



# ATTENDANCE POLICY – Version 1.1

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This is not a policy which governing bodies and proprietors are required to have by law.

**Review Frequency:** Bi-Annual

**Approval:** Delegated to the headteacher for approving and informing governors of the policy within the headteacher's report.

**Document Location:**

- Paper copy available in the school office policy file.
- O:\UPDATED POLICIES\NOT STATUTORY\SPS ATTENDANCE POLICY - V1.1.DOC.

**Document History:**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>
0.1	Original received from Ann Parish. Reformatted to the new layout.	24 April 2015	Karla de Visser
0.2	Updated the “Family Holidays during Term Time” section to make it clearer that it is only authorised when extenuating circumstances.	27 April 2015	Karla de Visser
1.0	Approved by Ann Parish. Included in the non-statutory policy list for Governors Meeting on 19 May 2015.	18 May 2015	Karla de Visser
1.1	Reviewed by Jo Shillington. Updated document location and deleted reference to 2015. Approved by Ann Parish on 24 May 2017.	24 May 2017	Jo Shillington

## **Mission Statement**

At Shackleton Primary School we seek to ensure that all our pupils receive a full-time education which gives the best possible opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, in which each member of the school community feels valued and secure.

All our staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

We will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges pupils' efforts to improve their attendance and time-keeping. We will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, we will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **Whole School Policy for School Attendance – Aims**

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at school.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupils when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### **To Improve the Overall Percentage Attendance of Pupils at School**

- Apply Whole School Attendance Policy consistently.
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
- Monitor progress in attendance in measurable outcomes.
- Inform parents when attendance falls below 90%
- To liaise with EWO on attendance below 90%

**To Make Attendance and Punctuality a Priority for All Those Associated with the School Including Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Governors**

- Produce termly/annual reports to parents/governors.
- Hold induction meeting for parents/governors.
- Produce newsletters.
- Provide INSET training for appointed/promoted staff.
- Display materials at focal points - classrooms and reception area etc.
- Discuss attendance issues in Education Welfare Service/Pastoral staff evaluation meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings (for example, attendance review meetings).
- Reward systems, such as badges, trophies, certificates, stickers, end of year prizes/trips
- A request will be made to the GP in order to confirm illness for those children who are identified as moving into persistent absentee category.

**To Develop a Framework Which Defines Agreed Roles and Responsibilities and Promotes Consistency in Carrying Out Designated Tasks**

- Maintain unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- Appoint an Attendance Officer with appropriate time set aside.
- Attendance Officer to make phone/letter contact on first day of absence if parent hasn't contacted with reason for absence by 10 a.m.
- Ensure clearly defined late registration procedures.
- Respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- Define clearly the roles and responsibilities within the school staffing structure.
- Timetable staff to meet with the Education Welfare Officer.
- Have clear procedures prior to referral to the Education Welfare Service.
- Review attendance regularly.
- Be familiar with the Education Welfare Service's referral and recording system.

**To Provide Support, Advice and Guidance to Parents and Pupils**

- Highlight attendance in assemblies.
- Staff available to talk to parents and pupils.
- Data information available for staff and pupils/parents to see.
- Newsletters.
- Annual Reports.
- Set aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
- Seek improved communication with parents, for example when parents ring in.
- Involve parents from earliest stage.

**To Develop a Systematic Approach in Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data**

- Be consistent in collecting and providing information.
- Identify persistent absentees and pupils consistently late.
- Attendance Officer to speak to parents and pupils identifying reasons for lateness and non-attendance.
- Attendance Officer to identify developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.
- Attendance Officer to liaise/inform parents of low attendance and lateness.
- Inform staff weekly on class attendance and inform parents at Consultation Evenings.
- Issue letters to parents re low attendance, lateness and improvements in these.
- Identify issues with EWO.
- Progress in this area to be reported to Governors termly.

**To Further Develop Positive and Consistent Communication between Home and School**

- Initiate first day absence contact.
- Promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
- Explore the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships.
- Provide information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English and alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio cassette or signed interpretation).
- Encourage all parents into school.

**To Implement a System of Rewards and Sanctions**

- Continue to budget for a system of rewards.
- Actively promote attendance, associated rewards and effective sanctions.
- Ensure fair and consistent implementation.
- Involve pupils in system evaluation e.g. School Council
- Take action which accords with objectives agreed between school and others, for example, Education Welfare Officer, parent, SEBSS.
- Names on newsletters for 100% attendance over year.
- Prize/trip at end of year for 100% attendance.
- Class attendance on weekly newsletter.

**To Promote Effective Partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and With Other Services and Agencies**

- Attendance Officer to liaise with Education Welfare Service and other agencies.
- Headteacher and Attendance Officer to give priority to regular meetings with Education Welfare Service.
- Carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral.
- Gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Education Welfare Service referral.
- Hold termly attendance review with key school staff and Education Welfare Service.
- Arrange multi-agency liaison meetings as appropriate.
- Establish and maintain list of named contacts within the local community, for example, community police contact officer.
- Encourage active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school.
- Develop understanding of agency constraints and operating environments.

