

# **South Failsworth Primary School**

**‘Inspiring and Creating Lifelong Learners’**



## **Attendance Policy**

Approved by the Governing Body: September 2022

Next review date: September 2023

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#### **1. Aims**

South Failsworth Primary School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between school and home
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **2. Ethos and Values**

Attendance is a significant factor in the academic and social and emotional progress and development of our pupils. This rigorous policy documents how the school aims to support pupils, and their families in being in school every day and in reaching their full potential. It is the school's and parents' responsibility to work together in this duty.

Attendance levels are generally good at South Failsworth Primary School. This is due to the commitment of our very supportive parents and carers and the stimulating curriculum and the caring ethos of the school. Children enjoy coming to school because they can learn and feel like valued members of the school community who are safe, secure and at ease. We believe that as a school we should be the best we can be and therefore we want to continue to work together to keep improving our individual and school attendance. We also work hard to maintain good levels of punctuality because we recognise the disruption lateness causes both for the pupil who is late and for their classmates.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault, it may be related to religious reasons, family circumstance or in the worst cases, a safeguarding issue. We have a duty to monitor the attendance of our children to ensure they are receiving their full educational entitlement and that their welfare is paramount.

Whilst our school follows the Local Authority procedures for attendance, we have our own local arrangements that take place every day.

## **3. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **4. School procedures**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

In Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1, pupils arrive between 8.45 and 9.00a.m. and the doors close at 9am when the register is taken.

In the Foundation Unit, teachers greet children at the classroom door at 9am and take the register at 9.05am.

If a pupil arrives after the register and before 9.30am, they will be marked as late. However, if they arrive after 9.30am, they will be marked as absent for the morning session.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm in Foundation, 1.30pm in Key Stages 1, Year 3 and Year 4 and 2.00pm in Year 5 and Year 6.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents should notify school via phone, either speaking to the school office or leaving a voicemail, via parent pay or by emailing the school.

We ask that parents notify school if the absence continues to a third day of illness unless a length of time has previously been discussed with the school office or member of the senior leadership team.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should notify school via phone, either speaking to the school office or leaving a voicemail, via parent pay or by emailing the school. Also, parents may wish to share information about appointments with the class teacher in advance of the appointment as they can record absences on our school system. We do understand that some medical consultant led and specialist appointments cannot be taken outside of the school day and will be sensitive of individual cases where children have to attend these appointments when rewarding excellent attendance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed, at 9.30am, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed, after 9.30am, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The attendance lead, Mrs Murray, deputy headteacher, may request a meeting to discuss ongoing concerns around punctuality and how we can work together to improve this. Also, pupils may be required to complete missed learning during their lunch and/ or break times or at home.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We have developed an absence reporting flowchart (see appendix 2) which details the actions we will take to monitor and support attendance concerns on a daily basis and over a period of time. This could include telephone calls to parents and other adults identified on children's contact data. In addition, school staff, the local authority, or where there are

safeguarding concerns, police or social workers, may conduct home visits to elicit the reason for absence and/ or to seek information about the child's welfare.

The attendance lead and designated safeguarding lead, Mrs Murray and/or Mrs Gorton, the SENDCo may request a meeting to discuss ongoing concerns around attendance and how we can work together to improve this.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

We will report to parents on a half termly basis or more immediately about their child's current attendance figures where we have concerns it is or could fall below 90%.

Attendance is also reported annually in end of school year reports and may form part of the dialogue during twice yearly parents' meetings.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an immediate family member's funeral, an immediate family member's wedding, an immediate family members sudden illness/ death, a holiday with mitigating circumstances as to why it cannot be taken outside of school term time or is needed at this time. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion and will not be for more than 5 days.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3
- Illness - however, please refer to section 4.2. If school staff believe the absence may not be genuine or the child is well enough to attend school the absence may be unauthorised or families could be asked to provide medical evidence for the absence.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body for further advice.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Promoting good attendance is very important at South Failsworth and the senior leadership team, school governors and school council have had input in reviewing and selecting new strategies for promoting, improving and rewarding attendance. The school attendance and class attendance figures are shared on the weekly newsletter. The class with the highest attendance gets an additional break time the following week. If a class has 100% attendance for a week, the following Monday children from this class can come to school in their own clothes as a reward.

Where we have concerns about patterns of absence or poor attendance, Mrs Murray, Deputy Headteacher or Mrs Gorton, SENDCo, may request a meeting with parents to discuss the concerns and offer advice and support. We would also welcome any parents who have concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality to organise a meeting with Mrs Murray or Mrs Gorton to discuss their concerns.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The school office and Mrs Murray monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to telephone or email the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to telephone or email the school office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of illness, if a reason for a prolonged absence on day 1 was not shared with school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If, after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Pupil attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. The senior leadership team will receive a complete set of attendance data each half term. This pupil level data will be used alongside and to support the absence flowchart (see appendix 2) and pupils who have persistent absence or who are flagged as at risk or persistent absence, may be added to our monitoring list and where appropriate, additional letters sent home or meetings arranged with Mrs Murray.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. South Failsworth Primary will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

### **8.1 The governing body**

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. This is done through the headteacher's report to governors during termly full governing body meetings. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **8.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff, Mrs Murray, Mrs Gorton, Mrs Cooper and Mrs Hyde in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **8.3 The attendance lead**

The attendance lead is Mrs Murray, deputy headteacher. Her role is to:

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Conduct home visits to discuss reason for absence with families
- Advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices



#### **8.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They are also responsible for sharing concerns about attendance and punctuality with the attendance lead.

#### **8.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls and emails from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They will also provide daily reports for the attendance lead regarding unauthorised absence and also the attendance of pupils on the monitoring list.

### **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the attendance lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

### **10. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Absence flowchart

### Absence Flowchart

#### First day call

##### **Children not on monitoring list**

1. Telephone parents (both where appropriate) to establish reason for absence.

If you now have a reason for absence, record on SIMS.

If you do not have a reason, send a parent pay message and inform Mrs Murray about the absence.

##### **Children on monitoring list**

1. Telephone parents (both where appropriate) to establish reason for absence.

Share reason for absence with Mrs Murray or Mrs Gorton.

If you do not have a reason, send a parent pay message and inform Mrs Murray or Mrs Gorton about the absence (see list). If both are absent, please see Mrs Foy or Mrs Butler.

SLT to decide whether absence will be authorised and/or follow SLT absence flowchart for monitored pupils.

#### Day 3 of absence

Child on monitoring list: Refer to Mrs Murray or Mrs Gorton.

Child not on monitoring list: Please telephone to enquire why the child is still absent and an estimated return to school date. Inform Mrs Murray of update.

Do not phone if a valid reason for prolonged absence was given during initial reason for absence.

#### SLT absence flowchart for monitoring pupils

Attempt contact through phone call and parent pay message.

Home visit with calling card.

Organise meeting with parents to discuss absence before or at return to school AND/OR letter home to parents to discuss concerns.