

SEVEN FIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Absence Request Procedures

To be read in conjunction with Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Admission Policy

September 2022

Version 1.3

Philosophy

School attendance is subject to educational legislation and this policy is written to reflect these and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DFE). The DFE remains firmly of the view that **unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools.**

We aim to provide a caring, happy and positive environment that enables all pupils to achieve and excel. In order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital they attend school, on time, every day. Evidence shows that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

As a school, we review attendance regularly and do all we can by liaising with families and other agencies as necessary, to improve attendance and punctuality for all.

We expect all of our pupils to aspire to 100% attendance and appreciate the full support of parents and carers in encouraging this. The minimum level of attendance for the school is 96%. The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important role to play in meeting these targets.

Aims and Objectives

- To remind and encourage parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school and nursery regularly
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- To promote good attendance and punctuality and reduce overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence
- To monitor attendance and punctuality and act early to address patterns of absence
- To work effectively with parents/carers and other agencies to offer support, advice and guidance if there are attendance/punctuality concerns
- To acknowledge and celebrate good and improved attendance/punctuality

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Seven Fields has an effective system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and appropriately challenges the behaviour of those pupils and students who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Governors:

- To have overall responsibility for school attendance and review attendance figures regularly.

Parents/Carers

- To perform their **legal duty** to ensure their children of compulsory age attend regularly and punctually
- To truthfully communicate reasons for absence to the school by 8.40am on the morning of each absence as permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence
- To inform the school in advance (wherever possible) should they need to collect their child during the school day and provide a reason and evidence for this
- To arrange medical/dental appointments outside of the school day where possible, to ensure that the pupil is only absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for an appointment.
- To take holidays *out of* term time. **Any holidays taken in term will receive a fixed penalty notice.**
- To keep children home only if they have a serious illness/injury. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache/stomach pain, parent/carer can still bring their child to school. If a child does not get any better, the school will contact parent/s requesting they collect their poorly child.
- To ensure the school has up-to-date contact information for the parent. **School requests at least 3 emergency contacts.**
- To work in partnership with the school /Education Welfare Office (EWO) to improve attendance/punctuality for their child, if required.

If your child is absent, we will:

1. Text, dojo or call you when they are absent if we have not heard from you.
2. If as a school we are concerned about your child's attendance a member of the Pastoral team may visit you.

The above protocols apply to all absences. Should a pupil's attendance fall below 95% then a series of additional actions will be implemented to monitor and address all attendance concerns.

Failure to improve attendance for a pupil can result in legal action by the local Authority.

School Staff

- To promote good attendance/punctuality and the link between good achievement and good attendance.
- To maintain daily registers (class based staff) and record explanations (office staff).
- To contact parents on the first day of absence and any subsequent days of absence if the parent has not contacted the school.
- To monitor attendance/punctuality on a daily basis
- To celebrate and reward good attendance e.g. weekly announcement/ end of term raffles
- Share any concerns about the impact of poor attendance/punctuality with parents/carers and the pastoral team.

- To meet with parents/carers when attendance/punctuality is a concern and engage with EWO were attendance is below 90%
- To set targets for improving attendance/punctuality.
- To report to parents/carers on their child's attendance.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

- To ensure parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To issue penalty notices/warning letters as necessary.
- To conduct case discussions, take legal action and follow the Local Authority Education Enforcement Policy.

Organisation and Routine

Registers

Staff must take the attendance register twice a day at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session (9am and 1 pm). Pupils are recorded as being present or absent. Pupils who do not arrive on time will be marked as late (L) or if late after registers close will be marked as (U). On arrival, after the gates have closed, parents need to come to the office and sign their children in on the Inventory system located in the lobby.

Any unexplained absence is followed up by the office (see Appendix 1) to identify whether the absence is authorised or not. Registers are marked accordingly using the correct code (see Appendix 2). If no legitimate explanation is received it is marked as unauthorised.

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 the absence is always required.

