



Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

1.2 There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

1.3 The academy is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

1.4 The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576: "Meaning of "parent". In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person— (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him."

S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

1.5 The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the Board of Trustees. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

1.6 There is a trustee appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with Headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.

1.7 The Headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that the Board of Trustees objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole academy data, surfacing

trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 Academy staff are responsible to ensure they promote the academy's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality and enable the academy to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend the academy regularly and punctually.

1.10 Children have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our academy communities of the following:

- How the academy encourages and enables good attendance
- How the academy monitors and reviews attendance
- How the academy monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

2. Encouraging and Enabling Good Attendance

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the academy is a place to which the children want to come: that the academy is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at the academy. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the academy and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of the End of Year written reports and at Parent Consultations. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

3. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

3.1 The academy follows West Sussex policy for managing attendance of the children at the academy. We work in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Team at West Sussex to monitor and, where appropriate, support families in improving levels of attendance for their child.

3.2 The academy will log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

3.3 By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The academy will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

3.4 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the academy may request additional information or evidence, eg. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

3.5 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Office Staff.

3.6 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Office Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

3.7 Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Office Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

3.8 The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils each half term. The staged approach appended outlines the academy's approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.

3.9 Returns of academy data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our academy within local and national contexts.

3.10 The academy sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Trustees at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

4. Punctuality and Lateness

4.1 It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the academy day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to academy is crucial. Lateness into the academy causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at the academy on time.

4.2 The academy doors open between 8.45am and 8.50am, and the register is taken at 9.00am. We expect your child to be in class by that time. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:10 am** the registers will be closed. 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 may mean that you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

4.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the academy will make verbal contact with parents/carers, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the academy on time. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to the parents / carers, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

4.4 If there is no improvement, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parent / carer.

4.5 In the event of persistent lateness, the academy may make a formal referral to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team at West Sussex.

4.6 We monitor late collection from the academy premises at the end of the school day. Names of such pupils are recorded in the Office and a reason for the late collection must be recorded on each occasion. The academy will invite you to meet with them to discuss late collection of pupils if it becomes frequent and regular or a pattern emerges and letters will be sent home once a child is collected late from the academy on three or more occasions.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

5.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher.

5.2 Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

5.3 If a child is absent from the academy for any reason the parent must inform the academy office in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the academy receives no reason/explanation or if the academy has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

This includes:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- absences at the start and end of the school term around school holidays
- absences which present a pattern e.g. absences around weekends
- children who arrive at the academy too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Social, economic and cultural considerations within the family and community
- 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 academy, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, please speak to us rather than report your child as unwell and we will work with you to resolve any issues that may be affecting attendance.

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 & honest communication with the academy
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

6. Leave of Absence in Term Time

6.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

6.2 Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

6.4 Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from the academy if the leave is granted.

6.5 The academy can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

6.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from the academy during that period.

6.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team at West Sussex.

6.9 The Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with West Sussex County Council’s procedures on managing school absence. Details of this can be found here:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/#overview>

Fixed Penalty Notices in West Sussex may be issued in the following instances:

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM. This includes; any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.
- Persistent late arrival at the academy after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

6.10 It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child.

7. Why Attendance and Punctuality Matters

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance

- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

8. Children Missing in Education

8.1 Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the academy to establish their whereabouts without success, the academy will make an immediate referral to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team or West Sussex Children Missing in Education Team.

8.2 If the academy has safeguarding concerns regarding the unexplained absence of a child, an immediate referral to the MASH or Police may be made.

