



Reach for the Stars

Policy Document: Attendance Policy

March 2019

Monitor: Headteacher/ EWO

Governor Link: Staffing and Curriculum Committee

Background

“Under Section 36 of the Education Act 1944, parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. In most cases, children attend school. Parents are thus primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend, and stay at, school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.”

From School Attendance, policy and practice on categorisation of Absence DFES 1994

This statement makes clear that school attendance is a partnership – the parents (or guardians) have a legal duty to send their child(ren) to school, or make satisfactory alternative arrangements, and schools have the responsibility of supporting parents by close and regular monitoring of attendance.

Parents should ensure:-

- Children arrive on time.
- Children are properly dressed.
- Children are in a condition to learn.
- That any reason for absence is reported as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- That they know the school’s arrangements for notifying absence.

Schools should ensure:-

- A prompt start to the school day.
- A suitable learning environment.
- That the school’s Attendance Policy is known and available to all parents.
- That all messages reporting reasons for absence are passed to the right person.

Registration

“Under Regulation 3 of the Pupils’ Registration Regulations 1956, all schools (other than independent schools for boarders only) must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.”

From School Attendance, Policy and Practice on categorisation of Absence – DFES 1994

- The 1956 regulations were amended in 1991 by requiring all absences of compulsory school aged students to be categorised as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. These Regulations also allowed for the keeping of computerised Registers of Attendance.

- **Manuscript** registers must be marked in ink and any corrections made in such a way that the original entry and its correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- **The Computerised** register is completed weekly by the school administrator who ensures that corrections are clearly distinguishable and **makes a weekly printout of attendances**.
- Both annual and computerised registers must be kept for a period of three years.

The Education Welfare Service

- LAs have a legal responsibility to enforce school attendance for children of compulsory school age: where attendance is irregular and gives rise for concern, the LA can apply to the courts for an **Education Supervision Order** and the parents can be prosecuted.
- Shropshire LA employs Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) to help them carry out their statutory duties. EWOs will make home visits and assess the problem in the wider family context.

SCHOOL POLICY

Attendance

Children are expected to attend school daily. They are expected to arrive at the start of the school day no later than 8.55 am and not before 8.45 am. Children enter school at 8.45 am with lessons commencing at 9.00 am.

Lateness

- Children who arrive late, but before 9.10 am will be marked present in the normal way. Those arriving after 9.10 am, but before 9.25 am will be marked late, but counted as present for the session.
- Children arriving after 9.25 am will be recorded as absent for the session and the absence recorded as unauthorised, unless the lateness is a planned authorised one. Their presence, however, will be recorded for purposes of emergency evacuation. Where children arrive late parents will be asked to sign their children in.
- In responding to lateness, the Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances and, where there are genuinely unavoidable problems, the appropriate adjustments will be made to the register. The Headteacher will give reminders of the importance of good attendance on 'The Mail on Monday' throughout the year.

Absence

Absence Codes

These codes may not be altered as they have been approved by the DFES as acceptable for computerised registration although the meanings can be varied.

/	Present
@	Late (after 09.30am – see Policy statement)
B	Educated off site (e.g. attending special centre)
C	Other authorised absence
E	Excluded
H	Annual family holiday
I	Attending interview

L	Late (before close of register)
M	Medical/dental
O	Unauthorised
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
V	Educational visit

Categorising Absence

- Absences are either authorised or unauthorised.
- Under Section 199 of the Education Act 1993, the parent of a child of compulsory school age registered and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable in law. However, an offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) The pupil was absent with leave (granted by any person authorised to do so by the Governing Body);
 - b) The pupil was ill/prevented from attending by unavoidable cause;
 - c) The absence was on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong;
 - d) The school at which the child is registered is not within walking distance of home and the LEA have made no suitable arrangement for any of the following:
 - Transport to and from school.
 - Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school.
 - Enabling the child to register as a pupil at a school nearer to home.
 - e) A limited defence is also available to parents of Traveller children.

The end table places absences in the two categories of **authorised** or **unauthorised** and are intended to be used for quick reference. If doubt remains, then isolated cases will be decided following reference to the DFES document – School Attendance – which is available from the School Office.

REQUEST FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Headteacher can only authorise any absence when a **Request for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances form (available from the school office)** has been submitted **at least a month in advance** by the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident and it is felt to be for an **exceptional circumstance**. An annual family holiday would **not be deemed an exceptional circumstance**. If the requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council, may in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:

Parents have not sought permission from the Headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time

The Headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or

A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.

PARENTAL NOTES	Usually AUTHORISED. Parentally condoned unjustified absence can be a problem – only school can approve absence. If in doubt speak to Head. If no satisfactory explanation is given absence is UNAUTHORISED.
ILLNESS, MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS	AUTHORISED Where a pupil is present for registration and is collected by parent during session NO ACTION NECESSARY.
LATENESS	Marked according to Policy. May therefore be AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.
MINDING HOUSE/SIBLINGS	UNAUTHORISED.
SHOPPING	During school hours – UNAUTHORISED.
FAMILY BEREAVEMENT	AUTHORISED – respond sensitively to request. Where pupil remains absent for longer than agreed period, investigate/use discretion to continue authorising.
SPECIAL OCCASIONS	School to determine – only exceptional occasions to be authorised. Thus a birthday treat on a school day is UNAUTHORISED, but attending a function deemed to have educational value given leave of absence to be marked AUTHORISED.
OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES	School visits – AUTHORISED. Activities peculiar to individual e.g. music exam, special tuition, at discretion of school and can be AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.
HOLIDAYS	These are not authorised.
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE	AUTHORISED.
TRAVELLER	Special dispensations. May AUTHORISE where school is satisfied that family migrates after giving reasonable intention to do so and to return. Where traveller children are known to be on site and registered at school but are not attending, matter dealt with in normal manner.
EXCLUSIONS	AUTHORISED.
Notes	For guidance on holiday authorisation see pages 7/8 of the DfE document. For further guidance on Traveller special dispensations see page 8 of the DfE document.

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Reviewed and adopted by Standards and Curriculum Committee on 26th March 2019

Signed _____
Chairperson, Standards and Curriculum Committee

Next review: March 2021