



# Attendance Policy

Last Review Date: January 2024

Next Review Date: January 2025

## Statement

We believe that:

- Children need to attend the centre regularly so they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available
- Poor attendance rates and persistent lateness undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

## Aims

Therefore, we aim to:

- Take all reasonable steps to maximize attendance rates
- Actively discourage late arrival
- Be consistent in the application of the centre's registration and attendance procedures
- Legal Framework

It is recognised that parents, the centres, and Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities with regard to the centre attendance. It is important to know that a child with 90% attendance loses nearly four weeks of the centre every year and 24 weeks by year 6 SATs. This increases to one whole year lost by year 11 GCSEs.

## Parental Responsibility

- Parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at the centre.
- Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:
  - Attend the centre regularly.
  - Arrive at the centre on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn.
  - Are absent only for reasons that can be authorised.
- Parents are required to inform the centre of the reason for any absence and the likely return date, as soon as possible.
- If a child is a persistent absentee (attendance less than 90%), the family may be fined. This would be done after discussions with the family and after giving them a reasonable period of time to improve.

## Registration

The centre keeps an attendance register for each class in which pupils are marked present or

absent at the beginning of each the centre session.

## Reporting Absence

- Parents are asked to make contact on the first day of absence, where possible - by note, personal contact, telephone call or e-mail - informing the centre of the reason for the absence and/or nature of any illness. They are also asked to inform the centre if there is a likely return date. If the centre has not heard from the family

by 9:30 am, a member of staff will attempt to contact home to ascertain the reason for absence.

- Notes received by teachers are dated and initialled and sent to the office to be retained until the end of the academic year. The absence is logged as either Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence.
- Telephone messages and personal contacts made to the centre office are noted on the centre database system and subsequently logged as either Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence.
- Personal contacts made with teachers/tutors should subsequently be logged on an Absence Record slip and placed in the Register, then logged on the centre database system.
- Any absence that may be considered Unauthorised Absence should only be recorded after discussion with the Centre Manager. Any queries as to whether to Authorise an absence or not should be referred to the Centre Manager.

### **Authorising Absence**

The law states that only the centre can approve absence, not parents. If doubts remain about the explanation offered – or where no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence will be authorised immediately or retrospectively if:

- The pupil was absent due to illness
- The pupil had leave of absence granted by the Centre Manager
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- The absence was due to a medical or dental appointment.

In addition, the centre *will consider authorising* absence in the following cases:

- Family bereavement/attending wedding (1 day only)
- Moving house
- External music examination
- Special tuition/events.

The centre *will not authorise* absence in the following cases:

- Shopping during the centre hours
- Children looking after brothers and sisters
- Children minding the house during the centre hours
- Children avoiding aspects of the curriculum (games, swimming, visits, etc.) whether condoned by parents or not.
- All holiday leave in term time

### **Parents wishing to request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances:**

In each case the Centre Manager will consider the request, writing to the family explaining that the exceptional absence days will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and explaining the reasons.

### **Persistent Absentees**

Persistent absence rates are counted as anything below 90%. The centre may contact any family where the child has more than 3 days consecutive absence without a medical note in any 6 week period. Or whose attendance over a 6 week period is less than the 90%. In the first instance, the Centre Manager may write to the parents and invite the parents into the centre to discuss the absence.

Secondly, the Centre Manager may write to the parents to inform them that a fine will be issued.

The Centre Manager may involve the Family Service if the child's attendance does not improve.

The Family Service may issue a fine on the centre's behalf.

Every effort will be made between the centre and the family to ensure the child's attendance improves.

### **Pupils absconding**

Where a pupil is marked present and has absconded from the Centre or have left the building

without authorisation the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:

- Member of staff to inform the SL or a member of the DSL team
- The DSL or a member of SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
- If the pupil leaves the building without authorisation where a member of staff is unable to stop them. Then the office will immediately contact parents/carers, School/Commissioners and Social worker (if one is assigned) and inform them of the situation. If the Police have been informed, then all parties will be notified. We must always keep parents updated.
- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the centre's perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests. Liaise with the police and parents at all times.
- Once a pupil has been found then the lead DSL or SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- An Incident report must be logged and securely filed.
- Member of SLT/DSL must brief police and parents.

### **Lateness**

- We recognise that persistent lateness is:
  - Detrimental to the child's education
  - Administratively disruptive
  - Poor preparation for future schooling and adult life.
- Morning session starts at 9.30am.

- \* If pupils arrive after 9.30am and before 9.45 am they receive a late mark L and need to be signed in late via the main office.
- \* Pupils arriving after 9.45 am will sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes. 'Late after the register is closed' U which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registration starts at 1.00 pm and the registers are closed at 1.10 pm pupils arriving during the period 1.05 pm and 1.10 pm receive a late mark L.
- Pupils arriving after 1.10 pm sign in late at the office and receive a mark which denotes 'Late after the register is closed' U which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive a warning letter from the centre. Cases may be referred to the Family Service.

### **Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures**

It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which

may be authorised:

- Illness or accident in the centre resulting in a child going home
- Medical or dental appointments
- Unavoidable delays or reasons to leave early.

Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on the

Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log in the centre office for purposes of emergency evacuation.

The register itself is not altered.

Pupils not present for registration who return later from an appointment should be noted on the Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log in the centre office for purposes of emergency evacuation.

The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence.

### **Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality**

- The computer printouts will be examined at the end of each half term to look for:
  - patterns of unexplained absences
  - any persistent lateness
  - any prolonged absence
  - any unexplained patterns of authorised absence
  - attendance below 90% (including late after registration is closed (this could lead to prosecution))

**Summaries of Attendance** rates are prepared termly or annually for all children showing:

- The total number of pupils on roll at any time during the period
- The total number of possible pupil's sessions
- The number of authorised absences and the number of children affected



**Year on Year summaries** are retained for comparison and class registers are retained for a minimum of seven years.

**Attendance and Punctuality Reports are given termly** to directors, outlining the attendance and punctuality rates.

**Individual Attendance and Punctuality Reports** are sent home with every child praising those with high levels of attendance and punctuality and commenting on those with unsatisfactory levels.

#### **REWARDS**

- Individual certificates
- Class certificates
- Gift vouchers for improving attendance