



POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE

Manager: J Doyle (Head Teacher)

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Next Review: October 2027

INTENTION OF THE POLICY

At Shawclough we believe that regular punctual school attendance is crucial if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children arrive in school on time and is included in the Parent-School Agreement.

“Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources ...”

(Dfe Working together to improve school attendance – August 2024).

Shawclough School knows from experience that irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantage and other subsequent disadvantages. There are a range of activities and strategies that the school can take to improve the attendance of those with poor attendance records. However, it is also recognised that there are factors over which the school has no control, for example natural childhood illness. Fundamentally, all our children should want to come to school each day because they like it. If they do not it will be vital that we review what is happening to the individual child.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, 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. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.30am each day.. the register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances. Morning registration ends at 8.40 a.m. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late (L). After 9.10 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence (U). The afternoon register is taken at 1.15 p.m. It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

The school office should be informed as early as possible but definitely before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. Telephone: 01706 647991 or Email: office@shawclough.rochdale.sch.uk

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours or during school holidays. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, depending on the time of the appointment, the child should come into school before and after the appointment.

IF A CHILD IS ABSENT

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence. Parents/carers are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.30a.m. on the first day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent.

They are asked to state a reason. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent /carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

All reported and unexplained absences are discussed by the Pastoral Lead and Administrator, and action taken as necessary if the child's attendance is a concern. (See Appendix A).

Authorised Absence:

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carers emails the school office or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carers takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher, school has not received a notification from a parent/carers or a child is late after the registers close at 9.10a.m.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME AND OTHER UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Penalty Notices are issued where a parent has failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age, attends school regularly and absence is recorded as unauthorised. Leave in term time will not be authorised unless it is exceptional circumstances. "Exceptional circumstances" can be described as 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short and that the leave/absence could not reasonably be scheduled at another time'.

To have a week's holiday in term time, because the cost is cheaper, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

The threshold for issuing a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be a combination of unauthorised absence, for example 10 sessions of holiday (G code) or 6 sessions of holiday and 4 sessions of arriving late after registers closed (U code). The period of 10 school weeks can go across different terms.

The first Penalty Notice will incur a fine of £80 per parent, per child. If this is not paid within 21 days, it increases to £160 per parent, per child.

If another Penalty Notice is required within a 3 year rolling period, the second Penalty Notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent, per child.

Payments are paid directly to the Local Authority and failure to pay can lead to prosecution.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home or facilitate online learning, so that they can keep up their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will

contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

If we suspect a child is missing or missing out on education (CME/ CMOE) we will refer to the CME team in Rochdale for advice and support in finding the child. We will try all means to contact the parent/carer to ascertain their whereabouts and reason for absence. If the family have moved out of the area, we need to establish their new address and where (if appropriate) they intend registering their child at a new school. We aim to collate as much information as possible before referring to the CME team, ensuring their safety and in facilitating education in a school.

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Improvement Officer at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parents can support their child by:

- Ensuring that you have everything they need ready for school the night before
- Ensuring regular bedtimes and wake up times on school days
- Ensuring they arrive at school punctually
- Talking to a member of the school staff if there is a problem

REWARDS

To encourage children to attend regularly, a reward system has been put into place.

1. The school Administrator, from her monitoring of attendance, produces data about the individual class attendance. The children are informed of their class attendance each week during assembly. If a class achieved 100% attendance, a Game is awarded to the class for use during wet playtimes.
2. A child from each Phase is randomly selected as an 'Attendance Champion' from those who achieved 100% attendance and punctuality during the previous week, to receive a Certificate and Badge in assembly.
3. An attendance display is updated weekly in a prominent position in the entrance hall, showing each class's attendance over the previous week.
4. A prize is awarded to the class with the best attendance at the end of each Half Term.
5. Individual 'postcard' style certificates are awarded to all children with 100% attendance at the end of each Half Term.
6. At the end of the year those children who have maintained excellent attendance will receive a reward.
7. At the end of the year, the class with the best attendance for the whole year will receive a reward/treat.

COMMUNICATION

Attendance is treated as a 'whole school' issue, involving pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff. Attainment, wellbeing and safety are affected by maintaining good attendance and we strive to involve all parties by communicating effectively.

