

Shelton Junior School



Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

All children of compulsory school age have the right to receive a full-time education. We aim to provide an environment where every pupil is valued and able to fulfil their potential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for each pupil. We are proud of our attendance record which is generally very good. We will work with parents and carers to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Poor attendance is the single most significant factor in academic underachievement. If a pupil is absent from school, they are missing out on learning.

Persistent Absence:

This is the term used in school to define a pupil who has an attendance rate of 90% or less. If a student has an attendance figure below this, they are falling behind and will struggle to reach their potential. Parents or carers could face legal action.

Attendance Monitoring

- Electronic registration within 15 minutes of the start every morning session
- Electronic registration within 15 minutes of the start every afternoon session
- Class Teachers will liaise with parents regarding attendance or late concerns
- Pupils causing concern will be referred to the Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead and will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer where appropriate

School Procedures

- The office staff will enter absence messages received from parents onto the electronic system (Integris)
- Any absence for children on the vulnerable children register where no reason has been given will be communicated to the Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead for further action
- A phone call will be made for those with no reason for absence.
- Continued absence or lateness will result in Class Teachers contacting parents.
- Where pupil absence or lateness continues to cause concern, Office staff and Class Teachers will refer to Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead.

- Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead or SLT will authorise any further actions such as a home visit where deemed necessary
- We will aim to resolve the problem with Parents. If this is unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Extended absence may lead to legal action up to and including prosecution.

Lateness

Punctuality stops valuable learning time from being wasted. The class teacher will take the register recording pupils who are present and those pupils who are absent. The register will close 15 minutes after the start of the morning session.

Any pupil arriving after the school gates have closed should enter the school through the main entrance. The office staff will record the name, class, time and reason for the lateness. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will contact parents to offer a reason. All staff must be aware that any child arriving late must register at the school office for purposes of fire regulations. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of registration will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers closed. Once the register is closed, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Medical or Dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents should inform school by email or ClassDojo at least 1 working day in advance of any appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as: ***circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there is insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation and where missing education cannot be reasonably avoided.***

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Term Time Holiday

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless there are explicit, exceptional circumstances. Parents wishing to apply for term time absence for their child must do so in writing to the Headteacher.

Leave of absence taken without consent from the school could result in a referral to Education Welfare and a fine of up to £120.00 per Parent/Carer per child.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Long Term Absence

Occasionally, a pupil may be absent for an extended period of time due to ill health. Parents/Carers must liaise with the Class Teacher where the absence period is likely to be greater than one week. The School will aim to minimise the disruption to learning by providing appropriate work to complete. If necessary, a phased return or part-time timetable will be considered.

Promoting Attendance

The school will highlight the importance of good attendance by the use of the following:-

- Assemblies
- Newsletters
- Parent Evenings
- The Home/School Agreement

Persistent Absence Monitoring

The school's persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The Office Manager monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis in consultation with the Pastoral and Safeguarding Lead and the SLT. The Office Manager will prepare and record any letters that should be sent out to families at each stage and will record how/when information is communicated. The Pastoral and Safeguarding Lead and SLT will check for any known exceptional circumstances before letters are dispatched.

The Office manager will maintain a record of all contact made with parents with regard to absence using the following process:

Stage 1:

If a child's absence falls below 95% in that period without reasonable cause, the child's parents/carers will be contacted to request an explanation (see appendix 1).

Stage 2:

If the child's attendance has fallen below 92% AND the parents/carers have received and not responded appropriately to the letter sent at Stage 1 then the parents/carers will be contacted again requesting further information.

Stage 3:

If the child's attendance has fallen below 90% AND the parents/carers have received and not responded appropriately to the letter sent at Stage 1 and Stage 2 then the parents/carers will be required to attend a meeting.

Stage 4:

If all of the above stages have failed to improve the child's attendance then a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Persistent Lateness Monitoring

Alongside persistent absence, lateness will also be monitored every term. The Office manager will prepare a report listing the children who have recorded late arrival at school. This will be reviewed with HT/SLT and letters issued. The office manager will record which families have received a letter. If lateness continues then parents/carers will be required to attend a meeting to ensure their child's prompt arrival at school.

Attendance to Remote Learning

Where children are being taught at home, for example as a result of self-isolation due to COVID-19, the Remote Learning Policy will apply. Class teachers and Teaching Assistants will expect and record children's engagement in on-line learning. A daily contact register will be kept and reviewed at least weekly by SLT. Teaching staff will escalate non-engagement to SLT/Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead as appropriate for further action.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

We use an electronic system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record and monitor attendance information.

Code	Description
/	Present am
\	Present pm
Code B	Educated offsite
Code C	Other authorised circumstances
Code D	Dual registration
Code E	Exclusion
Code G	Holiday during term time not authorised by the school
Code H	Holiday authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances.
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
Code J	Interview with another educational establishment where a pupil is planning to transfer to
Code L	Late arrival before the register has closed. The Register opens at 8.55am and closes at 9.15am .
Code M	Medical/dental appointments
Code N	Reason for absence not yet provided
Code O	Absent from school without authorisation
Code P	Approved sporting activity
Code R	Religious observance
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed at 9.15am .
Code V	Educational trip or visit

Appendix 2 – Initial Letter Stage 1

Dear Parent/Guardian

Attendance

I am writing to raise your awareness of [pupil's] percentage attendance. His/her attendance has fallen below 95% which is equivalent to one day every month. It is important that children attend school regularly in order to reach their expected levels of progress.

The school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

The school will continue to monitor [name] attendance and if there is no improvement, you may be asked to produce medical evidence to authorise absence. Failure to do so would result in all absences being unauthorised and the potential of a penalty notice being issued.

Thank you for your support and I hope we can work together to improve attendance over the next 4 weeks. If you wish to discuss this matter or request additional support, then please contact the school to make an appointment.

Appendix 3 – Letter Stage 2

Dear Parent/Guardian

Attendance

We are becoming increasingly concerned about [pupil's] attendance as this has now fallen below 92% despite recent correspondence.

Parents/Carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and may be subject to:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000
- Prosecution under Section 444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 12 weeks imprisonment

I would encourage you to make us aware of any circumstances affecting your child's attendance as a matter of urgency.

All absences from this point forward will be marked as unauthorised unless accompanied by medical evidence.

Thank you for your support and I hope we can work together to improve attendance over the next 4 weeks. If you wish to discuss this matter or request additional support, then please contact the school to make an appointment.

Appendix 4 – Letter Stage 3

Attendance

Shelton Junior School have serious concerns regarding [pupil's] attendance. Attendance is now [%]. As a result, we request that you now attend a meeting at school to discuss this issue.

DATE	TIME	VENUE	IN ATTENDANCE
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If you fail to attend and/or the reasons given for your child's absence are not satisfactory, then legal proceedings may commence against you for failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000
- Prosecution under Section 444(1)(a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 12 weeks imprisonment

It is hoped that enforcement proceedings will not be necessary and we look forward to meeting you.

Appendix 4 - Lateness

Dear Parent/Guardian

Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child, _____ has been arriving late for school.

Registration starts at ____am and if your child arrives after this time they will be marked late and this could lead to a referral being made to the Education Welfare Officer.

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone’s education is compromised.

If your child is going to be late for school, you need to contact school immediately and advise us of the reasons for their lateness.

Thank you for your support in this matter and I hope that we can work together. If you wish to discuss this matter, then please make an appointment.