Southfields Primary School

Attendance Policy

Addendums added during 2020 in line with Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Government Guidance

Date agreed: September 2019 – updated Covid-19 guidance added in March, September and November 2020
Review Date: September 2021

This policy, having been presented to, and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governors, will be distributed to:

- All teaching staff
- School governors

A copy of the policy will also be available in:

- The Staffroom
- The Head’s office
- School web site

This will ensure that the policy is readily available to visiting teachers, support staff and parents.

Southfields Primary is totally committed to social justice and improving life chances for potentially vulnerable children. It is dedicated to sharing its work and findings beyond the school to improve outcomes for as many children as it can reach and has a particular specialism in Speech and Language development.
Introduction

Southfields Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Leader

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.
Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil’s absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone’s responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody’s responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and
(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Reception Intake Induction period

PCC, in line with the Admissions Code, offer all children in the September following their fourth birthday a full time place at school if requested by the parents/carers.

Our School uses a short induction period where Reception aged children are introduced to their formal education by the use of a reduced timetable and to assist in their transition to full-time education. You will be notified of the timetable for our Reception children for September in advance.

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, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other exceptional cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- 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 authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from 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 your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from
attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

**Persistent Absence (PA):**
A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need full parental support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

**Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:**
A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of 10% or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at 10% or above;
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

**Absence Procedures**

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence via a message left on the school answering machine or a message sent to Mrs Absence on Class DoJo;

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
• Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

Telephone numbers:
There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don’t then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:
Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council, School Attendance Team. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Lateness:
Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:
The school day starts at **9.00am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

• Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive an absent mark if they are not in by that time.
• At **9.00am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the school Risk Assessment, if your child arrives after that time you will be asked to take them home and return at 1.30pm for the afternoon session, but the morning session will be marked with a ‘U’ Code which is recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
• If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:
Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.
Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child’s education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may only authorise such absences in exceptional circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks’ notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

**Deletions from Register**

Under Section 8-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child’s name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child’s welfare and life opportunities are promoted.
### Addendum 1 – Rules on Self Isolation

#### What are the Rules on Self Isolation? – a Quick Guide for Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the person has any of the Covid-19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste) and is awaiting a test result</th>
<th>If the person has tested positive for Covid-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The individual person</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must self-isolate until the test result is received.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If this is positive, see right hand column.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If negative, the individual may end their self-isolation if they are well, no one in their household or support bubble has symptoms and they have not been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test &amp; Trace.</td>
<td>Must self-isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms and until there is no high temperature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **The person’s household** |  |
| Must self-isolate until the test result is received.  |
| • If this is positive, see right hand column  |
| • If negative, the household may end their self-isolation if no one has symptoms and they have not been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace. | Must self-isolate for 14 days from the start of their symptoms, or from the date of the positive test taken (if the individual has no symptoms). If any member of the household develops symptoms at any point during the 14 days, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the start of their symptoms and get tested. |

| **The person’s contacts** (see below for details of who a contact is) |  |
| They do not need to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms or the person tests positive. | Must self-isolate for 14 days from the last contact with the confirmed case. If they develop symptoms during the 14 days, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the start of their symptoms and get tested. |

| **The households of the person’s contacts** |  |
| Do not need to self-isolate unless the Contact develops symptoms. | Do not need to self-isolate unless the Contact develops symptoms. |

A ‘contact’ is a **person who has been close to someone** who has tested positive for Covid-19 anytime from 2 days before the person had symptoms (or a positive test if no symptoms) and up to 10 days from the start of their symptoms (when they are infectious to others). So this means anyone who:

- Is in their household (living together, sharing kitchen or bathroom)
- Has been closer to them than 1m for one minute or longer
• Has been within 2m of them for more than 15 minutes
• Has had face-to-face contact (within 1m), been coughed on or had skin-skin physical contact
• Has travelled in a small vehicle with them, even on a short journey.

You may also find the following diagram about actions to take if someone in your household develops Covid-19 symptoms helpful.

Addendum 2 - Transition from other settings

- Children will finish their previous school on the Friday prior to the week they begin and then have the weekend and a 2 day (48hour) transition into school.
- During this time the school will provide these days of learning as part of an induction into our school for Health and Safety reasons with some independent tasks.
- This will include a Covid-19 video to watch, tour of the school, meet the teacher and class virtual introduction, information regarding lunch times, entrance to and from school, as well as the opportunity to explore the website to find out more about school, links to age appropriate resources we have on line as well as some tasks to complete.
- If pupils are entitled to FSM then we will provide £2 vouchers for each of the 2 days.
Addendum 3 - Response to any infection

- engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice
- A letter will be sent only if there is a confirmed case
- The letter informing there may be a case whilst children or staff take the test has now been removed (October 19th 2020 as per government guidance) although if we think that there is a vulnerable child or member of staff we will inform individual parents or staff.
Addendum 4 – Excerpts taken from the DfE School Attendance document

School Attendance

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
  - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

What does the law say and what do I have to do?

This guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- Parents’ duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil.
- Schools’ responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities’ codes of conduct.
New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
  - If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
  - If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste.
(anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

- If someone in the pupil’s household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
  - If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
  - If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
  - In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

**Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

- Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

- The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

**Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

- As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.
Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

- If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

- Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local lockdown

- If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.