



Sutton-on-Trent Primary and Nursery School

Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Sutton-on-Trent Primary and Nursery School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of attainment. Our vision is to give every child an excellent education, making a positive impact on their lives and allowing them to reach their full potential.

There is a statistical link between attendance and attainment. The attendance register is therefore an important tool in the work of schools to drive up standards and pupils' attainment. The most effective way of minimising the adverse effect that absence has on a pupil's attainment is to prevent all unnecessary absence.

Therefore, at Sutton-on-Trent Primary and Nursery school, we aim to promote excellent attendance by:

- fostering a love of school
- providing an environment and ethos where children feel safe and can build positive relationships
- making attendance and punctuality a priority for the school
- developing a framework with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- ensuring consistency of practice
- providing support and advice to pupils and parents
- developing a systematic approach to the gathering and analysing of attendance data
- developing close links between school and home
- implementing a system of rewards and sanctions
- promoting effective working relationships with the LA Family Service

Legal Responsibilities

It is a legal requirement that attendance registers are completed twice a day and must show whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

LAs are charged in law (Education Act 2002) with enforcing school attendance for pupils of compulsory school age: this is delegated to the Schools Family Service. The School Family Service Advisor will work with families to improve attendance but ultimately the LA may pursue cases of poor attendance through the courts.

Role of the School Governors

It is the responsibility of the School Governors to ensure that:

- An admission register is maintained
- Attendance registers are properly kept
- Regular returns of attendance are made to the LA
- To be aware of school attendance targets and figures

Role of the Head Teacher

- To ensure that legal requirements are being met with regard to attendance.
- To emphasise the importance of maximum attendance to pupils and parents and carers at every opportunity (Website, Parents Evenings, Newsletters etc).
- To make clear to parents and carers the procedure for notifying the school about a pupil's absence.
- To authorise pupil absence when appropriate.
- To monitor attendance on a weekly basis.
- To liaise with the Family Service Officer.
- To contact parents/carers in cases of concern about non-attendance.

Role of Class Teachers

- To administer registration appropriately.
- To discourage late arrival at school.
- To inform the Head Teacher of any concerns about pupil attendance, including patterns of absence, unauthorised absence etc using CPOMS
- To regard any absence as unauthorised if they are unaware of the reason.

Role of the Office Manager and Administrator

- To support the Head Teacher in monitoring attendance.
- To record attendance on Arbor
- To produce attendance reports as required

Role of Parents and Carers

- To encourage maximum attendance.
- To ensure pupils arrive at school on time and ready to learn.
- To inform the school on the first day when their child is absent from school.
- To give a reason for the absence of a child.
- To work with school to maintain good attendance or to improve attendance as appropriate.
- To avoid taking holidays during term time. In cases where this is absolutely necessary, parents and carers should seek authorisation from the Head Teacher in writing explaining the exceptional circumstances.

Role of Pupils

- To arrive at school on time by encouraging parents and carers to facilitate this.
- To come to school prepared for the day's activities.
- To report to the office if they arrive late for school.

Role of the Family Service Officer

- To visit school to discuss matters concerning attendance with the Head Teacher.
- To follow up any concerns the school has about attendance.
- To check registers and give advice when appropriate.

Registration

Class teachers are fully conversant with, and implement the Registration procedures as provided by the LA. Class registers are taken on Arbor at 8.45 am and 1.00 pm and close at 9.00 am and 1.10 pm. If a child arrives after this time they will be marked late.

Encouraging Attendance

Taking the register twice daily is a significant opportunity for teachers to convey positive messages about attendance. Children should feel that their presence is welcome and important, and that the absence of class members is regretted. We want to work together with parents/carers to help ensure excellent attendance and punctuality for all children from an early age.

We aim to keep above our whole school target of 96% attendance for the year, which is in line with national expectations. In recognition of the effort it takes to keep attendance at this level we use incentive schemes and rewards to encourage and improve the attendance of our children.

Reporting and Recording of Absences

Where a child is absent from school, parents/carers are expected to contact the school office as soon as possible in the morning and advise why their child will not be attending school, and how long they expect their child to be absent.

If parents/carers do not inform school of their child's absence the school office will try to make contact in order to check that the child is safe, in line with the school's safeguarding policy. If there is a reason for significant concern a home visit may be conducted, or a referral may be made to another agency.

Whenever pupils are absent and parents/carers have not told the office the reason for absence the school must mark the absence as unauthorised. The school can change the mark at a later date if a satisfactory reason for the absence is given.

Once a reason for the absence has been given a code is given in accordance with LA policy. This may be authorised or unauthorised, as determined by the school.

If a member of staff is concerned that an absence/pattern of absences is not justified, then this should be reported to the headteacher on CPOMS.

Children should only be away from school if they are ill, have a medical appointment or there are exceptional circumstances.

Authorised Absences

Only the school, through the head teacher, can authorise a child's absence, following the available guidance.

Parents may not authorise absence.

