

Sandown Primary School and Nursery Attendance Policy



Policy Contact Person	Mr Charlie Lindsay
Review Frequency	Annually
Signed by Link Governor/Chair	
Date Agreed/Signed	28.02.2019
Next Review Date	April 2020
Signed original stored in Business Manager's Office	

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Sandown School and Nursery by

- Collaborating with parents and carers using clear communication which harbours an environment of mutual respect to ensure children realise their academic potential.
- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent or carer.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents or carers and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, by telephone or in writing. For reasons of safety, parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable causes.

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**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained**
- **Children who arrive at school too late for registration in class**

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service, (ESBAS) from the Local Education Authority. The ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can 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 £2500.00 and/ or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

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

- Parents/carers are expected to telephone or advise the school/nursery using Parentmail on the first day of any absence and on each day thereafter.
- Absences are only authorised when notified by the parent/carer by telephone or in writing.
- Requests for absences during term time should be addressed to the Headteacher in writing. It is the school's policy to authorise such absences only in exceptional circumstances. This can include compassionate grounds including exceptional medical circumstances.
- Requests for withdrawal from learning must be completed by parents and carers and returned to the school. Failure to do so will result in the school requesting a welfare check by the local authority / police. In line with first day calling missing child procedures, any child unaccounted for will be reported as a missing child.
- Students who have unauthorised absences of more than 5 days in any term are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Students arriving late to school are required to sign in at the school office. Those arriving between 8.45 and 9.15 are counted as late, those arriving after this time are treated as unauthorised absences.
- Parents and Children are asked to complete the Attendance Commitment Contract in accordance with ESCC guidelines.
- The school complies with the East Sussex attendance monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- The nursery reserves the right to remove your child from role if poor attendance in the nursery continues to be an issue.
- The school will, on occasion, visit the home if a child is not at school. If the school is unable to contact parents or carers, school staff will visit the property in pairs and if there is no response, a note will be left at the property advising of our visit and asking the parent / carer to contact the school. On occasion, in order to support engagement, it may be possible to transport pupils into school.
- In line with the Local Authority policy, if no response can be gained, the school will contact the police and the Local Authority to report the child as missing. It is therefore imperative that parents keep emergency contact details up to date to enable us to make contact.
- Families that are on Child Protection will also be monitored to ensure the safety and the whereabouts of their children is known. Families who are stepped down following a case review will continue to be monitored for 6 months.

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. However where possible please make routine dental and optician appointments outside of school hours.

Information about projects and special initiatives

- The class in both KS1 and KS2 that has the best attendance for the week are awarded champions and care for either the Ponies or Chickens during the following week.
- A prize draw will take place at the end of terms 2, 4 & 6 for those children that have been in on time with 97% - 100% attendance. With a further prize draw for those children who have had 100% attendance during the whole of the school year.
- A special prize will be given for those who have had 100% attendance all year.
- The school/nursery has a SWAT (Sandown Wellbeing Attendance Team) initiative that monitors persistent absence.

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

Governors will monitor and review the implementation and development of this policy.

Appendix A

Children with adverse attendance will be subject to attendance monitoring to support increased engagement tailored to specific needs such as medical/exceptional circumstances/SEND:-

