

Chichester Schools



Working Together

Singleton C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written in conjunction with
Chichester Locality Group of Schools

First Written: November 2016

Review Date: September 2023

To be reviewed in September 2024

(To be read in conjunction with our School Aims)

Rationale

Every child has a right to education and parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child/children, once enrolled at a school, attend/s regularly and punctually. Regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child/children making appropriate progress and achieving success. Good regular and punctual attendance means doing well academically, developing better relationships with other children and positive behaviour. It also sets up good habits for when young people enter into work and life.

Principles

We recognise that children's learning is affected by their attendance and punctuality, as we aim to encourage everyone to aim high and try to achieve their full potential. The school provides a warm, welcoming and caring environment, within which everyone is valued and respected.

All school staff work with parents to help their children attend school punctually every day and to thereby meet the legal requirement that all children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular, full-time basis.

Every half day absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (e.g. illness or educated off-site).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable (e.g. absences that have not been properly explained) or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register.

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Team.

The Governing Body agrees legally required targets for attendance each year.

Procedures

Attendance registers are online at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and checked by the office at 9am. The office staff contact the parents/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence before the end of the morning session. All absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation. Absence notes are collated by the school office and stored. The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is unfit for school, parents / carers are asked to inform the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. When the child returns, he / she should bring a written note if they have not already e-mailed the school office with a reason.

In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, such as a doctor's note. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, day trips, etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency e.g. bereavement or for exceptional medical appointments which take place during school time.

Register codes

Appropriate codes are entered by the office staff. The Headteacher confirms any disputed codes.

Late arrival

Children who arrive late to school must report to the school office, and the time of arrival and reason for being late written on the late log. The time of arrival is also noted on the online register. Arrival at the school after 9.00 (30 minutes after the official start of school) is recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a reasonable explanation is given.

Holiday absence

The school will not authorise holiday in term time for any year group in line with DfE guidance. Any absence request must be in writing to the head teacher who may discuss this with the governors. Absence may be granted in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher: eg: a family wedding or funeral

Appointments

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are outside of the school day whenever possible. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, parents have a responsibility for ensuring that only part and not all of the school day is missed.

Communication with parents

If concerns about attendance or punctuality arise, the school will contact the parents/carers to discuss these and agree how this will be taken forward. A case file may be started, comprising documented phone calls, letters, meetings, agreed actions and review dates.

At the end of a term, parents whose children's attendance falls into the **Concerning or Very Concerning Band** will be contacted by the Head. There will of course be exceptions to this, for example where a pupil has been very unwell or been in hospital.

Below **90%: VERY CONCERNING**

90-94.99%: CONCERNING

Attendance above **95% NO CONCERNS**

The school applies the following monitoring procedures:

- The class teacher / SBM and head work together to identify concerns
- The Head makes monthly and termly checks on attendance.
- Pupils with 90% or less will be contacted at any point of concern
- Attendance is always available for parents to track on MCAS

Electronic records

Attendance of all pupils is recorded electronically by the school and West Sussex using the West Sussex BROMCOM system. This is up-dated regularly, and used to inform patterns and concerns across the school.

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI)

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Officer, and seeks their advice on issues and matters arising from pupil absence. The initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual poor attendance lies with the school, and pupil case files will be kept.

A referral to the Pupil Entitlement Officer will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 25 sessions or more - (there are two sessions a day).

A referral to the Pupil Entitlement Team will be made only after the school has worked with the family.

Email: FPN.PEI@westsussex.gov.uk **Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Advice Line:** 03302 228200

Fixed Penalty Notices **

The school, in conjunction with the Local Authority, is able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents of pupils who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week consecutive period if attendance has been irregular. The Fixed Penalty Notice is served by West Sussex county Council, NOT the school.

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be given after 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions.

This includes;

- any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher

If the headteacher has reason to believe that a pupil's absence is due to a holiday, but the parents have informed the school that a pupil is unwell, The Headteacher can contact the Pupil Entitlement team and ask that this is investigated. It is then the responsibility of the parent to prove that they were not on holiday and away from the family home.

The FPN is for £120 per child per parent and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty.

If the FPN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued.

Governing Body

The Governing Body agree targets for school attendance each year. Issues and concerns may be raised with the Chair of Governors. The attendance policy is agreed by the Full Governing Body and reviewed every three years or whenever significant changes occur.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Schools must liaise with CME when a parent withdraws a child to be home educated, or should they be unable to establish the whereabouts of a child who has been absent for more than 10 days without contact from the parents. CME guidance is stored in the office and all communications logged.

**** This is taken from the West Sussex County Council advice letter for parents.**