Absences may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness of the child
- Illness of the parent/carer resulting in them being unable to bring the child to school
- Doctors, hospital, dentist, opticians, child and family therapy appointments that cannot be made out of school hours (an appointment card may be requested)
- Attendance at some family events (weddings, funerals – for the event itself, not for extended leave)
- Religious Festivals (a day exclusively set apart for religious observance, not for extended leave)
- Death in the family
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities in exceptional circumstances

Absence data is regularly monitored and the school will work pro-actively with parents/carers of any pupil whose attendance falls below 90%. Where a child's absence is consistently below 90% this is considered by the government to be 'persistent absence' and a referral may be made to the Family Service.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays **may not** be taken in term time. Legislation makes it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Leave of Absence during term time

Parents must request leave of absence in term time from the head teacher. The loss of learning for should be completed, giving the dates as well as stating the reason for the request and any exceptional circumstances.

Under exceptional circumstances, the Head Teacher may grant a leave of absence in term time. At Sutton-on-Trent Primary and Nursery School, exceptional circumstances are truly exceptional and would only be a specific one-off event. A leave of absence under exceptional circumstances is only granted when the child's existing attendance is over 97%. All requests are considered on an individual basis taking into account circumstances such as:

- The amount of time requested
- The age of the child
- The child's general attendance record
- The proximity of SATs or other assessments or school events
- The child's educational needs
- The general welfare of the child
- The circumstances of the request
- The purpose of the leave
- The frequency of the request
- Whether sufficient notice is given of the request

The school office will send a response from the head teacher , in writing, explaining whether or not the leave of absence has been authorised.

Missing Children

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse or neglect, or may raise concerns around child sexual exploitation.

After 5 days of non-school attendance and after the school has been unable to contact parents/carers, the school should refer the situation to the Family Service, or Children's Social Care, as appropriate.

After 4 weeks of non-attendance, and where efforts to find the child prove unsuccessful (i.e. the child is no longer believed to be residing at their address), the child will be deemed as missing. The Family Service will then refer the child to the CME (Children Missing Education) Officer who will then advise the school when or whether to remove the child from the school roll. The school should create a 'lost pupil' record on the national Lost Pupil's Database School to School (s2s).

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children progress through their school life and out into the wider world. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss the start of the work resulting in a lack of understanding, hindering their ability to do their best work.

School children may arrive at school from 8.40 am to allow children to have a calm start to the day. The register is taken at 8.45 am and 1.00 pm. Children arriving after the register have closed must report to the office. Legally a child is given a late mark if they arrive 15 minutes after registration without an explanation which constitutes an authorised reason for lateness. Office staff will record the reason for lateness on the individual child's database on Arbor, along with the number of minutes late as this is a requirement should the case be referred.

Lateness will be monitored regularly along with absence. If a pattern of lateness is identified, or it becomes regular, parents are notified.

Collecting Children After School

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day. Regularly requesting to take children out of school early for any reason is not acceptable without the permission of the head teacher who may grant permission in exceptional circumstances.

The school reserves the right to refer families to Social Care for children who are repeatedly not collected by parents/carers at the end of the school day. In extreme cases, where a child has not been collected and the school is unable to contact a parent/carer, the child will be taken to the local police station.

Staff Attendance

The health and well being of all staff is of vital importance in ensuring the delivery of quality of education to pupils and raising school standards. All procedures for managing the attendance of school staff are in line with Nottinghamshire County Councils 'Managing the Attendance of School Staff' policy and 'Annual Leave and Leave of Absence for School Staff'.

In the first instance, absences are notified by phoning the Head Teacher as early as possible, but by **7.00 am** on the first day of absence, texts or emails **should not** be sent as a method of communication. The Office Manager will then be notified if supply needs to be arranged. Midday Supervisors must also notify the school directly, before 9.30 am.

The absent member of staff (or member of family) must keep the school informed on a daily basis as to the staff of their illness and/or absence, this must be done either personally or via telephone calls, text messages are not appropriate. There is self-certification for the first five working days; after this a doctor's note is required.

Absence for personal reasons is to be negotiated in the first instance with the Head Teacher (in accordance with the guidelines in the Annual Leave and Leave of Absence for School Staff Handbook), and further reference will be made to the Chair of Governors. Holidays during term time should not be taken. Absences for holidays in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised; family holidays, availability of cheaper holidays, availability of desired accommodation, availability of time off work, poor weather experienced in the school holiday period, holidays overlapping with the beginning or end of term.

It is recognised that it is inappropriate to prescribe rigid rules in respect of compassionate leave; however guidelines will be taken from the Annual Leave and Leave of Absence for School Staff Handbook. Up to five

days of absence **may** be granted in any one year for domestic reasons at the discretion of the Governing Body. A year is defined as a 'rolling year' not a calendar or academic year.

Where it can be demonstrated that it is not possible to obtain appointments outside of working hours or outside of school term, the governing body may grant paid time off for reasons of the personal health and welfare of an employee or that of a dependent who needs to be accompanied, for example, visits to a doctor or hospital.

Staff must complete form 'Application for Leave of Absence' in all cases to request an absence from work. Full details regarding staff absence can be found in the Nottinghamshire County Councils Handbook 'Annual Leave and Leave of Absence for School Staff'.

Role of the Head Teacher

- To ensure staff are aware of the procedures for absence.
- To inform the Governing Body of staff absences.
- To monitor staff attendance.
- To record absences in staff files.
- To ensure a healthy, safe environment for staff.

Role of the Governing Body

In matters relating to staff attendance, the Governing Body has a number of statutory obligations:

- To ensure a healthy, safe environment for staff.
- To monitor staff absence.
- To take appropriate action in cases of prolonged absence.