good attendance.
- Ensures the Policy is in line with BMBC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct – September 2019

Approved by:	Interim Executive Board
Date:	30 th January 2020
Next review due by:	September 2021