Parents/Carers:

- 'Attendance Matters' leaflet is included the admission pack for all new starters.
- Letter issued at the beginning of the academic year, highlighting attendance expectations and what they mean in real terms i.e. number of lessons lost. This also covers the procedure for reporting absences / reward systems / reporting medical conditions/concerns and Penalty Notices.
- Class attendances are reported to parents on the weekly Newsletter, along with any other relevant attendance information.
- Liaison with Pastoral Lead and Administrator.
- Child's attendance is available to view on Sims Parent App. at all times.

Pupils:

- A 'Galaxy of Attendance' display board is placed in the foyer, and is updated weekly with the previous week's class attendances.
- Class attendances are also reported to pupils during assembly, along with the issue of Attendance Champion certificates and badges and class prizes if appropriate.
- Half term 'postcard' certificates awarded in Phase assemblies.
- School Council are consulted and involved in ideas to improve attendance.

Staff:

- Targets and expectations communicated to staff during September Inset days.
- Administrator e-mails staff with class attendances, Attendance Champions and 'best class so far' each week. Any relevant Attendance information is shared and staff are asked to discuss with the children.
- Any information sent to parents/carers is copied to staff for information.
- Daily processes and action by Pastoral Lead and Administrator communicated to staff, by e.mail or CPOMS.
- Attendance concerns/information discussed in weekly Staff Meeting.
- Attendance percentages made available to Teachers for Parents Evenings/Phone calls.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Whilst we have high attendance expectations for all our pupils, we acknowledge that some pupils and cohorts have specific needs. These can be long term medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities. When dealing with parents, we are aware that these children face particular challenges and aim to put extra help in place, to ensure that they can attend full time.

Individual healthcare plans, SENCO involvement and pastoral care are used to support pupils and parents and remove any barriers these children face in accessing their education. Sensitivity is fundamental in understanding how our pupils and their parents feel and how we can best support the child's specific needs.

SAFEGUARDING

"For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms."

"To facilitate effective working across the local authority, schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school. Children missing education officers or a school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team should also inform a pupil's social worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register."

(Dfe Working together to improve school attendance – August 2024)

The daily involvement of our Pastoral Lead in attendance monitoring, means that we are immediately aware of absences, challenges or additional needs of our vulnerable families. Contact is made with Social

Workers, Family Workers or other outside agencies where appropriate, along with liaison with pastoral staff in sibling's schools.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Pastoral Lead, Administrator or Headteacher, who will contact the parents/carers. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.

APPENDIX A

Processes:

- Phone calls and e-mails received from parents are recorded in the 'Pupil Absences' file.
- Any appointment slips, relevant to the day are checked.
- E.mail and answerphone messages are checked.
- When these absences have been recorded on Sims registers by the Administrator, an 'Unexplained Absence' report is run.
- Texts are then sent out to the parents of children who are absent, without explanation.
- If no contact is made by the parent, either by phone or e.mail, the Administrator phones to ascertain the reason for absence.

On a daily basis, the Pastoral Lead and Administrator scrutinise the pupil absences. The child's current attendance level and that of the previous year, are taken into account as are any patterns of absence or recurring illnesses.

Where appropriate, parents are contacted to express concern over their child's attendance record, highlight current and previous year and express the importance of good attendance. Parents are encouraged to share information of a recurring medical issue or referral. Emphasis is placed upon the amount of learning that children are missing, as well as the detrimental effect on their friendships. Support is offered by the Pastoral Lead, including referrals to other agencies such as the School Nurse, who may be able to help the family.

The Pastoral Lead may be required to pick up a child and bring him/her into school.

The Pastoral Lead may contact other schools where a child's sibling attends, to determine a picture of the family as a whole and attendance trends.

The Pastoral Lead may, where appropriate, discuss attendance with a child once they have returned to school and continue to monitor and check in with them.

Individual Attendance Plans are used to monitor and support a family, where attendance is a serious concern.

Daily attendance actions are shared with the Headteacher and meetings between the Headteacher, Pastoral Lead, Administrator and Education Welfare Officer are held every term. Children who are a cause for concern are discussed and a course of action decided upon, for example letters are sent to parents, medical evidence requested, Attendance Panels arranged, home visits and Individual Attendance Plans.