



Attendance Policy

The Livingstone Road Primary Federation adopts the principles and procedures of this Policy for both Sylvan Infant School and Branksome Heath Junior School

Status & Review Cycle: Annually

Last Review Date: 16 October 2018

Review Group/Reviewer: LGB

Next Review Date: October 2020

Signed.....

Policy Statement

“Excellent Attendance =Excellent Progress”

Punctuality and good attendance are crucial to the success of our pupils and to the smooth running and organisation of the federation, for the benefit of all. In law, parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend school and are punctual. It is the responsibility of the schools to support and encourage full attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. Our policy is to:

- Emphasise the positive reasons for full attendance
- Recognise and acknowledge good attendance, including attendance achieved in very difficult circumstances (e.g. chronic illness)
- Identify and act upon difficulties at the earliest stage, working closely with parents or carers
- Avoid acrimony and disappointment in connection with requests for absence, through clarity and consistency

The federation greatly appreciates the steps taken by families to secure good attendance, and the willingness of parents to share information about circumstances which may give rise to difficulties. We know that children will often get ill, especially when they start school in the Reception class. With this in mind we would expect to see 96% attendance or above for all our children, which is also the national standard for good attendance set by the DFE. The 96% attendance benchmark, takes into account illness, which equates to approximately 9 days absence across an academic year.

Children who have 96% attendance or above are celebrated every half term in Celebration Assembly with a certificate to take home and the chance for them to win a special prize from the prize draw. Children who have maintained 100% attendance throughout the school year will have an extra special treat at the end of the academic year.

Daily Routine

Sylvan Infant School

The school day starts at 8.40am. The classroom door and register will be open from this time. At 8.55am the classroom door is closed and the register sent down to the office. Any child arriving at school between 8:55 and 9:00 will need to arrive via the school office and be signed in the Late Arrival book. These children will be marked in the register as a L (late) code. Any child arriving after 9.00am must come to the school office and will be marked with a U (unauthorised) code in the register.

Branksome Heath Junior School

The school playground is staffed from 8.30 am and registration for children starts at 8.40. At 8.50 the playground gates are closed and children should come into school via the school office. All children arriving via

the school office should sign to confirm their arrival and the reason why they have arrived later than 8.50. Children arriving between 8.50 and 9.20 will be marked as Late in the register, those arriving after 9.20 are marked as unauthorised late.

At both schools persistent lateness is monitored and parents will be invited to attend a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team if a pattern of lateness is seen.

First Day Contact and Notification on Return.

Parents/carers must inform the school of reasons for absence on the first day of any absence by 9.30am. Administrative staff will send a text message to parents/carers asking them to phone school and advise why a child is not present and no contact has been made. If there is no response administrative staff will contact parents/carers via a telephone call. Parents/carers should keep the school offices informed of any change of contact details as soon as possible. A letter will be sent to parents/carers if no reason for the absence is given by the end of the week and the absence is marked as unauthorised until a reason can be established.

Where children are registered as "at risk", Children and Family Services will be informed of the absence on the same day. If the Head of School has any cause for concern about the reason for absence, this will remain unauthorised until these have been discussed with the parents and a satisfactory explanation secured. If the school does not accept the reason given, the absence may remain unauthorised.

Requests for Authorised Absence

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which came into effect on the 1st September 2013, schools are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances.

In making a request for leave of absence from school in term time a parent/carer will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional, and therefore why the activity cannot be undertaken either at a weekend or within the normal 13 weeks holiday. The legislation states that Head teachers can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

What amounts to exceptional circumstances is to be decided by the Headteacher. If a parent/carer takes their child out of school without permission the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised leave of absence, which may result in a request being made to the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A form is available for requests for authorised absence is available from either school office. This should be completed with as much detail as possible and returned to the school office. The Head of School will read through each request and the decision to grant authorised or unauthorised absence will be made. Holiday dates for each school year will be advertised to parents/carers before the end of the previous school year.

Legislation makes it clear that the burden is on the parent/carer to show why requested absences should be authorised. The Head of School will consider the following (and may contact the parent/carer to discuss their request in detail):

- The nature and purpose of the absence, and the reason for the request
- The duration of the absence and its likely impact on the education and progress of the child
- The circumstances of the family and the wishes of the parents
- The distance of any journey involved
- Whether the absence is seen by the family as a rare event, not to be repeated
- The attendance record of the child at present and for the previous year.

Parents/carers will be advised that, while applying the above criteria, the following requests may be considered as reasonable:

- Medical or dental appointments e.g. in hospital clinics (proof of appointment letters)
- Family bereavement- one day
- Special family occasions e.g. weddings on school days. Please note only the actual wedding day will be authorised.
- Days of obligatory family religious observance
- Interviews and examinations e.g. in connection with school transfer, musical tuition. The school will expect the child to return to school after the examination.

Where an absence is authorised and families fail to abide by any agreement, additional absences will be unauthorised and future requests refused. Absences taken without consultation will be unauthorised. Absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Traveller Children

Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 acknowledges the special position of Traveller Children. The Head of School will consult the School Attendance Worker (SAW) if there are concerns.

Off-Site Tuition

Where a child's special educational needs are recognised by the school, and special tuition/therapy not available in school is required, the Headteacher may authorise absence for specific times when such tuition or therapy may be given outside school.

Absence for Performance

The Head of School may grant leave of absence for approved public performances considering the following:

- The nature and purpose of the performance
- The frequency of absence requested and the likely impact on the child's education and progress
- The child's attendance record

Where a child is paid for their performance, a license must be obtained from the LA, and absences will be monitored to ensure that they comply with the permissions given in the license. Any concerns will be communicated to the SAW.

Monitoring and Support of Attendance

Half termly audits of attendance occur through the school year with the School Attendance Worker and the Deputy Head Of Schools. Any child below 95% attendance will be discussed at this audit and the reasons for absence will be looked at.

Each child will be discussed on an individual basis. From this discussion it will be decided if a meeting with the parent/carer should go ahead with the Deputy Head Of School and/or the School Attendance Worker. Where possible the school will make all reasonable steps to support parents/carers to ensure good attendance.

Sometimes parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for when their child is off sick. Parents will be notified of this either verbally or in writing.

Any child sitting at 90% or below is classed as a persistently absent child by the Department for Education. These children's attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis. These children may be referred to the School Attendance Worker who will work directly with the family to improve attendance. If a child's attendance is still a cause for concern the School and Local Authority may consider issuing the parent with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuting for failing to ensure the child's regular attendance at school is in line with the Education Act 1996. Usually a Fast Track contract meeting is set up to improve attendance within 12 weeks before any legal intervention occurs. This happens with the school attendance worker.