8.3 Reasonable steps to be taken by academy staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at the academy without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through academy contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

8.4 All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file.

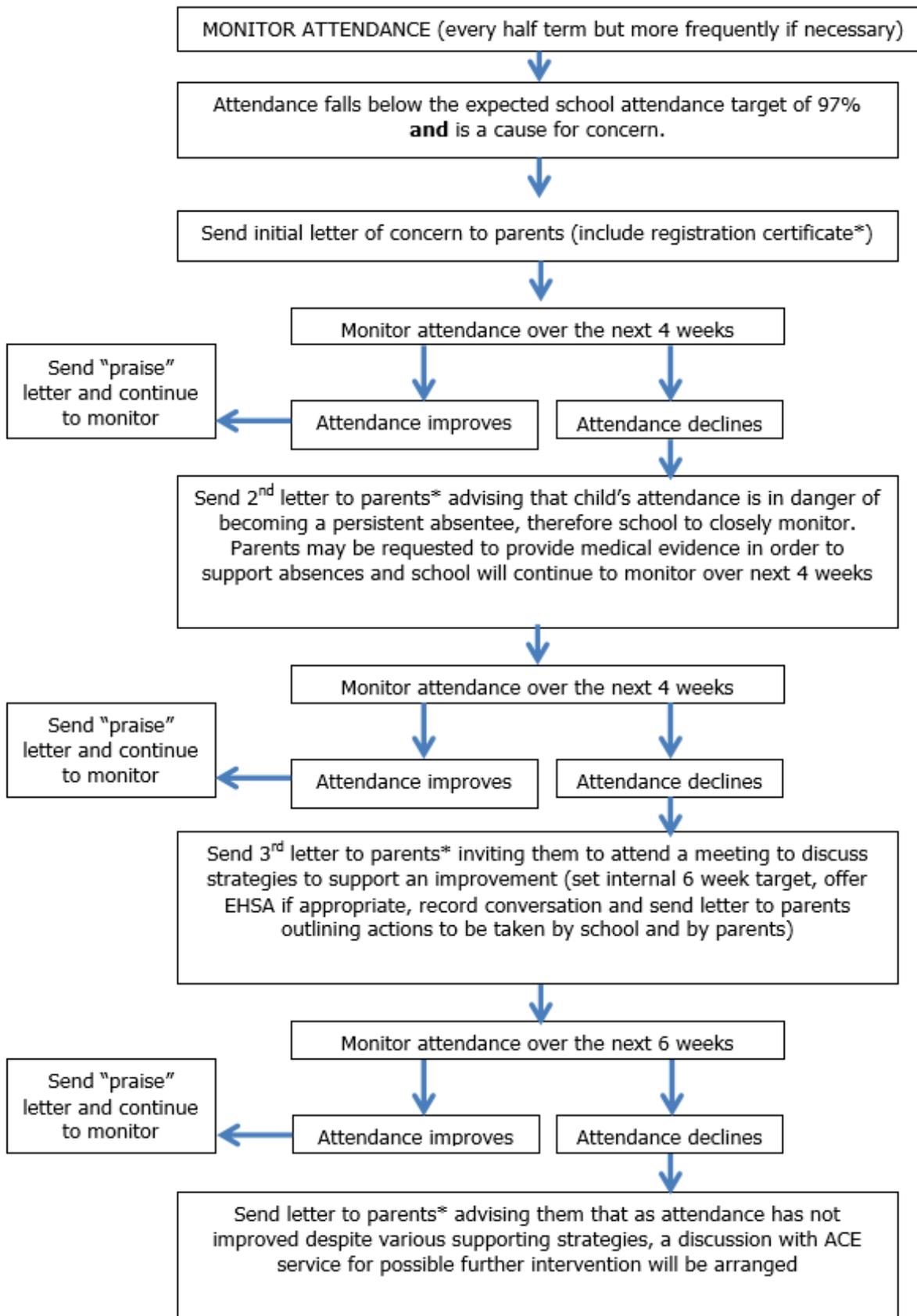
9. In Conclusion

9.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our academy's success.

9.2 The Southwater Infant Academy greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Appendix A

The Southwater Infant Academy Attendance Monitoring (Escalation process)



*registration certificate to be available / included with all correspondence and communication with parents (and minutes late report if appropriate)