



Southfield Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SOUTHFIELD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Information for Parents

“Attendance matters...”

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an authorisable reason to be absent (registration regulations 2006 (amended) section 444 of the Education Act 1996) “If a child of compulsory age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his /her parent guilty of an offence” A pupil’s Unauthorised Absence is an offence for the parent/carer

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 95%
- Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Children who attend regularly make better progress, both socially and academically
- Children who attend regularly find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Children who attend regularly find learning more satisfying
- Children who attend regularly settle into High School more easily

Parents/carers have the responsibility to inform the school of any absence.

As a parent you can help us by:

Avoiding absences and ensuring regular attendance (see initial paragraph) and good punctuality (being in class when the bell rings at 8.55am)

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return. A good time to contact the school office is around 9.15 am.
- Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for any absence of 4 days or more on your child’s return to school after an illness or copy of any prescription given to the child or doctor or hospital letter.
- When informing the school of any absence due to illness, please provide details and expected return date to the school.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- When booking any trip, please ensure your child will return to the school on the first day after any school holidays.
- If your child is absent due to a hospital appointment, we will require a copy of the appointment letter in advance.
- If your child has an appointment with his/her GP, optician or dentist in the morning, we expect him/her to return to the school for the rest of the day and require a copy of the appointment card or letter.

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, letters, texts or emails using our ParentMail service.

- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school brochure and correspondence.
- Publish our attendance rate in the newsletter.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report.
- **Send regular notification to parents if attendance remains below 90%, regardless of the reason (other than bereavement or chronic illness).** The LA will request the school for information when attendance is below 90% and in cases of persistent late arrival.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns, make a referral to the School Attendance Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, some family bereavement, some religious observance. (We follow the Ealing days of observance calendar).

If you request any leave for your child due to a family event, authorisation may be only given for the day of the event

If your child is absent due to a piano or violin exam, or visiting a new school please kindly complete the leave form available at the school office. These absences are normally approved but the school must be notified in advance. It also applies to Year 6 attending induction, exams or interviews for the High School applications.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **NOT** permitted. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Family day out
- Absence due to a sibling being ill or having a medical appointment
-
- Waiting for a delivery or repairs to be done at home
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays in term time
- If frequent absence is claimed as illness and is unsupported by medical evidence
- If there is no explanation for the absence or the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- Parents/carers' illness or work commitments are not recognised as a reason for a child to be absent. You may wish to contact the Head to discuss this.

Unauthorised Absences are reported to the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service inspects our registers twice per term and may contact you and consider a fixed penalty fine or taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

If your child cannot do PE due to illness or injury but is well enough to be at school, he/she must give a note to the classteacher. If the absence is going to last more than 2 consecutive sessions, you will need to provide a doctor's note stating why the child cannot do PE. Fit For Sport will provide an alternative activity to the session. For longer absences school work can be provided and the child will stay with another class. In the case of absence from swimming lessons, you need to speak in advance with Miss Rodriguez/Miss Bal. PE is part of the National Curriculum and not having the correct PE kit does not exclude a child from the session.

Punctuality

We have introduced a "soft start" in the morning. School doors are open at 8.45am, so children will have enough time to get into their class and be ready for their class register when the bell rings at 8.55am.

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.

If your child misses the beginning of the morning session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view that there are no late children, only late parents/carers.

If your child arrives late, he/she must go through the school office where the arrival will be marked with "L" plus minutes late and reasons will be recorded. Please accompany your child to the school office and do not leave them to the school gate.

When we think there is no valid reason for a child being late, we may mark his/her late arrival as "U" (unauthorised absence), which will affect the child's attendance record and bring the attendance record to the attention of the Local Authority.

We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality; and you may be required to attend a meeting with the Head to discuss our concerns

If your child arrives at school after the bell rings and before 11am due to a medical appointment, we will mark it as "L" (late). If he/she arrives after 11am we will mark the absence as Medical (code "M") in which case his/her recorded attendance will decrease.

Term Time Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays or other events.

There is **no entitlement to time off in term time**. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Head in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Governing Body.

It is our policy:

- That only in **exceptional** circumstances will leave from school be allowed and then only up to a maximum of two weeks. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application.)
- Parents wishing to apply for any leave of absence need to complete an application form at least 4 weeks in advance (available at the school office) The Head will consider your request and advise you of his/her decision (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss). Approval cannot be given without application or retrospectively.
 - Taking further time than allowed may result in your child being taken off roll. Schools can take children off roll after an absence longer than 20 school days.
- If the school does not agree and you take your child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. If you do this we have to officially warn you that you are liable to a fixed penalty fine issued by the School Attendance Service.
- We also need to warn you that if you fail to bring your child on the agreed date, you may be issued a fixed penalty fine by the School Attendance Service. We will expect you to contact the school by phone or email in this situation.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.

Leavers

If your child is leaving Southfield during the school term for reasons other than at the end of Year 6 to go to High School, parents/carers must complete a Leavers Form available at the school office and provide the following information

- Date of the last day in school and first day in the new school
- New home address if you are changing schools because your family is moving
- Name and address of the new school
- An updated mobile/phone number

If you failed to provide any of the required information stated above, we will inform the LA as your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). Unauthorised absence is an offence under that act. The School Attendance Service inspects our registers regularly and aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents/carers may have to pay a Fixed Penalty Fine or can be prosecuted (taken to court) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

“Every day counts...”

REVIEW OF POLICY

Governing Body Sub Committee	Published	Review Date	Author
Teaching and Learning Committee		October 2019	Simon Prebble
Headteacher's Signature			
Chair of Governors Signature			