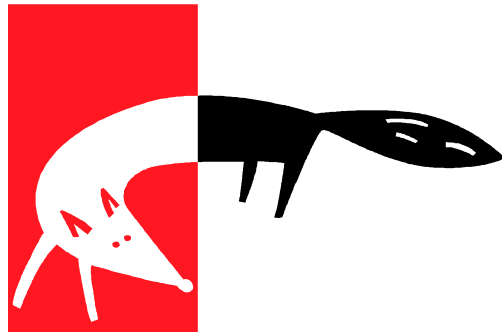


Sandfield Close Primary School



Attendance Policy

Adopted: Summer 2016
Review: Summer 2019

Introduction

We are a GOOD school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. This school attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

- Any absence (including lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law. *If your child has unauthorised leave of absence you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.*

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will

- Provide you with reports 2 or 3 times a year on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality is, and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by telling the children in assembly and awarding a certificate to the best attending class;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates, outings/events/golden time.
- Run promotional events when parents/carers, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Understanding types of absence

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- keeping one child off school who is not ill because another child in the family is ill

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all pupil absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception. (Voicemail available)

NB Notes/letters that you send us will be stored on your child's file.

If your child is absent we will:

- If we do NOT receive a reason for your child's absence we WILL send you a Parentmail text asking you to contact the school URGENTLY to give us a reason to why your child isn't in school.
- Write to you to if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our *Head teacher*.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe.

NB Letters and notes of our contact with you will be stored on your child's file.

Telephone numbers/Parentmail

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. Remember to inform us if you change your mobile number. Please also remember to update your Parentmail account.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Parents/carers or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 2211260. They can also be reached by e-mailing: education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.25 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

If your child arrives at school after all children have left the playground and gone into school, they will be given a late mark.

At **8.35am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your CHILD arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the *Head teacher* to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays In Term Time

Sandfield Close Primary School does not authorise any holiday leave during school term time.

School targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Our target for 2016/17 is **96%+ attendance with no unauthorised absence**

The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records.

Security of registers

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three year. The registers must be safely stored.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Panna Tailor, Admin Officer
Mrs Amanda Dhillon, Head teacher

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.