Improving Attendance

At Seven Fields, we use 6 categories to monitor each pupil's attendance. These are as follows:

Outstanding	97.5-100%
Good	96-97.4%
Requires Improvement	94-95.9%
Poor Attendance	90.1-93.9%
Persistent Absence	85-90%
Excessive Persistent Absence	Less than 85%

Monitoring Attendance and Procedures

Attendance/punctuality is monitored regularly. Particular attention is paid to persistent absence (below 90%) and poor punctuality (see Appendix 3 for a table showing estimated cumulative absent sessions' thresholds for 10% term on term). The government states that good attendance is **95% or above**. School staff may contact parents/carers if a pupil's attendance is **95% or below**. Parents will be notified of attendance/punctuality concerns (see Appendix 4 for a range of letters). If no improvement in attendance/punctuality is made parents/carers will be invited to attend a 'School Attendance Meeting' (see Appendix 5) with a member of the Senior Leadership Team/ Attendance Officer. The meeting will discuss a child's attendance, outline the importance of good attendance and ascertain if the school can offer support or advice, or refer the family/ child to other agencies in order to improve a child's attendance/punctuality. At such attendance meetings, actions will be set and then reviewed accordingly. If attendance does not improve or if there have been previous concerns about attendance/punctuality, the school will refer the child's case to the EWO. The EWO will then invite the parent/carer and a school representative to a 'Case Discussion' held at the school.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

Seven Fields follow the Local Authority's procedures for reporting pupils who are missing in education. After a **maximum of 5 days** of non-school attendance, and after school has been unable to contact parents/carers, the school completes the specific referral online form and forwards it to the CME Office.

If a child who is looked after, or a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan goes missing, schools will refer them to Social Services within 48 hours.

When requested Seven Fields inform the Local Authority details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

Removing a Pupil from the School Roll

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006/2013 govern when a pupil can be removed/deleted from the admissions/attendance register. The regulations enable schools to remove/delete compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- the school is replaced by another school on a school attendance order (a local authority served notice)
- the school attendance order is revoked by the LA
- completion of compulsory school age
- the permanent exclusion of a pupil
- the death of the pupil
- the pupil is registered at another school
- the pupil is receiving education other than at school
- there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the LA and school have tried to locate the pupil
- the pupil fails to attend school within 10 days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted.

- a medical condition prevents pupil attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- the pupil is in custody for more than four months
- the pupil has left the school, the school and the LA have failed to locate the pupil.
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any avoidable cause.

Schools can lawfully delete **non-compulsory** school-age children in the following circumstances:

- the pupil has ceased to attend the school
- there are 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the LA and school have tried to locate the pupil
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or any avoidable cause
- the pupil has been absent for a period of no less than 20 school days
- the death of the pupil
- the permanent exclusion of a pupil

In general, pupils can be deleted from the register of one school if they register at another. However, it is possible for any pupil to register at more than one school and, where this happens, there are restrictions on applying the power to delete pupils because they are registered at another school. Schools can only delete pupils from the register if one of the circumstances in these regulations applies.

All other deletions are illegal and could result in court proceedings against the person responsible. With the exception of pupils who are subject to a school attendance order and pupils with special educational needs for whom the LA has made arrangements, there is no requirement for Local Authority approval of deletions from registers.

Requests for Absence during Term Time

Parents **DO NOT** have the legal right to remove their child from school during term time unless the pupil is genuinely ill, or the parent has received permission in advance of the absence. Requests for pupil leave of absence during term time should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed. Parents/carers should complete the appropriate form (Appendix 6), which is available from the school office and includes vital information for safeguarding reasons.

- Before deciding whether to authorise the requested leave of absence, the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each case individually at the time of the request and relevant background context. The school will take the following into consideration:
- the pupil's current attendance and the effect the absence will have on attendance
- the impact of the absence on the pupil's learning and progress

- if the period of absence falls during; national tests, school assessment periods or the beginning of a new year/term whereby the pupil will miss social integration opportunities.
- if it is an exceptional circumstance

The decision to authorise or unauthorise an absence request does not set a precedent, nor does it mean that a future/similar request will receive the same decision. A reply is given within 5 working days (Appendix 7). Leave of absence taken before the 5 working days outcome may be marked as unauthorised. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval for leave taken. Schools cannot authorise absences, including holidays in term time, unless they are in **exceptional circumstances**. Cost, employment, extended family illnesses and extended family gatherings ***are not*** deemed as exceptional circumstances.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school should determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. Schools are not obliged to provide work for the pupil during term time absence.

If an absence is not authorised, parents/carers will be fined for taking a pupil out of school without permission. A penalty notice may be served. A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine issued by the Swindon Borough Council at the school's request. Since the 1st September 2013, the fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. A Penalty Notice can be issued to **each** parent for **each** child. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice will be issued:

- Absence from school when the pupil has been taken on holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- During the early stages of casework, a parent continually fails to provide an explanation for a pupil's absence in accordance with the school's procedure and remains at an unacceptable level. This can also include late arrival after registration has closed.
- Notification from the school to the local authority that a pupil has had an unauthorised absence from school and the circumstances of which appear to have been totally avoidable (e.g. too tired, birthday treat, visiting family and friends, shopping)
- If a child is found in a public place during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion from school without reasonable justification e.g. a single parent collecting and dropping off a sibling
- Wiltshire constabulary report following a Truancy watch patrol.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. If a parent has received a Penalty Notice for an unauthorised holiday and then repeats this offence, we will not apply for another Penalty Notice but instead may instruct the Local Authority to prosecute for this offence through the Magistrates' Court

A maximum of 3 penalty notices can be issued per child per year.

The penalty for taking your child(ren) on **holiday during term time** without authorisation from the school is 60£ per parent, per child, per holiday.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Registers close at 9am in accordance with Regulations, if your child arrives after that time 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 will mean that you will face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Penalty Notices for Lateness

If lateness to school is frequent and persists a Penalty Notice may be issued to parent/carer as the child would have an unacceptable amount of UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.

Procedures that Seven Fields will follow if a child is not collected promptly from school at 3.10

- If a child has not been collected at the end of the school day, a member of staff will bring the pupil to the school office at 3.20
- Pupil/s will be supervised by school staff
- Admin staff will telephone all named contacts in their priority order (as indicated by parents on the admission form) until a response is achieved.
- On arrival, adults are asked to sign out their child on the Inventory system giving reason for the late pickup.
- If school is unable to contact a pupil's contact within 30 minutes then school have a duty to raise initial concerns with Children's Services: warn them of the situation, making it clear that at this stage it is just for information.
- If school is unable to contact a pupil after 4.15 then school will telephone Children's Services again for further information and advice on how best to proceed.

If there are several occasions of late collection, parents will be invited to a school attendance meeting. This could lead to a further meeting with Swindon Education Welfare if lateness continues to be a concern.

Acknowledgement and Celebration of Good Attendance/Punctuality

Pupils receive various rewards for good attendance such as points via class dojo, certificates in assembly and entrance into autumn, spring and summer term raffles.

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance/punctuality every autumn/spring/summer receive a certificate and those with 100% attendance at the end of the year receive a goody bag.

Review

This policy should be reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and Governors and reviewed in line with changes in legislation.

APPENDIX 1

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear «addressee»

Unexplained absences from school

As per Seven Fields attendance policy, parents should communicate reasons for absence to the school by 8.40am on the morning of each absence as permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence.

Our school acknowledges that each family's circumstances are different and works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child.

One of our key aims is to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

«chosen_forename» currently has «total_unexplained_absence» on the dates below:-
«dates_of_specified_codes»

I therefore request that you contact the school as a matter of urgency to explain the reason for recent absence or complete and return the slip below.

