



Together, we learn and grow

Shepherdswell Academy

Attendance Policy

2022 – 2023



Collaboration



Courage



Curiosity



Creativity



Community



Every child deserves to be the best they can be

Review date: July 2023

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Policy overview

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Shepherdswell Academy.

At Shepherdswell, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents, and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Shepherdswell Academy encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” (DfE 1999).***

Aims of the policy

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils’ achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

Responsibility of parents/carers

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Punctuality

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It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time.
- To ensure children who are late after 9:00am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

The first few minutes of school is a crucial time for children to get settled into class. When a child arrives late for school, it not only disrupts the rest of the class, but they miss out on this crucial time. Being punctual is an important life skill. Ensuring that your child is punctual gets them into good habits for their future. Arriving just 5 minutes late every day equals 3 days of education over the whole year. Arriving half an hour late every day is equivalent to 18 days absence.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning or emailing the school office.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted by a member of staff after 9:30am.

Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school will request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription, etc.

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education. If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

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If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Headteachers' authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. ***Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by Education Inclusion and Partnership Team for unauthorised holiday absence during term time, payable direct to the Local Authority.*** The Penalty Notice is £120 per parent/adult for each student to be paid within 28 days, decreasing to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance or close family bereavement may be authorised by the Headteacher. These requests must be discussed with the school.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Attendance Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Attendance Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

Role of the Education Attendance Officer

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Attendance Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority.

Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:55am will be brought to the attention of the Education Attendance Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:30am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

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Appendix 1: Attendance Procedures

