



Southbourne Infant School

Attendance Policy

Spring 2016

Reviewed Spring 2019

Next review Spring 2022

Written in collaboration with:

Southbourne Junior School
The Bourne Community College
Westbourne Primary School
Funtington Primary School
Compton and Upmarden Primary School
Bosham Primary School

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, 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 has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why 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, absences that have not been properly explained or are not considered to be exceptional, or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register.

The school works in partnership with the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

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

Procedures

Attendance registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and sent to the office for checking by 9.30am. The office staff contact the parents/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence before the register closes. 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 reasons logged in the Absence Book.

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 texted/ 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 medical appointments which take place during school time. Other exceptional circumstances could include service personnel

returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

- 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 noted on the register. Arrival at the school after 9.20am (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.

- 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

The school monitors attendance carefully each term. 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.

Each term, parents will be sent a letter linked to cumulative attendance for their child from the start of the academic year, or from when they were enrolled at the school. These will be as follows:

Red letter – attendance below 90%

Amber letter – attendance 90 – 94.99%

Green letter – attendance above 95%

The school applies the following monitoring procedures:

- Electronic records

Attendance of all pupils is recorded electronically using the West Sussex SIMS 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 Pupil Entitlement Officer will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 20 sessions or more. A "Case Review Checklist", "A6 Referral Form" and a pupil's "Registration Certificate" will form part of this referral.

The attendance advice line (03302228200) is available for both parents and schools.

PEI@westsussex.gov.uk for all queries

EWR.AreaA@westsussex.gov.uk for A6 referrals in Area A

FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk for all FPN referrals and / or queries.

- **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 school must notify the local authority (on the number above) if a pupil is absent for ten or more consecutive school days without authorisation. Where this is necessary, the responsibility for any legal action rests with the local authority.

- **Governing Body**

The Governing Body agree targets for school attendance each year. Issues and concerns may be raised with the Governors. The attendance policy is agreed by the Governors 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 front office and all communications logged.

This policy has been developed with local primary and secondary schools to ensure all our families are treated consistently:

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Compton and Upmarden Primary School
Bosham Primary School