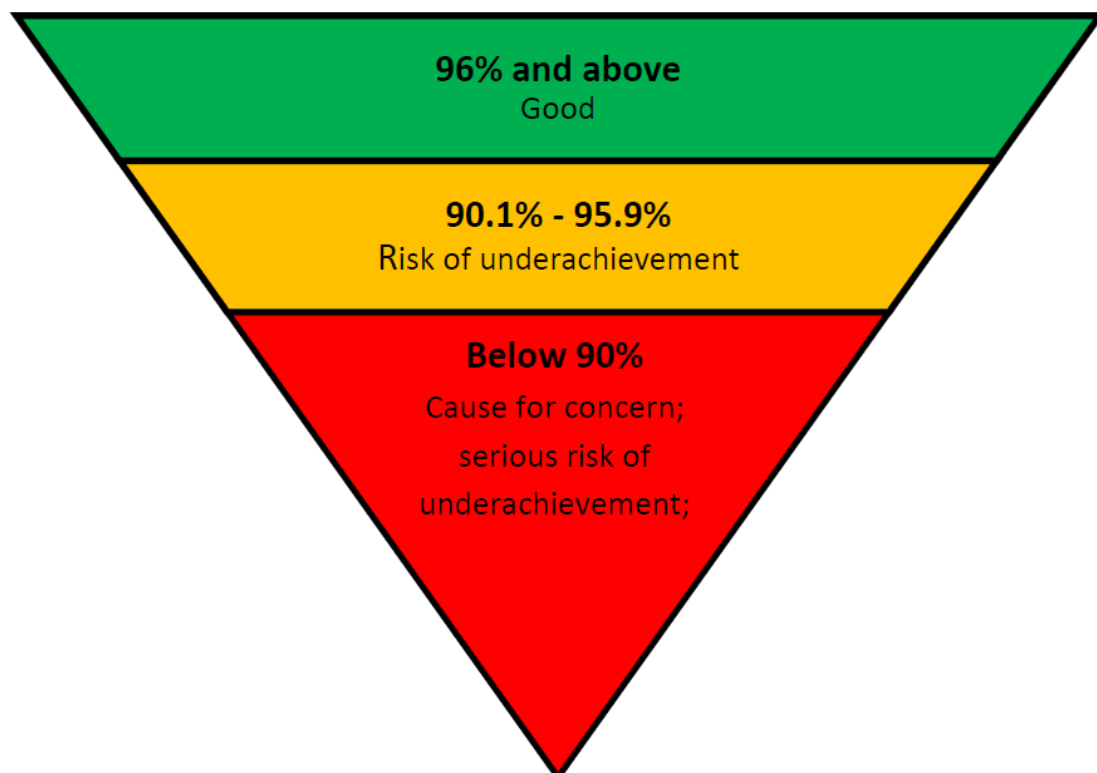


SOUTH BERSTED C E PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance and Absences

A guide for Parents and Carers



Why should my child attend school?

- Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend school regularly.
- Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it but because it is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

Did you know?

- ‘Good’ attendance means attendance of **96%** or more.
- Attendance of 94% equates to 10 days absence during a school year, which is approximately 2 weeks and 60 missed lessons.
- Over a period of 6 years, consistent attendance of 85% would mean a child would miss the equivalent of **1 school year**.
- If a child’s attendance falls below 90% the child is classed as a **‘persistent absentee’**.
- A child who is absent one day of school per week misses an equivalent of **two years** of their school life.
- 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE level and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all.
- Poor examination results limit young people’s options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable.
- Poor school attendance is also closely associated with crime; a quarter of school age offenders have truanted repeatedly.
- At least 1 million children take at least one half day off a year without permission.
- 7.5 million school days are missed each year through unauthorised absence. Absence at any stage leads to gaps in your child’s learning, and can have the following impacts on the child:
 - *they may fall behind in their work*
 - *it can affect their motivation*
 - *it can affect their enjoyment of learning*
 - *it may lead to poor behaviour*
 - *it can affect their desire to attend school regularly*
 - *it may affect their confidence in school*
 - *it may mean they miss out on the social life of school and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences*
 - *it can affect their ability to have or keep friendships*

WSSCC Guidance on School Absences:

Children must attend school regularly and on time during term time.

Your child can only miss school if:

- *they are too ill to go to school*
- *the school has authorised the absence*

You must get permission from the Headteacher if you are planning to take your child out of school during term time. Examples of exceptional circumstances would include:

- *a death in the family or a funeral*
- *an emergency doctors, hospital or dental appointment*

If you do not get permission and you take your child out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Examples of absences which are unlikely to be authorised by the school include:

- *sickness of a parent, or other family member*
- *inadequate clothing for school*
- *child being used as a carer*
- *problems with transport*
- *non-urgent medical treatment*
- *school refusal or truancy*
- *days off for birthdays, shopping trips*
- *family holiday*

Unauthorised absences are when a pupil has been marked in the school attendance register as being absent from school without authority. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence for any reason from school. This includes:

- *any absence marked in the register as unauthorised ('O' or 'N' codes)*
- *persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken ('U' codes)*
- *a holiday in term-time, not been authorised by the headteacher ('G' codes)*

The Government has directed that Headteachers may only grant leave for a holiday in term-time where there are **exceptional circumstances**.

In West Sussex, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued if a pupil has accrued unauthorised absence from school and the school has referred the matter to West Sussex County Council.

