



SLADEFIELD INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

	Committee	Date	Minute No.
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	C & GP	21/03/13	5
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	C & GP	26/02/14	6
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	C & GP	22/01/15	16
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	FGB	22/10/15	15
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	C & GP	17/10/16	8
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	C & GP	27/03/17	24
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	FGB	09/04/19	14
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	FGB	30/03/21	13
Reviewed and Approved by Governors	FGB	27/3/23	12
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

March 2023

INTRODUCTION

At Sladefield Infant School, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. All children benefit from well-planned sequences of lessons designed to ensure that they make the best possible progress. If they are frequently absent, this learning is disrupted and makes it difficult for progress to be maintained.

Everyone that comes to Sladefield Infant School is expected to aim for 96% attendance. We understand that everyone gets sick from time to time but minor coughs, colds or aches and pains should not stop a child from coming to school.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all our children. We shall reward children whose attendance is good. We shall also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.

Sladefield Infant School bases its Attendance Policy on the Guidelines set out by Birmingham Local Authority.

RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Every member of staff in school is responsible for ensuring good attendance and punctuality of all children.

The Pastoral Team specifically work to improve children's attendance; this team includes the Head Teacher, Attendance Officer, Learning Mentor and Family Support Worker. The team also liaise with the school Office staff on a daily basis to ensure that attendance concerns are being raised with immediacy.

Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school each day that school is open, and school has a legal duty to monitor and report the attendance of all children. In accordance with Local Authority policy, leave of absence in term time is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Each case is reviewed by the Head Teacher on its merits, and records of leave are kept for individual children. It is school policy that no holiday or extended holiday absence is authorised under any circumstances.

Whilst parents of children in Reception classes do not have a legal duty to send their children to school until they are five years old, at Sladefield Infant School, we believe that expectations of attendance and behaviour are laid down from a very early age, and will

therefore monitor attendance from as soon as a child begins at the school, and endeavour to work with parents to improve it where necessary.

We believe that a partnership approach to attendance is vital: Senior Leaders, Governors and the Pastoral Team will work with parents and pupils, and Support Services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

ROLES OF CORE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SCHOOL

Governors

- To monitor progress towards school targets for attendance
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy

Pastoral Team

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately record individual pupil, group and whole school patterns
- To discuss and disseminate to class teachers the attendance of children whose attendance is causing concern
- To analyse attendance codes to inform action planning
- To contact parents and meet with them to discuss how their child's attendance could be improved, providing support for the parent or child where appropriate
- To carry out home visits for pupils with poor attendance, or whose reason for absence can't be determined
- To request medical evidence for pupils with poor attendance, where it is clear that this can be provided to support the child's absence
- To ensure that those children with expected attendance, or improving attendance, are rewarded as outlined in the policy
- To ensure appropriate support and intervention for pupils with low attendance to reduce impact on learning
- To feedback to Governors and provide information for them to evaluate the success of the policy and practice
- To follow the Local Authority 'Children Missing in Education' guidelines if required
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Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the attendance module in SIMs
- To prepare attendance reports when requested by the Head Teacher
- To record names of pupils who arrive late via the Inventory System; pupils late after 9.30am will receive a 'U' mark meaning they are considered absent for that session
- To record reasons for absence on the system
- To call parents on first day of absence if no reason has been given, ensuring that priority is given firstly to those children considered 'vulnerable'
- To ask parents for evidence of illness if required, and record on pupil's attendance

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class, completing the register twice daily at the designated time

- To promote good attendance, which may include questioning children and/or parents as to reasons for absences when the child has known absence concerns
- To notify the Pastoral Team should a child's attendance cause a concern
- To ensure that children who experience difficulties with attendance and/or punctuality receive targeted support to minimise the impact on their learning

PROCEDURES

The doors for children to enter the school are opened at 8.30am. A second bell is rung and closed again at 8.50am. Class teachers complete the register during this 20-minute period, electronically sending it at 8.55am. If a child arrives after the register has been electronically sent, they are marked as late. Children who arrive late or after the register has closed report to the main Reception, where they are signed in by their parents using our electronic system; a reason for their lateness is requested. **Children who are late after 9.30am will receive a 'U' mark, meaning they are considered absent for that session.**

ABSENCE

- Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for legitimate reasons and the school has received notification from a parent.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences outlined by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent

