

Slindon Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Headteacher (Lucy Cooper) and Governing Body
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1. Aims

The aim of our attendance policy is to encourage and foster a positive attitude towards attendance by pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors. Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence and reinforce that high levels of absence are associated with low academic achievement;
- Detailing procedures for noting that children are absent and for appropriate follow up;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and help promote the partnership between parents and school, in ensuring good two way communications and sharing of information
- Supporting children and families whose attendance is a cause for concern and to assist the support of children returning to school after long periods of absence;
- Clarifying responsibilities.

We will support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

As a Rights Respecting School, our Attendance Policy supports the following articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.

- Article 28: We respect the right to learn and let others enjoy their learning.
- Article 19/24: We respect the right to feel safe at school and help others feel safe.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09.00 and will be kept open until 09.30. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 and will be kept open until 13.10.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers **must** notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers should telephone the school office on (01243) 814330.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Where continued concerns have been communicated regarding poor attendance, the school may request that any illness should be supported by medical evidence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing school for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, though advance notice is required when possible. We ask that where possible, medical evidence is provided, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

Children arriving late disrupt not only their continuity of learning but also that of others. Late arrival must be signed in at the office, where the time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded. Registers are closed 30 minutes after the start of each session. When children arrive after this period and fail to provide an adequate explanation they are marked as an unauthorised absence for that session.

In dealing with lateness we take account of individual circumstances, particularly when they are genuinely unavoidable. It is recognised that lateness at Primary School level is often the fault of the parent/carer and not the child. Liaison with the West Sussex Pupil Entitlement Team will be made as appropriate.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as late after the register has closed (U), which is unauthorised absence.

The most punctual class is celebrated each week through the Celebration Assembly.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We ask that the school is informed by telephone, on the first day of any unplanned absence (see section 3.2). Our safeguarding procedures require us to have spoken with parents/carers if a child is unexpectedly absent from school. If we have not received a telephone call or a message has not been left after the register has closed, the attendance officer (Mrs Karen Cooper) will telephone parents/ carers.

If we have been unable to make contact with the first and second contact numbers provided, we will leave a message where possible and continue to attempt to make contact via the remaining contacts provided. Our primary reason for this is to ensure the well-being of our pupils and their families.

3.6 Reporting to parents

A copy of your child's attendance for each half term, is sent home at the beginning of the next half term.

An annual record of attendance is provided in the end of year written report for your child/ children.

The school will contact parents/carers at any time when there are concerns regarding the child's attendance (see Appendix 2).

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Any request for absence during term time should be made by completing the '**Request for absence during term-time**' form (see appendix 3), available from the School Office or through download from our school website.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unusual events or circumstances which are unexpected and prevent your child from coming to school. For example, bereavement, unexpected personal or family problems might be considered as an **exceptional circumstance**.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3;

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The overarching principles of our school guide the strategies that are used to promote attendance. In our strategy for promoting attendance, we recognise that:

Every pupil is a *unique pupil*, and are rewarded as such for meeting attendance targets through individual rewards as well as class rewards. Their individual attendance is rewarded through invitation to 'The Big Breakfast' and shared with a certificate at home.

Through *positive relationships*, we recognise pupils and families who may need support and encouragement to maintain regular attendance and punctuality from time to time. Our *enabling environments*, with specific staff trained in techniques to support Emotionally Based School Avoidance

(EBSA), and flexibility in our approach to manage EBSA, along with partnership with external agencies, allows us to offer the support needed to address issues relating to poor attendance.

We recognise that high levels of absence are associated with low academic achievement and therefore poor attendance greatly affects the *learning and development* of our children. Clear systems to monitor attendance and strategies to address rising absences ensure that we make our best endeavours to support our pupils in their learning and development.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer (Mrs Karen Cooper) monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and produces a report which is shared with the Headteacher each week. Attendance data is gathered weekly, fortnightly, half termly and for each term.

A letter is sent home in circumstances where attendance figures have fallen below 85% for the previous half term, and a meeting is offered with the Headteacher to offer any support that may be put in place to raise attendance.

An attendance report is sent home in the first week of each half-term, for the previous half terms since the beginning of the academic year, to allow parents/ carers to be aware of their child's attendance data.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health or for any other reason (see section 3.2).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Headteacher works with external agencies such as The West Sussex Pupil Entitlement Team, to tackle persistent absence.

7.3 Parent/Carers Responsibilities

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis and to ensure their child is punctual. It is recognised that lateness at a Primary School level is not usually the fault of the child.

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays in school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made.

Parents/Carers are responsible for notifying the school of external appointments and where possible will make appointments out of school hours, although it is recognized that this may not always be possible. Copies of hospital/ doctor/ dentist appointments will be taken by the school office (see section 3.3).

Parents/Carers are responsible for informing the school of any absence. See section 3.2 for unplanned absence and 3.3 for medical appointments and 4.1 for requests for authorised absence.

7.4 Children's responsibilities

To understand the need to attend school regularly and punctually.

To begin to take responsibility for themselves, to make the most of the opportunities available, to enjoy and achieve to the full, their time in school.

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer (Mrs Karen Cooper):

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues

Liaises with the Headteacher and the Pupil Entitlement Team with regard to when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Letter of Concern re Attendance

Slindon Church of England Primary School
Meadsway,
Slindon
Arundel
West Sussex
BN18 OQU

Tel: 01243 814330.

Fax: 01243 814556

Email: office@slindonprimary.co.uk

Website: www.slindonprimary.co.uk



Headteacher: Miss Lucy Cooper

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX,

As you can see from the attached attendance certificate from the beginning of the academic year to the date, your child's attendance is below our target of 95%.

I would like to offer a time to meet with myself to discuss your child's attendance and explore ways in which we may be able to help to raise levels of attendance.

With best wishes

Lucy Cooper
Headteacher

Appendix 3: Request for absence during term-time



Request for Absence in School Time	
<p>From September 2013 the Department for Education (DFE) amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. In line with these new regulations, holidays during term time will not be authorised. However if there are 'exceptional circumstances' surrounding your request, complete this form giving full details for the Head Teachers consideration. Please remember; pupils are in school for 190 days each year and there are 175 other days for holidays and other activities.</p>	
How to Use this Form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for all absences other than sickness • Make sure the form is submitted to us before the date of the requested absence • Complete a form for each child and each absence 	
Guidance	
<p>Absence for a holiday will not be authorised unless it is an 'exceptional circumstance' agreed in advance by the Head Teacher</p>	
Parent/Guardian/Carer to complete this section	
Name of Child:	Class:
Dates Requested:	
Reason for the request:	
Declaration:	
<p>I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to request for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence, which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or by prosecution in the Magistrates Court.</p>	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:
Full Name:	
<p>Unless further information is required a decision will be sent to you within 7 school days.</p>	

Record of Decision of the request for absence:

Having considered the information presented the decision of the Head Teacher is:

Absence will be authorised with an attendance code of:	(please tick)
Absence will not be authorised with an attendance code of:	

Any additional comments to support decision: