

## ***Sunningwell CE School Attendance Policy 2013***

### **Introduction**

Sunningwell CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### **School Procedures**

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

### **Lateness**

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8.55** am. The registers will remain open for **30 minutes**.
2. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at **1.00pm**

The registers will close at **10 minutes**

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. Parents must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
6. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

### **Absence from School**

- **First Day Absence**
  - **First Day** - When a pupil is absent and the reason is known through parental contact, this is passed on to the relevant teacher and recorded in a Notification of Absence book, class register and in Integris. When a pupil is absent and the reason is not known parents/carers will be phoned to ascertain the reason for absence.
- **Third Day Absence**
  - If a pupil has been absent for 3 or more continuous days and there has been no parental/guardian contact, the attendance officer will send a letter home, copies of which are to be filed in the pupil's file.
- **Continuing Absence**
  - If this situation continues a second letter will be sent
- **Ten Day Absence**
  - If the pupil has 20 or more sessions (10 days) of absence in any new term, the attendance officer should discuss the absences with the Head Teacher and Class Teacher and appropriate action will be taken:
    - Contact home to request an explanation and/or meeting
    - Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, Attendance and Engagement Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

### **Absence Notes**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer, Mrs Nina Baker, to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parents. The head teacher will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents in to discuss causes and ways forward.

## **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

[a] to his age, ability and aptitude and  
[b] to any special needs he may have,  
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance and Engagement Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement is used to support attendance.

### **Leave of Absence**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents should seek permission from the head teacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school ***if*** the leave is granted. Parents who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine or prosecution. Please also see Holiday Leave Entitlement policy

### **Attendance Awards**

The school may, if deemed necessary, use a system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance

### **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a head teacher will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our **schools targets are for at least 95% attendance** for all pupils.

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;
- Computer registers are printed out week and stored for 3 - electronic back-ups are kept on Integris for at least 3 years.
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink;
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The registers are stored safely either in classrooms or the central office once registration is closed.

## **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence (O or U for lateness);
- [2] Authorised Absence (C);
- [3] Approved Educational Activity (V).

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

### **2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **3. Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

*Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.*

Reviewed by:

Head Teacher

Attendance Officer

Governing Body

Next review date      September 2017