



Silverhill Primary School
Policy for Attendance

Safeguarding

Issue date: April 18

Review date: April 19

Missing school for any reason can deprive your child of educational opportunities and hamper their progress at school. Children have a right to an education and denying children their rights can have a long lasting effect on ensuring children meet their true potential. There is a strong correlation between good school attendance and academic achievement.

Nationally Government Policy is insisting that schools minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of term time absences and schools are now expected to adopt a more challenging response to requests for leave of absence in term time.

Legal Requirements

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education. The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the local authority. This responsibility is delegated to the EWS.

Legal action will be initiated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including;

- Penalty notices for non-attendance and term time holidays
- School Attendance Orders
- Section 444(1) and (1)(a) of the Education Act 2002.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the accompanying guidance make it clear that parents/carers **do not** have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time. **In line with the recent change to Government policy, from September 2013 schools will no longer be allowed to authorise any time off for holidays in term time.** There are **190 statutory school days** a year so there are **175 other days available for holidays** that would not have a negative effect on a child's education.

Responsibilities – School

School will take action to keep the pupils as healthy as possible to avoid absence due to illness. This currently includes:

- Teaching the children how to remain fit and healthy through a balanced diet and exercise
- Ensuring the pupils undertake basic hygiene before eating and after going to the toilet
- Providing hand sanitisers in the hall
- Pupils taking part in daily physical exercise
- Pupils participating in the Strength Lab programme in PE to improve core physical fitness
- Access to the Learning Mentor to talk about worries and concerns to alleviate mental health issues
- Providing healthy well balanced hot and cold lunches with a salad bar

If a pupil is absent from school and we have not received a message from parents by 9.30am, school will send a text message and call requesting an update. If we have not heard anything by afternoon registration, another telephone phone call will be made. Safeguarding procedures will be followed.

School holds half termly meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer to review attendance and discuss pupils whose attendance is below 95%. Following the review, if a pupil's attendance is still a concern, a letter is sent out to parents to make them aware of the situation. If there is no response as to why a pupil is absent **on three or more occasions**, the parents will be invited in for an interview with the Learning Mentor. If there is no response to this a visit from the EWO is requested.

In instances of significant absence due to ill health, the school could suggest in consultation with parents/carers, work to be completed at home, eg, websites to access and resources for children. In certain circumstances education support would be provided by the health service. A single point of contact may be assigned if appropriate.

Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn.
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the schools code of conduct.
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- Work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school.
- Notify their child's school if he/she is absent. This should be done as soon as possible on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed in writing - when the child returns to school.
- Wherever possible avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

If your child is absent and school either does not receive an explanation from you or considers the explanation unsatisfactory, it will record your child's absence as 'unauthorised'.

Most absences for acceptable reasons will be authorised by school, ie:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical or dental arrangements (if possible, these need to be arranged during the school holidays)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Holidays during term time and extended visits overseas

At Silverhill Primary School we have a "zero tolerance policy" for leave of absence during term time which has been approved by Derby City Council. This means that no holidays during term time will be authorised by the Headteacher.

Procedure for Applying for Leave of Absence

Although no holidays during term time will be authorised, any request for leave of absence has to be completed on the relevant Leave of Absence Form which is available from the school office and any requests for leave of absence must have supporting documentation.

School will consider:

- How long is it for and how much will it disrupt the child's education
- The overall attendance record of the child
- The nature of the circumstance, such as trauma or death within the immediate family where an immediate holiday may help the child deal better with the situation

School will not approve a request:

- If a child's attendance record is less than 95%
- If the period coincides with the start of term, or is near to, or coincides with in-school assessments, SATS, or other significant events on the school calendar
- If there are patterns of non-attendance or if there is Education Welfare Service (EWS) involvement
- If the school has concerns over a child's welfare and safety.

As responsible parents it is essential that you are aware of the importance of ensuring your child's regular, uninterrupted school attendance and the potential consequences for failing to do so. Parents do not have the right or entitlement to expect leave to be granted in term time and, in some circumstances, **a child may lose their place at school** if certain conditions are not fulfilled. Children may be reported as 'missing' to the relevant agencies if they fail to return to school by an agreed date whether the leave has been authorised or not by the Head teacher.

Parents should ...

- Always fill in a Leave of Absence request form provided by the school - failure to do so may result in legal sanctions (including fines for non-attendance) being taken against the parent(s)
- Consider very carefully the implications of taking a child out of school in term time and the impact on the child's learning.

The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with schools to ensure that, if parents are found to be taking their children out of school without the Head teacher's authorisation, the Education Welfare Officer for the school will conduct an investigation which may lead to a parents/guardians receiving a **Penalty Notice**.

- **The Penalty Notice is for each individual period of absence that the Education Welfare Service act upon.**
- **Parents/Guardians may receive a Penalty Notice payable up to £120 per Parent per Child for un-authorised leave of absence.**
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If this is not paid within 42 day of the original date of issue the matter will then be placed before the Magistrates' Court. Conviction at the Courts will result in the parents/guardians receiving a criminal record and may also result in a fine being imposed on the parents/guardians.