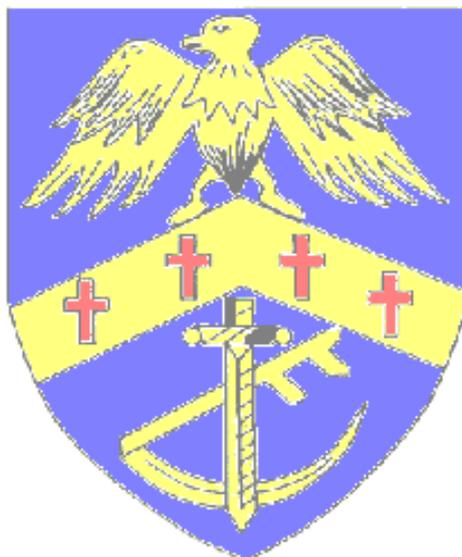


SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Ratified by Governors: October 2013

Review: Annually

This Review: October 2016

Next Review Date: October 2017

Record of Policy Review:

Name of Policy: Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review date	Headteacher's signature	Chair of Governor's signature
October 2016		

Aims of the policy

At Sunnymede Junior School we expect everyone to work together to achieve high standards of learning and behaviour in a safe, happy and stimulating environment, where both children and adults are valued.

Our School attaches much importance to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Children must attend school regularly and arrive punctually if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance or lateness undermines a child's education and may lead to educational disadvantage. It is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Consequently, we recognise the need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be drawn upon whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with parents and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We also work closely with Diane Griffiths, the Home School Attendance Officer from The Billericay Community Trust, to monitor attendance and address issues that may arise. Where such intervention fails to improve attendance or punctuality, the school may refer to the Local Authority's Missing Education Children Employment Service (MECES) to request further intervention.

A pupil with 100% attendance will attend school for 190 days within an academic year, a total of 38 weeks. **Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.**

Rights and Responsibilities

By Law, children are required to attend school regularly. It is the duty of parents to ensure that their child's attendance is not interrupted unnecessarily and that they attend school at all times, except when the child is unwell enough to attend.

We expect pupils to attend school regularly, arrive punctually, suitably dressed and healthy. The School encourages good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there are concerns about attendance or punctuality.

All staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly report and investigate all absenteeism and lateness. Sunnymede Junior School will annually report to parents on achievement and pupils' attendance.

Parents are responsible for informing the school immediately of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence and by 9:30 am at the latest. An answerphone message can be left on 01277 651364. It is good practice to confirm in writing when their child returns to school.

We operate a first day calling system. If a child is absent, and the school has not been informed of the reason for this, the administration officer will telephone to follow this up by 10:00am.

If attendance problems do develop, the School expects parents to work actively with school staff and the Missing Education Children Employment Service investigating Officer to resolve them. A parent is committing an offence if they fail to make sure that their child attends school regularly.

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons, the School or Missing Education Children Employment Service investigating Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Where a pupil has genuine on-going medical problems or long term illness, support will be provided and parents will not receive routine letters advising of unacceptable absence. However, updated medical evidence may be required periodically.

In exceptional circumstances, a *Missing Education Children Employment Service investigating Officer* or the Headteacher or senior member of staff will make a visit to the child's home to verify the reason for a child's absence.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Statutory Instruments 2013 No. 756: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended the 2006 regulations removing all references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers MAY NOT grant any leave of absence up to ten days during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Requests will normally be refused.

What is an exceptional circumstance?

There are very few situations where the school is likely to consider a leave of absence request to be exceptional. A holiday for example, however long or short, will not be considered exceptional and cannot be authorised. A routine medical or dental check-up, likewise, would not be authorised as it is expected that these are organised outside of the school day or during holidays. However, a request for leave to attend a medical clinic appointment that is supported by an appointment letter or similar may be considered exceptional.

However, each written request for exceptional leave of absence will be treated individually and considered on its own merit. It is for parents and carers to decide whether they think their request is likely to be considered exceptional and decide whether to submit a request for exceptional leave of absence.

Requesting Leave of Absence

Any request for exceptional leave of absence must be made in writing using the request form in [Appendix 1](#). It can also be found in the 'Letters and Forms' section of our website. A copy can also be obtained from the school office.

