

# **South View Community Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**



Date Agreed: November 2017

Date for Review: November 2019

## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

South View Community Primary School is committed to providing a high quality and effective education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all its pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy was agreed by the Governing Body in November 2017. The review should be carried out every two years or earlier if required.

## 3. AIMS

- That all students achieve excellent attendance.
- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
  - In the first instance, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school.
- Many pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported at some stage to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. The School will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## 4. EXPECTATIONS

**South View Community Primary School expects its pupils to:**

- Attend school daily.
- Arrive on time.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day.

- Tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

**South View Community Primary School expects its parents to:**

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- Ensure that their children arrive on time. Registration commences at 08.50 and a child is considered late if he/she arrives after 09.00 when registers have closed. A child arriving after 09.30 will be marked as absent from the morning session. The school operates a drift-in procedure to ease congestion. Doors are opened at 08.40 and parents can drop off children at the main entrance doors from 8.40 onwards.
- To contact the School before 08.30 whenever their child is absent giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away. If the school is closed the parent may leave a message on the answerphone.
- Help their children prepare for the school day by ensuring that any homework has been done and that their children have everything required for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect their children.
- Contact the School if problems arise which may keep their children away from school, so that the school can help.
- Avoid taking family holidays in term-time.
- Provide appointment cards, hospital letters or other evidence of GP/dentist appointments.

**South View Community Primary School will:**

- Maintain an attendance register on which pupils are marked present, absent or late.
- Ensure that its staff adhere to the rules regarding the registration period which is 10 minutes in length at the beginning of the morning session and 5 minutes in length at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Ensure that absences are left blank in the register by the teacher.
- Ensure that absences are checked daily by a member of the office staff. Those parents who have not provided a reason for absence will be contacted. At that point the registers will be updated so that every child has an attendance or absence mark against them for both sessions daily.

- Ensure that attendance registers are kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to support vulnerable pupils with poor attendance if this becomes a barrier to their achievement in school. It may also be used to support them academically and/or socially.
- Follow the protocol established for maintaining the confidentiality of data under the Data Protection Act which places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. The School has a Data Protection Policy which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in legislation prevents the School sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

## 5. ATTENDANCE SYSTEMS

Only the School, in the context of the law, can authorise absence. A note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher or member of the office staff does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the HT/DHT.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following reasons may be considered as authorised absences:

- Illness; which does not include minor coughs, colds, headaches, stomach aches, toothache and period pains.
- Family bereavements.
- Medical and dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or reinstated.

Absences should **not** be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips.
- Holidays in term time.
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
  - Oversleeping/tiredness
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.

- Medical appointments that cannot be verified or are for another person.
- No reason given.
- School staff have cause to believe that the information provided is not genuine or not valid.

### **Family Holidays**

Parents should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. Parents have 14 weeks each year when their children are not required to be in school. Holidays during term time can significantly disrupt both the academic and social development of the child. The School will not endorse and therefore not authorise holidays during term time. When monitoring attendance, the school may take further action if a child is removed from school for a family holiday during term time. This absence may be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the education Act 1996.

### **Resolving Disagreements**

Where there is a lack of agreement between the School and the Local Education Authority (LEA) as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

### **Approved Educational Activity**

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way, but the children are counted as present. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off-site for field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas should not be marked as present. Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head Teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfES Circular No. 10/99.

### **Lateness**

The School will actively discourage late arrival by asking parents whose children arrive late to provide a written explanation where necessary. A child entering school up to 30 minutes after the registers have closed is marked as late and the letter U is entered into the register to indicate that they are on site. A child entering school 30 minutes after the beginning of the morning or afternoon session are marked as absent from the entire session. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

### **Removal from the School Roll**

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.

- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the School and the parents have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.

- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil has not returned to the school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

### **Ensuring Pupil Information Is Up To Date**

The School will ensure, as far as possible, that the information it holds on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

### **Pupils Who Are Missing**

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National 'Children Missing in Education' Database.

## **6. PUPILS WHO FAIL TO ATTEND**

When a pupil does not attend, the School needs to respond effectively:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone.
- Where there is no response, the register is marked as 'no reason provided for absence'.
- Parents will be contacted on every day the child is still not in school, until the day the child returns. Parents will then be asked to explain the absence.
- Attendance will be monitored by the school and if attendance does not improve within two weeks of receipt of a School Attendance Panel letter, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending the School.
- The case will continued to be monitored and if there is no improvement, a penalty warning letter will be issued. Failure to improve attendance will result in a Penalty Fine from the local authority under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996. If it is felt that the student's attendance is not improving due to lack of support or engagement with either the parent/carer or the

student, consideration will be taken as to submitting a file to the Local Authority to initiate proceedings before a Magistrates Court.

- If a child is absent from school and no response is made to the attempts to contact the family, Children's Services and the Police may be contacted and could be asked to make a 'Safe and Well' check on the family. If no contact is made within 5 days, the school will contact Children Missing Education at Lincolnshire County Council. If no contact is made within 20 days from the date of the first absence, the school is entitled to withdraw that pupil's place from the school roll. If any pupil is absent for a period of 10 days (particularly where we have had no contact from parents/carers), the absence will be unauthorized and notified to Lincolnshire County Council's Pupils Not Attending Regularly Service.

### **Reintegration**

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE document "Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)".

Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.

All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.

Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there are specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff:

### **Head Teacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence

### **Deputy Head Teacher:**

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.

- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWS.
- To direct Pupil Premium funding to support attendance, where this becomes a barrier to reaching potential for those children in vulnerable groups.

**Teachers:**

- To report attendance issues and discussions with parents regarding attendance to the administration staff and LBP.
- To hold initial discussions with parents about attendance concerns, look for solutions where possible, and signpost support and services where necessary.
- To provide catch-up work and ongoing support for the pupil to be educated at home in the case of long term authorised absence and known medical conditions that impact on regular attendance. (The school will not support holidays taken during term time by providing homework.)

**Governors:**

Governors may become actively involved in monitoring attendance in the School in any or all of the following ways:

- By being given a specific role in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- By representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- By requesting regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

**Education Welfare Service:**

The EWS can assist the School in improving attendance by:

- Liaising with identified school staff.
- Undertaking home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Working with identified groups of pupils.
- Instigating legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- Accepting referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria, initiating contact with parents or carers and undertaking assessments.
- Planning and reviewing casework.
- Providing feedback to schools.
- Offering strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance.
- Supporting schools and academies in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- Supporting schools and academies in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

**Office Staff:**

Office staff will:

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly attendance percentage information.
- Maintain registers with updated absence information.
- Maintain pupil signing-in/out books for when pupils arrive after registers have closed and/or for when pupils leave before the end of the school day.

Other agencies may be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police.