More information regarding Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on the West Sussex County Council Website at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-behaviour-and-performance/school-absences/>

The School's Responsibility:

The school has a legal duty of care to take appropriate actions when a child is not attending school regularly.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- *Overall monitoring of school attendance.*
- *Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.*
- *Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.*
- *Making referrals to the Children Missing Education team.*
- *Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Children Missing Education team.*
- *Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.*

The School Administration team are responsible for:

- *Collating and recording registration and attendance information for the Headteacher and Governing Body.*
- *Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.*
- *Ensuring the absence/late book is completed.*
- *Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.*
- *Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.*
- *Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.*

The Parent/Carer's Responsibility:

The Parent or Carer is responsible for:

- *Ensuring that the child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment*
- *Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence*
- *Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as medical absence the school may require evidence from the doctor or dentist.*
- *Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.*
- *Talking to the school as soon as possible about a child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.*

Notifying the School of an absence:

Parents and Carers must contact the school by telephone, answerphone, email, note or verbal message on the first day of absence, before 9.20am, providing the following information:

- *The child's name and class*
- *The reason for the absence, including details of any illness*
- *The expected duration of the absence/expected return to school*

If the school does not have any communication by 9.20am, attempts will be made to contact the parent/carer.

If the school is unable to contact the parent/carer, other emergency contacts listed will be contacted.

Where no contact is made, the CME team (Children Missing in Education team) will be contacted for advice in the case of:

- *Pupils with poor attendance records*
- *Pupils on the Child Protection Register*
- *Pupils identified as being at particular risk or with welfare concerns*

If no explanation for the absence is received, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer requesting a reason for the absence. **Parents must complete the slip fully with details of the illness ('felt unwell' is not sufficient).** Forms must be returned to school within 5 days.

These absences will be recorded as unauthorised in the register if no response is received within the 5-day time period. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued for more than 10 sessions unauthorised in a 10 week period (a school day is 2 sessions; AM and PM).

Keeping Contact Information Up to Date:

You must ensure that all emergency contact information that the school holds is up to date. If you change your mobile number, home number or address you must inform the school and complete a 'Change of Details' form.

A Data Collection Sheet is sent out once per year. This is a summary of all information held for your child including the child's address, all emergency contact details and medical notes. Parents are asked to check this carefully and make any amendments necessary. Once the form is returned to school, any amendments will be made to our records.

It is crucial that you keep us informed of any changes to your circumstances or your child's contact information.

Lateness:

- The school day begins promptly at 8.50am. Children must be in the classroom and ready to learn by 8.50am.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken is recorded as an unauthorised absence, and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.
- Any child arriving after 8.50am must be brought to the school office and must be signed in on the late register which is held at the school office.

Process for requesting absence in term time:

- Please contact the school office to request an 'Absence Request Form' before the date of the requested absence. Absence requests must be considered by the Headteacher in advance of the planned absence.
- You may be required to provide additional evidence to support your request under 'exceptional circumstances'.
- You will receive a copy of the form signed by the Headteacher, confirming if the request has been approved or declined.
- If the request has been declined and you still take your child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if there are 10 or more sessions missed in a 10-week period.

Guidance on Infection Control in schools and other childcare settings

The following tables detail the guidance for absence from school when a child is unwell. This information is provided by the Health Protection Agency:

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	
<i>E. coli</i> O157 VTEC*	Should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Further exclusion is required for young children under five and those who have difficulty in adhering to hygiene practices
Typhoid* [and paratyphoid*] (enteric fever)	Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting	Children in these categories should be excluded until there is evidence of microbiological clearance. This guidance may also apply to some contacts of cases who may require microbiological clearance
Shigella* (dysentery)		Please consult the Duty Room for further advice
Cryptosporidiosis*	Exclude for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Exclusion from swimming is advisable for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled

Respiratory infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	See: Vulnerable children
Tuberculosis*	Always consult the Duty Room	Requires prolonged close contact for spread
Whooping cough* (pertussis)	48 hours from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary

Rashes and skin infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders
Athlete's foot	None
Chickenpox*	Until all vesicles have crusted over
Cold sores, (Herpes simplex)	None
German measles (rubella)*	Four days from onset of rash (as per "Green Book")
Hand, foot and mouth	None
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment
Measles*	Four days from onset of rash
Molluscum contagiosum	None
Ringworm	Exclusion not usually required
Roseola (infantum)	None
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment
Scarlet fever*	Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment
Slapped cheek (fifth disease or parvovirus B19)	None once rash has developed
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered
Warts and verrucae	None



Other infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult the Duty Room
Diphtheria *	Exclusion is essential. Always consult with the Duty Room	Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by the Duty Room. Preventable by vaccination. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary
Glandular fever	None	
Head lice	None	Treatment is recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen
Hepatitis A*	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	The duty room will advise on any vaccination or other control measure that are needed for close contacts of a single case of hepatitis A and for suspected outbreaks.
Hepatitis B*, C, HIV/AIDS	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. For cleaning of body fluid spills. SEE: Good Hygiene Practice
Meningococcal meningitis*/ septicaemia*	Until recovered	Some forms of meningococcal disease are preventable by vaccination (see immunisation schedule). There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. In case of an outbreak, it may be necessary to provide antibiotics with or without meningococcal vaccination to close contacts. The Duty Room will advise on any action needed.
Meningitis* due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. The Duty Room will give advice on any action needed
Meningitis viral*	None	Milder illness. There is no reason to exclude siblings and other close contacts of a case. Contact tracing is not required
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise any danger of spread. If further information is required, contact the Duty Room
Mumps*	Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2 doses)
Threadworms	None	Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic

