

Summerville Primary School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Designated Governor	Vicky Johnson
Signature	
Chair of Governors	Gail McNally
Signature	
Head Teacher	Joanne Jordan
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Attendance Policy

Introduction

Summerville Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

The school values all pupils, and staff will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. However, the school will challenge pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives the school has established an effective system of communication with parents to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Legal Framework

When a pupil of compulsory school age is on the school's register, parents are required by law to ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of term following their 5th birthday. It is important that children from an early age get into good habits of regular and punctual attendance that set positive patterns for the future.

Absence from school should only occur when a child is unfit to attend due to illness; has a day of religious observance or leave of absence has been granted by the school.

If a pupil does not attend regularly, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to enforce parental responsibility and may issue a penalty notice or take legal action if they fail to do so.

- **Penalty Notices:** The school recognises the use of penalty notices as an early enforcement measure that are used by the authority in accordance with Salford City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol. A Penalty Notice is to the value of £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.
- **Prosecution:** Legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken. This is to ensure that parents realise their responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education. The court can impose a fine of up to £2,500 per child or up to three months imprisonment.

Support Systems

It is recognised that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home, in the community or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school works closely with Salford's Education Welfare Service in matters relating to poor attendance and continuing late arrival to school. Other support services are requested to provide assistance on a needs led basis.

Arrival and registration

Registration takes place twice per day, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Morning registration starts at 8:45am and ends at 9:00 am. If a child arrives after the end of the registration period, they will be marked as **late**. If a child arrives after 9:00am they will become an **Unauthorised Absence** which equates to half a day's absence. Afternoon registration begins at 12:50pm and ends at 1:00pm after which a pupil will be marked **late** in the register. Children arriving after 1:00pm will be marked as an **Unauthorised Absence**.

Lateness

When children arrive in school late, or if they have to leave school early, the parent or carer should call at the school office to sign them in or out. The signing in/out register is used as an appendix to the class register as part of the school's health and safety procedures.

Categorising absence

When a pupil is absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be **authorised by parents**. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Illness: The school office should be informed before 9:00am on the first day of absence due to illness with an expected day of return. Parents should keep in regular contact with the school if the absence continues. Children should return to school as soon as they are well enough to attend. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription, GP's note etc.

Medical appointments: Parents should make routine medical and dental appointments outside of the school day so as not to disrupt their child's education. If it is absolutely necessary to make an appointment during school time (e.g. specialist medical or dental appointment), pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card/letter to school.

Religious Observance: The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. The school will authorise absence on parental request for a day's religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

Other Authorised Circumstances: The school will consider authorising absence on occasions where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances for example family bereavement.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that has been accepted as such by the school. Unsatisfactory explanations include: shopping for uniforms; a pupil's or family member's birthday; unauthorised holidays; closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other purposes); "couldn't get up"; illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school; having their hair cut; looking after the house or a sick member of the family. This is a general list and not exhaustive. When unauthorised leave is taken school will follow the local authority guidelines by referring to the Education Welfare Service.

Lateness: Late absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Exclusion from school: Exclusion is counted as an authorised absence. Parents are responsible for educating their child during the first 6 days of exclusion and the child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Leave of absence: The school strongly discourages leave of absence during school time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time due to leave of absence. Under no circumstances will the school approve a holiday during term time.

- The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
- Head teachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Salford and Manchester's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Each application for Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

(Extract taken from Attendance Compliance Enforcement Service August 2014)

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing.

Roles and Responsibilities

Summerville Primary School believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, carers, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body, in order to ensure that the school is complying with its statutory duties, will:

- Name a governor for attendance;
- Ensure there is a named senior member of staff to lead on attendance;
- Review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Review attendance on a termly basis and hold a shared responsibility to report pupil attendance to the named Governor;
- Support (where appropriate) meetings in school with parents relating to attendance concerns (named governor);
- Have attendance as an on-going agenda item at Governor's meetings;
- Liaise with Salford Governor Services regarding their training programme. The School will:
- Set an attendance target and persistent absence target and share with staff, governors and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and achieve.
- Encourage a welcoming and positive atmosphere which pupils feel safe and their presence is valued;
- Ensure the structure of attendance monitoring is effective with clear trigger points for attendance letters;
- Maintain clear procedures for monitoring the attendance of specific groups and Persistent absentees;
- Make immediate contact with parents if there is a concern about an absent pupil;

- Collect and analyse attendance data, on a weekly basis, in order to help identify patterns, set target, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice;
- Issue letters to parents/carers of pupils who are regularly late for school or are consistently poor attendees expressing concern and offering support;
- Invite parents/carers into school, if there is no improvement in attendance and/or punctuality following a letter, to discuss the situation with the attendance lead;
- Reward pupils successes in achieving 100% attendance termly and annually;
- Send out 'colour banded' letters at least every term informing parents/carers of their child's current attendance;
- Record current attendance and number of lates on annual end of year reports to parents/carers;
- Set targets for improvement for pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The head teacher will monitor and review these targets;
- Remind parents/carers regularly (via newsletters, the school website and app, learning reviews etc.) of the importance of good attendance;
- Send work home to pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time (when appropriate) and reintegrate them back into school on their return;
- Prepare an individually tailored reintegration programme for pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time (when appropriate);
- Review the Attendance and Punctuality policy to ensure relevant attendance information is included;
- Make a termly report to the school's Governing Board, by the head teacher, on attendance matters. In addition it is recommended that the head teacher reports on attendance, alongside the named governor, to the governors termly;
- Maintain the appropriate use of absence/attendance coding;
- Liaise with other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties;
- Refer pupils to the Education Welfare Service when attendance becomes a concern.

Parents have a very important part to play in supporting their child's education. Ultimately all those with parental responsibility are accountable for the regular and punctual attendance of children. In order to make a valuable contribution to their attendance parents are expected to:-

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- See themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children and must endeavour to install respect for education and those that deliver it;

- Contact the school by 9:00am on the first day of absence to let them know why and the expected date of return. Parents should keep in regular contact with the school if the absence continues. Children should return as soon as they are well enough to attend;
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Make routine appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Contact the head teacher should their child seem worried or upset about coming to school;
- Encourage good routines at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before;
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family;
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed, and in a condition to learn;
- If their child arrives at school after 8:45am they should always report to the school office and wait with their child until a designated member of staff can collect them;
- Ensure the school are kept informed of the progress during continued absence at regular intervals;
- Avoid taking their children on holiday during school time. If occasion arises where this is felt to be unavoidable, honest communication should take place with school and the leave requested in advance.

School expectations of Pupils:

- Children should try their best to attend school regularly and punctually;
- Pupils arriving after 8:45am should always report to the school office and wait with their parents/carer until a designated member of staff can collect them.