



South Hill Primary School Attendance Policy

May 2021

Introduction

South Hill Primary School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils. We believe that children attending school regularly and punctually will be better able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We believe that persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's short and long term well-being, progress and achievement.

South Hill offers a range of initiatives to support good levels of attendance, such as termly certificates, a monthly shout out for the best class with attendance in the newsletter, a flexible start in the morning, an early morning drop off breakfast club, a morning games club, and more specific catered and adapted morning entry and dismissal for some pupils.

School Responsibility

South Hill School is responsible for ensuring that attendance registers are taken and recorded. These registers are used to monitor individual pupil attendance, class attendance and whole school attendance to ensure that our pupils are striving to meet our school aspirational target of 98% and strive for 100% attendance. The attendance officer for the school is Mrs J Donley and she is supported by a member of the admin team who monitors attendance and punctuality at our school. The School also has a designated County Attendance Officer who works closely with the school to monitor attendance.

At South Hill School we:

- Work actively to maximise attendance rates – both in relation to individual pupils and the whole school.
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils.
- Have clear procedures to address attendance issues including persistent absence
- Are sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this is reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed.

School Monitoring

We monitor attendance regularly, and talk to and/ or write to any families we feel are unaware of the importance of full attendance/punctuality or where we are concerned about the health and wellbeing of children who are frequently absent. We offer support or advice where appropriate as often parents are not aware of how **repeated absences** can impact their child's education and social development. It is our aim to help parents and work in partnership to achieve good levels of attendance.

Parental Responsibility

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. This means parents must:

- Ensure that their child attends school daily.
- Ensure that their child arrives on time every day.
- Ensure that their child is picked up on time every day.
- Ensure they phone the school if their child is absent or leave a message before **8.50am**.
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues that may lead to non-attendance.
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Not book holidays or special days out during term time.

School Times

Our school day starts at **8.40am**. Doors close at **8.50am**.

Our school day ends at **3.15pm** for **EYFS** and **KS1**. Our school day ends at **3.20pm** for **KS2**.

Registration

- Pupils may enter the building when the school doors open at **8.40am**. Doors close at **8.50am**.
- Attendance registers by 9.00am in the morning and by 1.20pm in the afternoon.
- The class attendance register is completed in the morning and afternoon.
- Pupils arriving late, receive a late mark (**L**). Parents of children who are persistently late will be supported to enable better punctuality (see below)
- A summary of the appropriate symbols to indicate a child being present, authorised absence, approved educational activity and unauthorised absence follows in Appendix A.

Punctuality/Lateness

At South Hill School we encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is closely monitored and persistent lateness either in the morning or at pick up is followed up with:

- a verbal conversation (then)
- a warning letter from Mrs Donley (then)
- A meeting with the parent/carer, with Mrs Donley and one of the Co-Headteachers.

If there is no improvement, the school will make a referral to the **Local Authority Attendance Officer**.

- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)
- When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Minutes late will be recorded on your child's attendance profile and monitored.

Working with the ISL Attendance Team

South Hill School works in partnership with 'The ISL (Integrated Services for Learning) Attendance Teams.' The ISL fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Each school in Hertfordshire has a link **Local Authority Attendance Officer** (LAAO) who works with the school in monitoring attendance.

- On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the school will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the problem drop below 85% without satisfactory explanation, a referral to the Attendance Officer will follow.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence will be treated as **unauthorised**.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school by telephone before 8.50am, or as soon as possible thereafter. A message can be left on the answer phone.

- The normal routine is to telephone the school on the **first morning** of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.
- If a call is not made, a member of the admin team will contact the parent/carer. (**First Day response**)

- If after the second day of absence the school has not heard from parents/carers, they will call all other contacts held for that child and may complete a **Welfare Check** to ensure that the pupil is safe. (This may be conducted by the school, the police or Social Services).
- **Unauthorised absences** are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation, the explanation is not a valid reason for a child's absence or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.
- If a pupil has unauthorised absence, it is advisable for the parent/carer to provide work such as reading and/or times tables. It is not the school's responsibility to provide additional work if a child is not in school.

Safeguarding

The admin team record two or more contact numbers of appropriate adults/family members to have on file here at school. When a child is recorded as absent from the register, yet the school has no record of why, on the 2nd day of absence, these contacts will be telephoned. If the school cannot get hold of any of the appropriate adults and the school does not know where the child is, then Children's Services and/or the Police will be telephoned to establish if the child or children are at immediate risk.

In addition, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Section 12 requires schools to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive day's absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences. Reporting of pupils with irregular attendance/10 or more consecutive school days unexplained absence or irregular attendance. The school therefore informs the county of any child whose absence is in line with these regulations and duties.

Leave of Absence/Requests for Leave in Term Time

Changes to legislation which came into force in September 2013, made clear that Co-Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is deemed unacceptable to book a holiday or special days out in term time.

- If you remove your child from school for a holiday it will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.
- We do allow time off for truly exceptional circumstances, but these are relatively rare.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday or special days out during term time.
- Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Co-Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance, before the anticipated leave date and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.

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

Leave of Absence Request Form (Appendix 2)

A Leave of Absence form is available in the school office and must be completed *before* arranging any time off.

Fixed Penalty Notices

A penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation.

- If a pupil's absence reaches 15 sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term.

- A warning of a fixed penalty letter will be sent prior to a child reaching **15 unauthorised sessions** of absence
- Time will be given to parents to show that they have responded to the warning of a fixed penalty letter
- **Penalty notices will involve each parent with Parental Responsibility (PR) and every adult in the family home paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.**
- Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply)
- Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.
- The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority.

Attendance and Punctuality Letters

The school will send out letters when a child's attendance and punctuality is concerning.

The school may request medical evidence if a child is frequently off school due to ill health. This may be in the form of a medical appointment text or card, or prescribed medicine. Parents are encouraged to send children to school, if they are not infectious to others and the child can manage the school day. If a parent has been requested, by letter, to provide medical evidence, this is not forthcoming, and ill health, as reason for absence remains exceptionally high, the school may not continue to authorise absences due to ill health.

Attendance Rewards

South Hill School promotes good attendance through incentives including:

- Monthly reports of class attendance in the school newsletter, celebrating the best class attendance overall.
- Termly presentation of certificates in final assembly for children with excellent attendance.
- Annual presentation of certificates in final assembly (July) for children with excellent attendance over the course of the whole year.

Publication of Attendance Information

- South Hill School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils, staff and outside agencies who are working with families for the welfare of the children, e.g. social services.
- Current attendance statistics are shared on the school website.
- Attendance is reported at least termly to the Co-Headteachers
- The Co-Headteachers will be responsible for ensuring that data collected by DfE is accurate.

Updated by J Donley

May 2021

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

Appendix 1

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity

W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at:

www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance



South Hill Primary School
Request for Leave of Absence

Please make your request prior to making any bookings and at least 4 weeks before the anticipated leave date.

Due to the 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, Headteachers may no longer authorise leave of absence for holidays during term time and may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Name Of Pupil (s)	Class

From To Total =

The Exceptional Reasons for this request are:

Signature (Parent/Carer) _____ Date _____

Please be reminded that the **Attendance Officer**, allocated to the school, reviews the school registers on a termly basis. The Attendance Officer will advise the school on the appropriate action to be taken as regards to an unauthorised leave of absence.