If you do not provide a valid explanation for absence then the school will mark the absence as unauthorised. Schools may request additional evidence for this absence and if improvement is not evident, we may refer the matter to Swindon Borough Council's Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Booth - Headteacher

«chosen_forename»«chosen_surname» «reg»

«total_of_specified_codes» «dates_of_specified_codes»

The absences itemised above were because of

Please return to School Office within 2 days

APPENDIX 2

Codes for Registers

<u>REG CODES</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>STATISTICAL MEANING</u>
/	PRESENT (AM)	PRESENT
\	PRESENT (PM)	PRESENT
B	EDUCATED OFF SITE (NOT DUAL REG)	APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
C	OTHER AUTHORISED CIRCUMSTANCES	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
D	DUAL REG (ATTENDING OTHER SITE)	ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED
E	EXCLUDED	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
F	EXTENDED FAMILY HOLIDAY (AGREED)	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
G	FAMILY HOLIDAY	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
H	ANNUAL FAMILY HOLIDAY (AGREED)	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
I	ILLNESS (NOT MEDICAL OR DENTIST)	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
J	INTERVIEW	APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
L	LATE (BEFORE REGISTER CLOSED)	PRESENT
M	MEDICAL/DENTAL	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
N	NO REASON YET PROVIDED FOR ABSENCE	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

O	UNAUTHORISED CIRCUMSTANCES	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
P	APPROVED SPORTING ACTIVITY	APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
R	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
S	STUDY LEAVE	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
T	TRAVELLER ABSENCE	AUTHORISED ABSENCE
U	LATE (AFTER REGISTERS CLOSED)	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
V	EDUCATIONAL VISIT	APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
W	WORK EXPERIENCE	APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
#	PLANNED WHOLE OR PARTIAL SCHOOL CLOSURE	ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED
Y	UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED
X	NON-COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE ABSENCE	ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED
Z	PUPIL NOT ON ROLE	ATTENDANCE NOT REQUIRED
-	ALL SHOULD ATTEND/NO MARK RECORDED	NO MARK
@	DO NOT USE	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

APPENDIX 3

Table showing estimated cumulative absent sessions for persistent absence (10%) term on term

Terms	10% in sessions Am= 1 Pm=1	10% in days absent
Term 1	7 or more sessions	3 school days
Terms 1-2	14 or more sessions	7 school days
Terms 1-3	20 or more sessions	10 school days
Terms 1-4	25 or more sessions	12 school days
Terms 1-5	31 or more sessions	15 school days
Terms 1-6	38 or more sessions	19 school days

APPENDIX 4

«date_of_printing»

«address_block»

Dear Parent / Carer of «chosen_name»

Late arrival at school

In order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital they attend school, on time, every day. The school monitors pupil attendance very closely to ensure that pupils are able to take full advantage of the education available to them.

Our records show that «chosen_name» has arrived late on «total_lates_both» of occasions.

The school gates open at 8.40 and the register is taken by **8.50am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Late arriving means pupils can miss vital information, disrupt lessons and may feel embarrassed.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting persistent lateness/absence from school without a good reason may result in involvement from Swindon Borough Council Education Welfare Service.

If you have problems getting to school, which you have not yet discussed with the school please contact Miss Bates our Family Support Worker to discuss. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

I will monitor your child's attendance over the next two weeks and may contact you again, inviting you to a school attendance meeting, if there is further frequent lateness.

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, then please do not hesitate to contact Mr Booth or Mrs Pearce at school.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Booth

Headteacher

If absence is not authorised, parents/carers can be fined for taking a pupil out of school without permission. A penalty notice may be served. A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine issued by the Swindon Borough Council at the schools request. Since the 1st September 2013, the fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. A Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts.

APPENDIX 5

«date_of_printing»

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: «chosen_forename» «chosen_surname» «date_of_birth» «year_reg»

Invite to a school attendance meeting

The school monitors pupil attendance very closely to ensure that pupils are able to take full advantage of the education available to them.