### **To Recognise the Needs of the Individual Pupil When Planning Reintegration Following Significant Periods of Absence**

- Be sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
- Inform all staff of the reintegration process and involve them in it.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring.
- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
- Include Education Welfare Officers, relevant professionals, parents and pupil in reintegration plan.

### **The Curriculum**

The curriculum and pupils' success in learning play a key role in determining levels of attendance, as does the value pupils and their families place on education.

Shackleton Primary School regularly reviews:

- Curriculum support;
- Differentiated learning provision;
- Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning targets;
- Opportunities to encourage and acknowledge the contribution of all pupils.

National research shows that when pupils are successful, they feel valued and are less likely to be absent from school.

Shackleton Primary School acknowledges the skills, efforts and qualities of every pupil, so that self-esteem and motivation is maintained at a high level. Pupils who feel good about themselves perform better and enjoy coming to school.

We ask ourselves:

- Does classroom practice overtly value individuals?
- Is co-operation encouraged?
- Is self-esteem promoted?
- Are there opportunities for communication of feelings and needs?
- Is there a positive and inclusive ethos?
- Are staff aware of new techniques that will support classroom management?
- Are teachers supportive of one another?
- Is discussion of issues and difficulties perceived as a weakness?
- Are resources available that reflect progressive techniques to support teachers in handling conflict within the classroom and the wider environment of the school community?
- Is the curriculum relevant to the individual young person, enabling the young person to succeed?

Integrating attendance issues into the curriculum has many benefits, especially when the work encourages pupils to take responsibility and is linked to incentive schemes. For example it can:

- raise the profile of attendance;
- help to identify issues for pupils and staff;
- provide important feedback;
- encourage the development of new strategies to address attendance issues;
- improve attendance; and
- lead to quality development in other areas of school life.

## **Home/School Agreement**

Shackleton Primary School has a home/school agreement which is a useful way to remind both parents and pupils of the importance of regular and punctual school attendance and the expectations that the school has regarding this. This agreement specifies:

- The school's aims and values.
- The school's responsibilities, namely the responsibilities which the Headteacher intends to discharge in connection with the education of pupils at the school who are of compulsory school age.
- The parents' responsibilities: namely the responsibilities which the school expects the parents of such pupils to discharge in connection with the education of their children while they are registered pupils at the school.
- The school's expectations of its pupils, namely the expectations of the school as regards to the conduct of such pupils while they are registered at the school.

## **First Day Absence Contact**

First day absence contact has consistently been shown to be the most effective initiative in reducing the length of absence and thereby reducing rates of absence.

Parents are asked to telephone the school by 10.00 a.m. on the first day of a child's absent; if they haven't then the Attendance Officer phones/texts them to ascertain the reason for the absence.

Consistency of such schemes is vital to ensure that the parents receive the message that the school is genuinely concerned, but also determined to respond firmly in cases of unauthorised absence.

## Family Holidays during Term Time

Taking holidays in term time affect children's learning as much as any other absence. The governors have agreed that taking holidays in term time will not be authorised. Only the Headteacher can authorise leave of absence when there are extenuating circumstances. ("It is a school decision whether to give permission for any absence, including holidays, to be taken. It is not a parental right." *Regulation 8 Education (Pupil Regulations) Regulations 1995*).

The Headteacher considers each request for leave of absence individually. A Leave of Absence form needs to be completed and returned to the school in advance of the period of absence. This form is available on request from the school's office.

If authorised, through extenuating circumstances, the maximum permitted time to be taken is ten school days in any school year. This will then be categorised in the register as an authorised absence.

If leave of absence is granted, through extenuating circumstances, but exceeds the agreed return date, the days in excess of those agreed will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

If a pupil is absent without seeking permission from the Headteacher, the absence is recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Officer is informed.

If a child is absent after the school has refused permission, the Headteacher will warn the parent in writing that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

In any circumstances of unauthorised leave of absence the Education Welfare Officer will consider issuing a written warning or fixed penalty notice in accordance with the Bedford Borough Code of Conduct.

If unauthorised leave of absence exceeds ten school days, the pupil may be taken off roll and referred under the Missing Child Procedure. If a pupil taken off roll subsequently returns, it will be necessary for the parent to re-apply through the Local Authority Admissions Department for a place at Shackleton Primary. The application will be treated as a new application and will be subject to a place being available in the relevant year; there is no guarantee of a place.

## Re-integration Plans for Returnees

If a pupil's return to school after absence is not properly planned, their ability to maintain regular attendance may be affected. It is helpful for schools to establish a standard procedure to re-integrate pupils following absence. In cases of longer term absence, re-integration will be more time consuming, but effective in returning the pupil to good attendance. Sensitivity is vital; well-intentioned jokes can undermine a pupil's resolve to return to school.

### Recommendations for re-integration:

- A named person is appointed to co-ordinate support for the pupil. It is important that the pupil relates well to whoever is appointed to this position.
- A return date is set in advance and the relevant school staff alerted.
- A special time-table or phased return may be appropriate.
- Re-integration plans are followed through fully. If the pupil finds that promised work has not been set, or staff are unaware of special arrangements, they may perceive this as an excuse not to attend or feel that staff do not value them.
- We will consider the short term provision of classroom support for the pupil or support to catch up on missed work.

## Promoting and Rewarding Attendance

It is very important to promote and reward both regular, good school attendance and improved attendance. It makes parents and pupils aware that the school takes this issue seriously, it supports those students who have high levels of attendance and it can act as an incentive to pupils with attendance difficulties.

### Key principles in promoting and rewarding attendance

- Challenging but achievable targets are set (related to what is achievable for the individual child).
- Recognition for improvement is given as well as for achievement.
- Differentiated rewards are provided (100% attendance should attract a greater reward than improved attendance).
- We make sure that pupils and parents have clearly understood the attendance needed to achieve the rewards.
- A member of staff with responsibility has been appointed to ensure that awards and certificates are available.

Some attendance reward schemes can work against themselves. If rewards are only given for 100% attendance, a child who misses only one period has nothing to work for and therefore little incentive to improve. Consequently some leeway is allowed for unavoidable absence.

Attendance targets are realistic, taking into account the pupil's past attendance pattern and - if undertaken on a class or year group - their recent attendance patterns.

Children whose attendance is regular need to have this acknowledged and rewarded, but equally children with poor attendance need to be encouraged to improve. Two levels of rewards are in place; one level for the best attendance and punctuality and the other for the most improved attendance by individual, class group and year group.

## **To Raise Attendance through Addressing Bullying**

### **Anti-bullying policy**

Shackleton Primary School has a policy to prevent all forms of bullying. Challenging bullying effectively improves the safety and happiness of pupils, showing that the school cares and we make it clear to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable.

## **Recording, Monitoring and Setting Targets**

OFSTED and the Audit Commission have both highlighted how important it is to analyse and evaluate absence data. This helps schools to determine whether particular pupils, groups or classes are over represented, and also to monitor trends in absences such as holidays/extended holidays in term time.

Shackleton Primary School collects and monitors attendance data by using a computerised registration system. This system not only stores data, but has the capacity to produce a myriad of reports which help us to quickly and simply identify where poor patterns of attendance exist. This system also enables us to easily set and monitor individual, class and year group targets for incentive schemes.

Reliable data analysis helps us to establish patterns of attendance. This in turn enables both us and our Education Welfare Officer to target resources and adopt the most appropriate strategies. The following types of analysis are readily available:

- All students with less than (for example) 90% attendance from the start of the academic year and from the start of the current term.
- Attendance broken down by year groups and class/tutor groups, to include authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Attendance by gender; ethnicity; Looked after Children and other vulnerable groups.
- Reasons for absence, such as extended holidays, to identify trends.

We store the information from these reports so that patterns of improvement and deterioration can be monitored, allowing the school to take early intervention.

This data forms an important part of Senior Management Team Meetings, Educational Welfare Officer liaison meetings and Headteacher's report to Governors.

By making the most of our data we are able to target valuable time and resources to areas which most require them. We use this data to evidence our concerns to teachers, governors, parents and pupils and to inform policy and practice within the school.

We use this data to set attendance targets within school for individual pupils, classes and year groups. We share the individual targets with parents and they can form the basis for competitions and rewards throughout the school.

## **Planning for Phase/School Transfer**

Transferring phase or school is by definition disruptive. Some pupils may find this is a potentially difficult process. Proper planning between the current and new school is vital to identify any problems at an early stage.

Shackleton Primary School shares appropriate information with the relevant schools and other agencies involved, such as the Education Welfare Service. This enables the middle school to monitor the attendance.

Similarly children's attendance record is sought from the nursery provider to ensure smooth transition and to identify persistent absentees.

It is important that both the new school, and the one the pupil is transferring from, have a clear joint strategy for individual pupils who have been identified as possibly needing support. We review these strategies regularly and have clear systems in place to monitor and review attendance. Our Learning Mentor supports pupils and families where attendance/punctuality becomes a cause for concern.

## **Penalty Notices**

If attendance continues to be a problem after all support has been exhausted, Shackleton Primary School has the right to request the issue of a Penalty Notice from the Education Welfare Service under Section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003.

## **Related Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Anti Bullying
- Behaviour Management & Discipline
- Equality Information and Objectives
- PSHCE Policy
- Teaching and Learning.