



Attendance Policy

April 2015

Introduction and Background

Smithdown Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and children's attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and it underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every child has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that children succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Full time education means attendance on 190 days (equivalent to 380 sessions) during the school year from 1st September to 31st August).

This policy has been developed using the Department of Education guidelines on attendance, with support from the Education Welfare service and in consultation with parents, staff and the Governors of Smithdown Primary School.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, children and all members of the school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:

- Give our parents/carers details on attendance at the end of each term. We will do this by reporting each child's individual attendance.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 90% to offer guidance and support to improve attendance

- Work in close partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor patterns of attendance and non-attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements on school notice boards, awarding classes the 'attendance cups' at our weekly Celebration assemblies.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observances which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and/or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping their children off school unnecessarily e.g. not returning to school after a medical/dental appointment
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Not providing medical evidence of illness

Following Liverpool Local Authority's directive – NO holidays requested during school time will be authorised by the school. If children are absent from school due to holidays their absence will be recorded as Unauthorised Absence. 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 school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we work with the family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help us with this such as the School Nurse or the Parent Support Advisor.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking. Any child who reaches the PA mark i.e. have missed 15% of their schooling or who is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority for intervention and support by the school and the Education Welfare Officer. This may also involve other agencies e.g. School Nurse, Community Police Officer.

Absence Procedures and Punctuality

Parents/Carers should:

- Follow our Home/School agreement and ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time – 9.00am.
- Contact the school (by telephone or in person) by 10am on the first day of their child's absence.
- Send a written note (detailing the reason for absence) when their child returns to school.

School will:

- Keep a register of attendance at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session, recording absence using the Department of Education's Attendance Codes.
- Give a 'late code'(L) to children who arrive after class registration – 9.00am
If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Inclusion Manager, School Attendance Officer and the EWO to resolve the problem. If you are having difficulties in getting your child to school on time, please come in and discuss this with us.
- Give an unauthorised code (U) to children who arrive after 9.30am, when no valid reason for lateness/absence has been provided.
- Contact families (First day Response) when no reason for absence has been received by the school. If no contact can be made then an unauthorised code (0) will be given, the EWO will be informed and she may carry out an unannounced visit to the family home in order to establish the reason why the child is absent from school

- Monitor absence/attendance closely and inform parents/carers when there is a concern
- A 'team around the child' (TAC) meeting will be arranged if school are concerned about a child's attendance.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to offer support to families in overcoming barriers to good attendance and punctuality.
- If your child is absent from school for 10 consecutive days (for reasons other than medical) we will remove your child from the school roll, and their place will be offered to someone else.

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- Visit school every week to monitor attendance.
- Work in partnership with school staff to support families by making home visits when there is a serious cause for concern over attendance.
- Implement sanctions such as Penalty Notices (after 10 unauthorised days) or prosecutions in Court when unauthorised absences persist as under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act of 1996.

Attendance Targets

Our aim is for all children to achieve at least 95% attendance i.e. no more than 9 days of absence over the school year. It is recognised that not all children will be able to achieve this for valid reasons. However we will strive for as many children as possible to achieve or exceed this target because we know that good attendance is a key to successful schooling. We aim to improve attendance for all children and have as few children as possible listed as Persistent Absentees.

Monitoring, evaluation and responsibility

The Headteacher and Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.