Our attendance records show that <<*child's name*>> has a poor school attendance – currently **«percentage_attendance»** % with «total_lates_both» sessions marked as **late**
And «total_unauthorised_absences» total unauthorised absence.

The government state that good attendance is **95% or above** (see attached sheet)

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.

I would like to invite you to attend a School Attendance meeting with Mr Booth or his representative on

so that we can help to identify any barriers affecting attendance and discuss how the school or other agencies may support you in order to help improve your child's attendance.

It is important that you attend this meeting. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting persistent **lateness/absence** from school without a good reason may result in involvement from Swindon Borough Council Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D. Booth

Headteacher

APPENDIX 6

Requests for Absence during Term Time

Parents ***DO NOT*** have the legal right to remove their child from school during term time unless the pupil is genuinely ill, or the parent has received permission in advance of the absence. Requests for pupil leave of absence during term time should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed. Parents/carers should complete the appropriate form (Appendix 6), which is available from the school office and includes vital information for safeguarding reasons.

- Before deciding whether to authorise the requested leave of absence, the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each case individually at the time of the request and relevant background context. The school will take the following into consideration:
 - the pupil's current attendance and the effect the absence will have on attendance
 - the impact of the absence on the pupil's learning and progress
 - if the period of absence falls during; national tests, school assessment periods or the beginning of a new year/term whereby the pupil will miss social integration opportunities.
 - if it is an exceptional circumstance

The decision to authorise or unauthorise an absence request does not set a precedent, nor does it mean that a future/similar request will receive the same decision. A reply is given within 5 working days (Appendix 7). Leave of absence taken before the 5 working days outcome may be marked as unauthorised. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval for leave taken. Schools cannot authorise absences, including holidays in term time, unless they are in **exceptional circumstances**. Cost, employment, extended family illnesses and extended family gatherings ***are not*** deemed as exceptional circumstances.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school should determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. Schools are not obliged to provide work for the pupil during term time absence.

If an absence is not authorised, parents/carers will be fined for taking a pupil out of school without permission. A penalty notice may be served. A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine issued by the Swindon Borough Council at the schools request. Since the 1st September 2013, the fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. A Penalty Notice can be issued to **each**

parent for **each** child. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice will be issued:

- Absence from school when the pupil has been taken on holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- During the early stages of casework, a parent continually fails to provide an explanation for a pupil's absence in accordance with the school's procedure and remains at an unacceptable level. This can also include late arrival after registration has closed.
- Notification from the school to the local authority that a pupil has had an unauthorised absence from school and the circumstances of which appear to have been totally avoidable (e.g. too tired, birthday treat, visiting family and friends, shopping)
- If a child is found in a public place during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion from school without reasonable justification e.g. a single parent collecting and dropping off a sibling
- Wiltshire constabulary report following a Truancy watch patrol.

Request for Absence During Term Time

Parent/Carer Section (please complete one form for each child)

Surname of child		First name	
Date of Birth		Class	
Surname of parent/carers		First name	
Location of pupil during absence period		Contact Tel number during period of absence	
Email address during period of absence			
About the request for your child's leave of absence	Reason for taking absence during term time		
	Supporting evidence details (flight details, booking confirmation)		
Length of absence (school days)		Date from:	Date to:

Signed	I have read the attached section regarding absence in term time _____	Date	
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I understand that if this request is unauthorised and/or deemed unexceptional a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child, by Swindon Borough Council Education Welfare Service. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts.

Seven Fields Primary School response to an absence request.

Length of requested absence	
Current attendance rate Authorised absence Unauthorised absence	
Attendance rate following requested absence	
Exceptional circumstances	YES / NO
Authorised	YES / NO
Notification a penalty notice may be service by Swindon Borough Council	YES / NO
Notification letter than pupil may be removed from the school register.	YES / NO

This absence will be marked as **authorised / unauthorised** if taken.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please note if this request is unauthorised and/or deemed unexceptional a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child, by Swindon Borough Council Education Welfare Service. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in prosecution through the courts.