Parents should outline clearly why they consider the request to be exceptional. Any evidence to support a written request should also be included.

A request should be made four weeks in advance of the leave date. A decision will not be made more than four weeks prior to the absence dates requested.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will then be made. If the application is rejected, the reason for rejection will be recorded and conveyed to the parent(s) in writing. It will also advise the parent or carer that a penalty notice may be issued by the Education Welfare Service if the absence is taken without the school's permission.

If parents take a family holiday without applying for leave of absence or if the holiday request was refused and it was still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (G code) *and a Penalty Notice of £60 to each parent of each child may be issued by the Local Authority*. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 28 days. Failure to pay after a further 28 days will lead to legal proceedings being taken by the Missing Education Children Employment Service (under section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

If an absence has been authorised but parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. If the pupil fails to attend school within 10 school days immediately following the date the pupil was due to return and the school has no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any other unavoidable cause and **both the school and the Local Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is** the pupil can be removed from roll and referred to Children Missing Education (CME).

If any absence becomes long-term or repeated, the School or *Missing Education Children Employment Service investigating Officer* is entitled to ask the parent/carer to provide the School with written evidence of reason for absence e.g. Appointment cards/letter, medical certificate or letter from GP.

Appointments within the school day

Routine medical or dental appointments and check-ups will not normally be authorised during the school day, as they are not considered exceptional. We understand that some hospital clinics only run at particular times which may only be during the school day. In such cases, proof of appointment will be required at the school office.

Emergency medical appointments will usually be authorised. If possible, parents should let the school know in advance and evidence of the appointment should be brought to the school office on your child's return.

If your child is returning to school on the same day of the appointment and before the lunch break, please ensure you have booked a school dinner before 10:00am; otherwise, your child will need to return with a packed lunch. If an appointment takes a whole morning the child should return to school after the lunch break at 1.15pm.

For safeguarding purposes, children may not be collected or returned to school during the lunch period between 12 and 1.15pm. Parents must always report to the school office to collect their child for an appointment and ensure their child is signed out by a member of the office team. They must also return their child personally to the school reception and ask the office staff to sign them in.

Absence will not be authorised for appointments which are not for the pupil i.e. their parents/siblings.

Deciding whether to send a child to school

Parents or carers should not send their child to school if it is clear that they are unwell enough to attend school. Please refer Appendix 2 of our Medicine Policy for guidance on when you should not send your child to school due to illness. There will, of course, be times when your child is medically unfit for school and this is understandable. However, minor ailments, such as a slight headache or cold, are not acceptable reasons for failing to attend.

There are some situations where a child says they feel unwell and it may be difficult for a parent to judge if they should be sent to school or kept at home. If you think they may be well enough to come to school, please send them to school and let a member of the administration team know. They will inform the class teacher that the child may feel unwell and monitor the situation closely. If there are signs that your child is unwell, we will call you to collect them and care for them in the medical room until your arrival.

Registration

Schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. We are required to use the statutory registration codes set out in the table below. At Sunnymede Junior School, a manual register is completed by the class teacher in the morning at 8:55am and pupils are registered again after lunch at 1:10pm. A dinner register is also taken along with the morning register.

Children often complete learning activities during registration time and these are often linked to the day's activities and it is expected that children are present during this period. Registers are open for thirty minutes. If a child arrives after the register has been taken but before 9:25 am, a late mark will be entered in the register. Where a child arrives after 9:25 am, when the registration period is closed, the register will be marked with the code 'U', denoting an unauthorised absence.

Where a child arrives late for school, the parent or carer must accompany them to the main school reception to explain the reason for the lateness and sign the 'late book'.

Manual attendance registers must be marked in ink: red line for present, black circle for absent. Where an alteration is necessary, this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used by class teachers. Pencils must not be used.

Registers will be returned to the School office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored in the register for the academic year and then placed on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

Register marks are then entered onto the Sims.net attendance module. This information is used for tracking pupil, class and whole school attendance.

