



Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy reviewed: September 2020 by Headteacher

To be reviewed: September 2021

Approved by the Governing Body on 30th September 2020

"From little acorns....mighty oaks do grow"

Sibford Gower Endowed Primary aspires to be an excellent school, where outstanding practice, equality, well-being and the needs of our children are at the centre of all that we do.

We aim to provide a happy, safe and nurturing environment, where everyone is valued and respected for their individuality and contribution. We promote a love of learning and encourage our children to achieve and grow through the provision of a rich and inspiring curriculum provided by our dedicated staff and supported by governors, parents and carers, and the local community.

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our half-termly newsletters;
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Write to you to inform you, if your child's attendance drops below 95%;
- Arrange a meeting with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer, if your child's

attendance drops below 90%

- Celebrate good attendance with 100% certificates for individual children and class achievements;

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to

tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

Absence Procedures:

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Where possible, we ask that medical/dental appointments are accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- **First day absence:** Telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by the morning break;
- **Third Day Absence:** Further phone call to home, followed up by letter or email if no contact is made from home.
- **Ten Day Continuous Absence:** Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be investigated by the Headteacher and referred to the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer (Please refer to our Children Missing in Education appendix)
- **Persistent Absence (not necessarily continuous):**
Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher and/or WMAT Attendance Officer
Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are ongoing attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may be retained for a longer period.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The County Attendance Team:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513
attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:40a.m.

Morning registration is at 8:50a.m and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9:10 a.m. the registers will be closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

The register for the afternoon session is taken at 1:05 and is kept open until 1:20pm.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head Teacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
6. Exceptional Leave is most unlikely to be authorised in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11.
7. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
8. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
9. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
10. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28

days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Ms O'Sullivan, Headteacher

Rebecca Lowe, WMAT Attendance Officer

Mr Greenhalgh, Governor with responsibility for safeguarding, including attendance

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Attendance Policy has been published on the school website with a live link sent to all parents and carers.

Appendix: Children Missing in Education

As a result of daily admissions registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school/educational establishment/college staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they must try to establish with the parents/ carers, what has happened.

If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and where appropriate refer (see also [Referrals Procedure](#)) any concerns about the child to Children's Social Care.

Schools must monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head Teacher should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools days without provision of reasonable explanation.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, and there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, the Head Teacher must investigate and inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools days without provision of reasonable explanation.

All schools, colleges and educational providers have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and this includes investigating any unexplained absences.

All schools are required to notify the local authority within 5 days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register and investigate their forward destination.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral (see [Referrals Procedure](#)) should be made to Children's Social Care (and the Police if appropriate).