South Wellfield First School

Attendance Policy
(Pupils)

March 2019
Attendance Policy

Introduction
Regular and punctual school attendance is extremely important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. At South Wellfield First School we work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that all children have a full and equal access to all that our school has to offer. As a school we encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems which prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Aims and Objectives
This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Expectations
At South Wellfield First School we expect that all pupils will:
• Attend school every day
• Attend school punctually
• Attend appropriately prepared for the day (i.e. P.E kit, reading folder, water bottle, homework etc.)

South Wellfield First School Responsibilities
As a school we will:
• Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
• Provide a safe learning environment.
• Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality
• Monitor individual child’s attendance and punctuality.
• Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
• Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of rewards and recognition.
- Contact parents/carers where there are concerns regarding attendance, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Service where required.
- Liaise with other professionals where appropriate.

**Parents/Carer Responsibilities**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office, before 9.30 a.m. on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child’s reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Notifying school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

**Registration**

Children will be collected from the school playground by their class teacher and Teaching Assistant at 8.50 a.m. Doors will close at 8.55 a.m. The attendance register is completed by the class teacher by 9.00 a.m. and, in the afternoon, by 1.15 p.m. The register is then returned to the school office.

**Lateness**

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am the only way to get into school is via the main school office. Any pupil who comes into school after 9.05 a.m. will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15 a.m. will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor’s appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.
Absences
Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child’s absence, giving a reason as to why their child is absent.
All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child’s absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

First Day Contact
Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Admin staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.15 a.m. on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child’s absence.
If a child has returned from an absence and we not received reasons for the child’s absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete.
If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Illness
Usually illness is for a short time. However when children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, we liaise with parents/ carers, regarding sending home additional work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, we will contact support services, such as school health, for advice.

Where, over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, we may write to parents/ carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor’s note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday
Holiday during term time will not be authorised. Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

We expect attendance of at least 96%.

Attendance which is 85% - 80% is a cause for concern. Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters or by meeting with parents/carers. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. In some situations, where a child’s attendance record does not improve over a period of time, then we may make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. In such situations the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents/carers. However we would expect any attendance concerns to be addressed before needing to take this step.