- Parents are asked to let the school know if their child is going to be absent. All absences are imputed onto the school's registration records by Office staff
- When a parent informs a class teacher of an absence on Class Dojo, it is the class teacher's responsibility to inform the Office staff of this absence so that it can be recorded on the school's registration records
- Where children are absent for registration, and we have not been notified of an absence, parents are telephoned by a designated member of our Office staff to request a reason for absence. All reasons for absence are recorded onto the school's registration records
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the school tries to make contact straight away with the parent in order to check the safety of the child

- If the school has concerns about a child's poor attendance, a 'safe and well' home visit might be carried out for any absence irrespective of the number of days of absence
- On the third day of absence, staff will make either a 'safe and well' phone call or home visit and ask to speak to/see the child
- If the school believes there might be a Safeguarding concern regarding a child's absence, the school may carry out a 'safe and well' check at the known address for that child; this is likely to be carried out by at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead alongside another member of staff
- If there is no response from any 'safe and well' visit, the school may follow any of the following procedures:
 - contact other Emergency Contact numbers to see if they know of the whereabouts of the child and to request that they try and make contact with the parent and request that they make contact with the school to explain the child's absence
 - Contact the Police and ask for them to carry out a check on the property
 - Contact CASS to outline the situation and request advice
 - Contact the Child Missing in Education Team to outline the situation and request advice, potentially completing a referral to the team

Requests for Leave of absence/extended leave

- The Governing Body have agreed that holidays will not be permitted during term time
- Parents should be strongly discouraged from arranging holidays here or abroad, or visits to their country of family origin, during term time. If they do go then they need to provide school with a copy of the tickets for both the outward journey and the return journey, as well as updated contact details for whilst they are abroad, including telephone numbers and addresses for where they will be residing.
- Information regarding this is available to parents in the school prospectus and when a child is admitted into school.

Following guidelines updated by Birmingham City Council in September 2022, the school will follow procedures whereby parents might be issued with a Penalty Notice should a child's leave of absence reach levels as indicated in these guidelines.

Whole-School Strategies and Procedures

When a child has attendance below 90%, they have 'Persistent Absence' which is a sign of parental neglect. Children with such low attendance are at risk of academic underachievement.

However, it is equally important for the school to identify those children whose attendance is between 90% and 95% as this may easily fall into the 'persistent absence' category. As such, the school includes these children in their monitoring process and procedures.

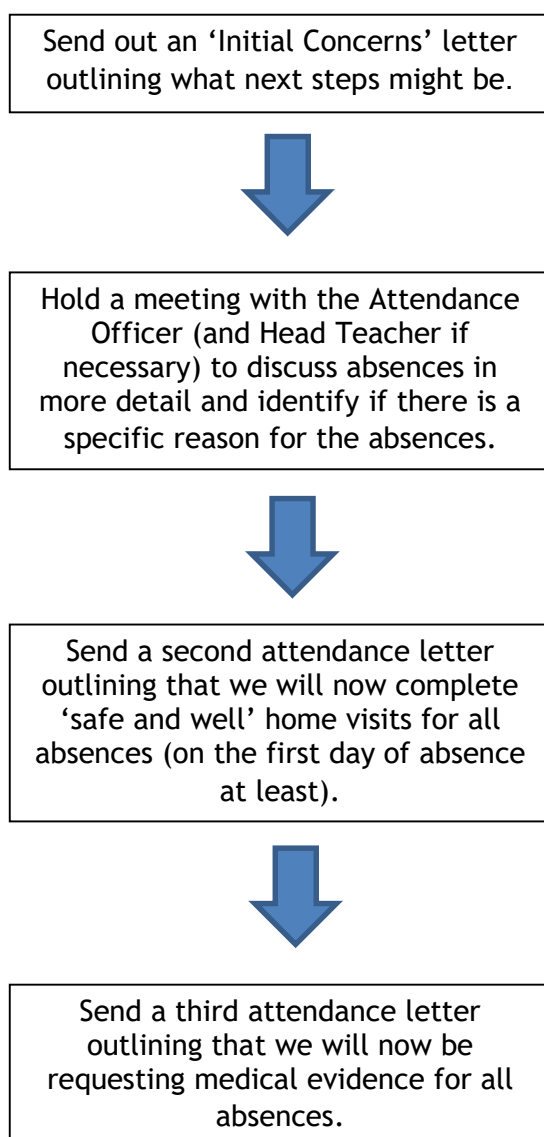
Our school has clear procedures and triggers for action based upon data analysis and contextual information for attendance.

On a daily basis, The Attendance Officer will meet with a member of the SLT and the Office staff to discuss the daily attendance. Decisions will be made as to children whose attendance needs to be monitored; any immediate actions that need to be taken; any longer-term actions that need to be completed.

Immediate actions may include:

- making a welfare telephone call to the family to discuss the absence
- carry out a 'safe and well' home visit to hopefully see the child and establish with the parents when they might be able to return to school
- requesting medical evidence for the absence

When attendance becomes a concern, the school will follow the following flow chart of actions:



*In certain circumstances, the letter regarding carrying out 'safe and well' home visits will not be sent and we will move directly to sending the letter requesting medical evidence.

This could be due to the distance to travel to complete a home visit, or else because many of the child's absences is due to medical needs that the school is aware of.

If a child's attendance is still very low, or there are a number of unauthorised absences, we may carry out one of the following options:

- The child is placed on the 'Fast-Track' programme which may result in legal action
- A referral to Family Support is made, or the school initiates Early Help procedures
- A referral made to Children's Services.

We follow the Local Authority policy of allowing authorised absence for Religious Observance. The guidelines state, 'A school must treat absences as authorised when it is due to Religious Observance'. Any other days taken for travelling or continuing celebrations will not be authorised by the school.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

In order to maintain the high importance of attendance, throughout the year there are:

- **Weekly reflections** on attendance during SLT-led assemblies.
- **Weekly 100% attendance** shared on each class's Class Dojo page
- **Improvement Postcards** sent to indicate that we have seen an improvement in attendance, and to set a challenge to earn a reward

REWARDS

We use a range of rewards and incentives - a differentiated reward system ensures that every child, every day, has an attendance reward to work towards.

- **'Sladefield Spend'** - an ongoing incentive which we use to reward attendance and behaviour in classrooms, linked to PHSE and managing money. Children are given a coin for 100% attendance and a coin for punctuality each week. Children get the opportunity to spend or save their coins and the shop allows them to save for bigger and better prizes.
- **Family rewards** for positive attendance (eg. Teddy Bear's Picnic, Picnic in the Park)
- **'Pizza Party'** - when a class achieves attendance of 94% across the week, they earn a slice of pizza; when they have earned 6 slices, the class gets to have a Pizza Party afternoon
- **Badge** reward system - different coloured badges are earned for different numbers of days' attendance without an absence

In addition to ongoing rewards, incentives and rewards are introduced across the academic year when there is an opportune moment, or when there is a need within a specific cohort. For instance, if it became apparent that there was an attendance concern a specific Year Group, an incentive would be introduced into that Year Group rather than as a whole-school initiative.

WORKING WITH OUR PARENTS

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child comes to school. We talk to our parents about how they can make sure their children are fit enough to come to school during

the Induction meetings at the beginning of term; this session outlines how to support their child at home to prevent absence from school, as well as outlining when it might or might not be necessary for a child to be kept off school.

SAFEGUARDING

When a child is not at school there can be Safeguarding risk. The Safeguarding of pupils is one of Sladefield Infant School's highest priorities. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for general safeguarding issues and procedures.

The attendance of all children considered vulnerable or potentially vulnerable will be checked on a daily basis alongside all other children to maintain an up-to-date analysis. If no contact can be made by the school, a DSL will assess if further action is required; this may include making a home visit or contacting external agencies.

When attendance falls below 90% without any reasonable circumstances, or there is a pattern of continual absence on certain days, the case will be referred to a DSL.

All applications for holiday/extended leave will be assessed in terms of safeguarding risks. This particularly includes the risk of FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) or being exposed to radicalisation or extremism (see The Prevent Strategy). Any applications considered high risk would be referred to a DSL.

In certain circumstances, there may be a need to contact other agencies without first contacting parents. This decision will be made in partnership between Education Services and Social Care Services and is a legal obligation, not a personal decision.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Absence is monitored daily via telephone phone calls for all absences where the school has not been notified.

Spreadsheets are in place to track daily attendance and persistent absence.

Weekly overviews are monitored for each class, and individuals within those classes.

Termly analysis is made of data for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence. This includes analysing for different groups including gender, SEN, ethnicity and Pupil Premium children. This analysis will influence future action taken.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years or earlier if deemed necessary.

Policy written by: R Meadows (Head Teacher)

Review March 2025