Use of symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

Code	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (before reg closed)
M	Medical / Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (not covered by other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff
Y	Enforced closure
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

The legal status of registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils' attendance or absence and, in the latter case, if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff responsible for processes

The headteacher is responsible for attendance issues and will ensure registers are checked on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns. The Headteacher and Office Manager liaise regularly with the Home School Liaison Officer to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team is responsible for:

- ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals
- logging attendance information on the computerised system
- identifying and informing the headteacher of any concerns in relation to poor attendance or lateness
- ensuring a parent is called by 10:00am if a child is absent from school without any reason being given

The class teacher is responsible for taking the register for the AM and PM sessions.

The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance and must:

- ◆ use the correct colour ink (no pencils to be used)
- ◆ ensure that symbols used are appropriate
- ◆ not use correction fluid or pencil
- ◆ ensure all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked
- ◆ ensure the registers are kept neatly, allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation – i.e. during a fire procedure

Sunnymede Junior School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Procedures for following up lateness and absence

It is the responsibility of the parent to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made by 9.30am then the school will endeavour to contact the parent. If, upon the child's return to school, a written or telephone explanation by the parent/guardian is not provided, then a letter will be sent requesting the reason for absence ([Appendix 2](#)). If a response has not been received after 14 days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has not attended school for 5 days with no contact being established, the School will notify the Home School Attendance Officer in the first instance and a missing pupil visit may be made to the home.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Where children leave the school, they will be taken off roll as soon as it is confirmed that they are attending another school and the EWO will be informed of the move of school place. It is expected that parents inform the school that their child is moving to another school.

Low Attendance and Persistent Absence

The government defines a 'persistent absentee' as a child whose attendance is 90% or below, regardless of whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If a child's absence falls below 90%, or is at risk of doing so, a letter will be sent to alert the parents and invite them to inform the school of any issues that may be contributing to their child's poor attendance ([Appendix 3](#)). Where appropriate, the school will begin to seek support from the school's Home School Attendance Officer, Diane Griffiths through an internal referral process ([Appendix 4](#))

If, following an appropriate period of monitoring and support from the school, the absence persists without satisfactory explanation, a further letter will be sent by the school, asking them to attend a meeting with the Headteacher/and or HSAO([Appendix 5](#)). This meeting will be a final attempt to identify and resolve the on-going difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending School.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting and the pupil's attendance does not improve, then a formal referral will be made to the Missing Education Children Employment Service at Essex County Council and formal intervention planned. ([Appendix 6](#))

When a pupil is persistently late arriving to school then the same procedures above will apply.

Penalty Notices

If the above actions fail to improve the child's attendance, then the Missing Education Children Employment Service may decide to take legal action against parents/carers; this could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

A Penalty Notice of £120 (£60 if paid within 28 days) may be issued to each parent of each child who is persistently absent. A Penalty Notice may also be issued for each child taken out of school for holiday which has not been authorised **in advance** by the headteacher. Should the Penalty not be paid, the Missing Education Children Employment Service will institute legal proceedings under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

Schools are required to send applications for the penalty notice within 2 weeks after the pupil's return to school following the unauthorised absence. A penalty notice will be considered by the LA if

- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to a leave taken during an academic year;

Returning to school after a period of absence

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than three weeks, in exceptional circumstances, there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence, then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Removing children from roll

Where children leave the school, they will be taken off roll as soon as it is confirmed that they are attending another school and MECES will be informed of the move of school place.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality at new intake meetings and in the Home School Agreement, School Prospectus and the School Website.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with known attendance problems being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Class attendance will be celebrated. 100% class attendance certificates are given weekly in celebration assemblies. Other reward strategies may be used where it is deemed appropriate in particular circumstances.

Monitoring

Class teachers, support and administrative staff will monitor attendance on a day to day basis and raise any concerns with the Headteacher.

The EWO and Office Manager will undertake more formal monitoring every 6 to 8 weeks. This is reported to the Headteacher. Evaluation will include any differences between particular groups of pupils: gender/ethnicity/disability / disadvantaged pupils.

The Governors will monitor overall attendance through Headteacher reports, and data such as Raise online, as a means of comparison with other schools. Each year an attendance target is set by the Governing Body. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target.

This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate, including any changes in the Law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are EXCEPTIONAL circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year.

There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. However, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Missing Education Children Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Please complete one application per child.

Name of Child:	D.O.B:	Class:
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Date of First Day of Absence: _____ Date of Return: _____

Number of Days Requested: _____

Please outline the reason for your request and explain clearly why you consider it to be EXCEPTIONAL.

Please continue on the reverse if necessary and attach any evidence in support of your application.

It is entirely the decision of the Headteacher if the reason provided constitutes an exceptional circumstance.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to child: _____

School / office use only:

Attendance percentage preceding 12 weeks:			
Number of sessions absence this academic year:	Authorised	Unauthorised	Total
Is this request authorised?	YES / NO		
Dates authorised:			
Where authorised, any conditions plied			
Where NOT authorised, reason given to parents			
Headteacher's Signature		Date parent informed of outcome in writing	

Dear [Parents]

Re: [First] [Last] – [Form]

I note from our records that your child, [Pupil's name], was absent from school on [Date] . Despite attempts to contact you by telephone, we have not been informed of the reason for absence. Please make contact with the school immediately, either by phone or in writing, to explain the reason for your child's absence. If we do not receive a response within fourteen days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, in the interests of safeguarding, it is the responsibility of parents and carers to contact the school by telephone on the first day of a child's absence. Contact should, where possible, be made before morning registration and should be followed up in writing on a child's return to school.

Many thanks for your co-operation in this matter. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R. Branch
Headteacher
Sunnymede Junior School

Dear [Parents / Carers]

Re: [First] [Last] – [Form]

Following recent in-school monitoring of our attendance records, I note that [Pupil's name] 's attendance is causing some cause for concern and is currently 90% (change for exact %). This means they now fall / are at risk of falling into the category of 'persistent absentee'. Please contact the school to outline the reasons for this low level of attendance / contact the school to arrange a meeting to discuss this low level of attendance (delete as appropriate).

This will provide an opportunity for us to work together to resolve any issues that may be contributing to [Pupil t name] 's absences from school.

Please could you contact the main school office, either in person or on 01277 651364, to arrange a meeting with me (where a meeting has been requested).

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child's file.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs R. Branch
Headteacher
Sunnymede Junior School

Home School Attendance Referral Form

Please send to: Diane Griffiths – Home School Attendance Officer

School Road Billericay, Essex CM12 9LH

☎ 01277 655191 – e-mail dgriffiths@billericay.essex.sch.uk

Parent/Carers name	
Address	
Contact Number	

Names of child(ren)	Dates of birth	School Attending

Name of referrer	
School	
Contact details	
Attendance % and brief history relating to this referral	
CAF in place Y / N	
Name of Lead Professional	

Other agencies involved	Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(please Tick ✓)	Educational Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	CAMHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	CFCS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	CSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	YOT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Other Counselling Services. (please state)	

Degree of urgency	H	M	L
Family history related to referral		
Language spoken at home		Ethnicity	
Additional information we should be aware of		

	Please	Please tell us if there are any factors
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	tick	below that may also be affecting attendance
Feeling isolated		
Using other services/facilities in the area		
Parent(s) emotional health and wellbeing		
Parent(s) self esteem		
Parent(s) physical health/wellbeing		
Child(ren)'s physical health and wellbeing		
Child(ren)'s emotional health and wellbeing		
Managing child(ren)'s behaviour		
Stress caused by conflict in the family		

I agree that this information may be shared so that the child(ren) can be provided with services except as follows:

.....

.....
Referrer's signature..... *Date*

Dear [Parents / Carers]

Name
Address

Dear [Parents / Carers]

Re: *Name of child*

I refer to our previous discussions / letters / School Based Meetings (add dates as appropriate) to address [Student name]'s poor school attendance.

The situation has now been reviewed. Unfortunately, the agreed plan does not appear to be having a significant effect and attendance has not yet reached a satisfactory level. I attach a copy of the attendance record.

Unfortunately, despite the support offered, (pupil's name) has failed to improve his/her attendance in line with the clear requirements highlighted in the (meeting / letter / discussion) and in line with the school's minimum requirements. Their attendance continues to be a significant cause for concern and I currently ***%.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I would like to arrange a further meeting with you to attempt to support you in improving your child's attendance.

I would like to call on [Date] at [Time] .

If this is not convenient, please contact me on the telephone number below to arrange another mutually agreeable appointment.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child's file.

Yours sincerely,

**D J Griffiths
Home School Attendance Officer
01277 655191 ext. 106**

