

ATTENDANCE POLICY September 2018

Do you know which colour your child is?

- **96% - 100% (Well done! This is excellent)**

We expect every child to reach 96% attendance and have a whole school expectation of 97%. Together we can reach this and provide support where necessary 😊

- **90% - 95% (Monitoring and a pro-active response)**

Your child will be carefully monitored and you will be invited into school for attendance review meetings 😊

- **Less than 90% (Persistent Absence Pupil)**

Our Education Welfare Consultant will be involved and potential fines enforced ☹

PRINCIPLES

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by learners will be recognised appropriately. All learners should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All learners are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the learner. If a learner 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 may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/learner or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Authority.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the learner is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a learner of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. Both AM and PM sessions involve recording lateness should your child leave the school premises prior to the PM session commences.

AM session register is commenced at 8.55am and the register is closed at 9.15am

PM session register is commenced at 1.00pm and the register is closed at 1.15pm

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**
- **holidays during term time**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage, asking for an appointment with the head teacher or Family Liaison Co-ordinator and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the learner’s attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices of £60 or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or learners may wish to contact the EWW 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.

PROCEDURES

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

What Parents should do if their child is absent:

Absence known in advance (e.g. Medical Appointment)

- Send in a note to the office/teacher informing the school of the nature of the absence (reasons why) and when it will be taken.
- *A phone call to the office or the Family Liaison Co-ordinator can also be made- this information will then be recorded on the relevant database*

Absence not known in advance

- Ring the school (*before 10.00am where possible*) on the first day of absence in order to inform the school and provide a reason.

First Day of Absence Contact

If a child is absent without explanation then the following procedures will be followed:

- If by 10.00am we have not received an explanation for absence by contacting the school, then staff will contact parents by phone and by text message.
- If there is no response – home visits can and will be made.
- This will enable us to ensure that the parent was aware of their child's absence from school enabling the parent where necessary to establish their child is safe.
- This will also determine the reason for absence and when the child might be expected to return to school.
- The clerical Assistant will then enter the correct code into the school register and relay any messages to the appropriate members of staff.

What Parents should do if their child is Late:

At Silverdale we actively encourage all learners to arrive at school on time and try to work in partnership with parents to ensure this. If a parent/carer is aware that they are going to be late and have a valid reason then we ask that they follow the procedure below:

- Ring the school (as soon as possible) so that class teacher's can be informed and prepare for the late arrival of the child.
- Parents and learners who arrive late should come to the school office to register and sign in the 'Latecomers Collection Record' providing a reason for lateness.
- Children arriving at school up to 20 minutes after the register was taken will be recorded as **L** for late.
- Children arriving later than this period will be recorded as **U** which legally means they were absent and this mark will be unauthorised.
- Children who are persistently late will be challenged.

What happens if your child is persistently late to school?

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness*

- Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued, this can be over a 12 week period.

Requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school

Silverdale Primary School follows Staffordshire's Local Authority Protocol in relation to requests for 'Leave of Absence' from school during term time.

As of 1st September 2013 there has been a change in The Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2006. Where there used to be the option for Head Teachers to grant leave of absence during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year, this has now been removed.

Head Teachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

What should parents do if they wish to request a leave of absence?

Parents should put their request in writing and address it to the Head Teacher. A written response will be returned to you as soon as possible.

What happens if a child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from school?

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offences of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- There will be no limit on the times' a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

- Any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the head teacher to the EWO.

What happens if your child is persistently absent from school?

Penalty Notice for Persistent Absence

- Less than 90% attendance is classed as 'Persistent Absence.'
- Parents whose child's attendance falls close to 95% will be contacted by either Miss Barlow or the Education Welfare Consultant. This is to provide support and to prevent the attendance from falling further.
- Repeated absence will only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.
- Parents whose child is repeatedly late and the register has closed will receive a 'U' mark rather than 'L' mark and this could trigger a Penalty Notice if this reaches 10 as outlined above.*

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

- If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

School Action on Persistent Absence

Where a child is persistently late or absent, the following action will be taken:

- A letter will be sent out inviting Parents into school to discuss the issue and support will be offered. This meeting will initially be with the Family Liaison Co-ordinator and/or the Educational Welfare Worker.
- Lateness/unexplained absence will be monitored and review meetings will be held accordingly. In some cases action plans will be put into place.
- Please note that any lateness or unexplained absence will be monitored by the Educational Welfare Worker as a matter of course.
- Home visit will be made to check the welfare of the child.
- Schools and Educational Welfare Workers must now adhere to the 'Code of Conduct under the provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2007 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Details of this can be obtained from <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>
- The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support head teachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents that choose to 'disregard the law.'

What should I do if my child has a medical appointment in school hours?

Medical Appointments

Parents of children attending a medical appointment during the school day need to produce an appointment card/letter or similar paperwork prior to the appointment. Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. We can then confirm lateness as a 'medical' absence and therefore authorised.

SCHOOL TARGETS, INITIATIVES & PROJECTS

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Attendance Analysis

The school office and Leadership team termly review and analyse attendance data to identify trends for individuals, groups and classes in order to target school improvement in this area. Wherever possible, action will be taken by the school to improve a learner's attendance and investigate and address any underlying causes or problems before considering whether to make a referral to the Local authority.

The school will continue to liaise with the EWO to discuss any attendance concerns and also report any child whose attendance falls below 90%.

Attendance Initiatives

At Silverdale Primary we believe that attendance is an important factor in the success of a learner's education. In order to ensure consistency and progression in their learning development it is vital that learners not only attend on a daily basis but also arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important however, that learners should not be in school if they are unwell and unable to cope with the daily learning.

Silverdale Academy employ Attend EDC (Independent Education Consultancy.) They can be contacted on 07803 207599. They will continue to help us achieve our targets.

The school has adopted the following attendance initiatives in order to help us ensure a continuity of learning experience for our learners and to further improve our attendance targets.

Communication

Key information regarding lateness, illness and absence is given to parents through the website and provided through letters. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason. Parents are encouraged to share any worries their child might have in school and to work in partnership with the school to address any issues or concerns.

Attendance Celebration Letters

Each learner's individual attendance is tracked on a termly basis. Parents receive a letter indicating their child's attendance for the half term and how this compares to the school's own attendance target. Colour coded boxes visually highlight where their child's attendance falls within an agreed scale.

Attendance colour codes:

- 96% - 100% (Well done! This is excellent)
- 90% - 95% (Be Careful)
- Less than 90% (Persistent Absence Pupil)

Class Attendance Celebration

Once a week the attendance records of each class are celebrated during a celebration assembly. The class with the best attendance receive an attendance treat.

The idea is to involve the children in positive competition and hopefully improving overall attendance.

Truancy

All staff at Silverdale Primary School are concerned about learner's regular attendance and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They also strive to ensure that every learner's safety, welfare and happiness is at the heart of all decision making. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a learner to truant, if there is a concern that a learner might be truanting then the following action is taken immediately:

- Notify the Headteacher.
- Headteacher then contacts the parents either by phone or by home visit if possible.
- This is then followed up by notifying the Educational Welfare Worker of the situation.
- The Headteacher, Parents and learner concerned meet to discuss any reasons for the learner not wanting to attend school in an effort to resolve any issues and put relevant support into place.
- Actions decided are shared with all relevant personnel and put into place.

Targets

The following indicates the targets agreed by the LA and school for the academic year.

- **School attendance target for 2014-2015 = 97%**
- **School attendance target for 2015-2016 = 97%**
- **School attendance target for 2016-2017 = 97%**
- **School attendance target for 2017-2018 = 96.5%**

Each term, attendance certificates will be given to children who achieve the school target for attendance or have 100% attendance throughout the term.

At the end of the year, all children who have secured 100% attendance will be entered into a raffle draw to win some well-deserved prizes.

RESPONSIBLE CONTACTS

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs L Nejrup – Head teacher
Family Liaison Co-ordinator
Clerical Assistant

All staff have a shared responsibility in encouraging good attendance. They follow the school's positive behaviour management and Anti-bullying policies and practice in order to ensure that learners feel safe, cared for and positive about their experience of school.

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. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

DOCUMENT CHANGE LOG

Version No.	Date of review	Reviewer	Changes Made
2	16.09.13	L Nejrup	Update in line with LA guidance
3	6.5.14	L Nejrup	Update percentage from 85% to 95%
4	27.04.15	R Barlow	Update with LA amendments and improvements made
5	15.06.16	R Barlow	LA amendments and improvements made
6	15.01.18	R Barlow/ ATTEND EDC	Changes to the Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices Commencing 1 st January 2018
7	15.01.18	R Barlow	Update school attendance targets
8	20.12.18	R Barlow	Update new term – no changes made