

	<h2>South Bersted CE Primary Attendance Policy</h2>
Web and/or Internal	Web & Internal
This policy should be reviewed every	Every three years
Policy approved by Governors	Spring 2021
Date of Review	Spring 2024
Member of staff responsible	Headteacher
Policy created by	SBS

At South Bersted CE Primary School, we place great value on regular and punctual attendance in order to maximise the learning opportunities for our pupils and to ensure their well-being. It is our intention to provide support and challenge where appropriate to ensure that attendance remains high for all pupils in our care. The Home-School Agreement encourages good attendance and makes clear what is expected of pupils, parents and the school.

As a school we will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence,
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled,
- Act early to address patterns of absence,
- Promote all pupils to be punctual to school.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Good attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school (DfE School Attendance Guidance, May 2022).

### **Registration:**

Gates open at 8.35am and close at 8.45am, registers are taken no later than 8.45am. These are completed using the school's information management system. (In the event of any electronic register not being available (whether the internet is down or a supply teacher is teaching the class) this is taken manually and entered by the admin staff as soon as is practical).

The register will officially close at 9:15am. Pupils arriving after the gates close at 8.45am, but before 9:15am will be marked as Late ('L'), with a reason noted in the comments section of the relevant register. If no reason is given, the number of minutes late will be recorded.

Arrival after 9:15am will be considered as unauthorised ('U') unless some other circumstance is specified (such as a medical appointment). Afternoon registers are taken by 13:00.

**Absence:**

Parents/ carers are responsible for:

- Notifying the school on the first day of absence before 9:15am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office, emailing or via Class Dojo.
- Providing medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school,
- Ensuring that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Absence for some circumstances may be approved by the headteacher if requested in advance using the appropriate absence request form. This might include absence to attend a family funeral, or to participate in an approved performance or sporting activity or to attend secondary school taster days.

Except in exceptional circumstances, family holidays will not be approved. When exceptional circumstances are based on the employment or other commitments of a parent, evidence will be requested in writing before approval via the absence request form (appendix A). When submitting the form, the evidence must include why an absence is exceptional. Guidance on this can be found in appendix B.

All other absence will be considered to be unauthorised ('O'), unless exceptionally approved by the headteacher

**Safeguarding children not in attendance:**

Where a pupil has not attended and we are unable to contact any parent or carer by telephone, including the use of emergency contact numbers, we will consider the matter from a safeguarding perspective.

Where appropriate, the headteacher and/or safeguarding lead will take further steps to ensure the wellbeing of the child, which may include home visits, referral to the Integrated Front Door (IFD); formerly known as MASH, or by seeking further advice from the local authority's team for Children Missing in Education.

Repeated absence, particularly where explanation for absence is not given, may be a safeguarding concern in its own right, or indicative of other risks to a child's wellbeing. Such cases will be referred to the safeguarding lead for consideration through the usual procedures.

**Monitoring:**

At regular intervals and not less than once each half term, attendance reports will be run from the school's Management Information System, showing those pupils whose attendance has fallen below the thresholds of 96% and 90%.

The school monitors where attendance drops below 96%. Parents will be informed of this through a letter (appendix C) at the end of the half term.

Where attendance falls below 90% over a period of at least six weeks, parents will be contacted by telephone, or invited to meet with the headteacher as part of an Attendance Review Meeting to discuss issues which are preventing good attendance (appendix D).

Where pupils are late on 3 occasions over a half term, parents will be informed and will be sent a letter informing them of our concerns (appendix E).

Reports will be given to the Governing Body each term within the Headteacher's report. Comparison of data will be made with national statistics.

Formal monitoring takes place half-termly and individuals causing concern will be invited to attend an Attendance Review meeting with the Headteacher.

#### **Fixed Penalty Notices:**

Should a child have unauthorised absence of 10 or more school sessions (half days) within a period of 10 school weeks, including unauthorised family holidays, the headteacher may request that a fixed penalty notice be issued.

Fixed penalty notices will be issued inline in line with the current legislation and according to the framework provided by West Sussex.

#### **Promoting good attendance:**

In promoting good attendance the school awards the following;

- The class with the highest attendance each week, via the weekly correspondence: newsletter and Friday Flyer.
- Pupils who have a 100% attendance at the end of each term,
- Annual awards for excellent attendance are presented at the end of the Summer Term.

#### **Leaving the school:**

Except at the end of Year 6, parents who wish to remove their child from the school will be asked to place their request in writing, providing a forwarding address and details of the school to which the child is expected to transfer.

In the case of families electing to home educate, notice should be given in writing to the school of this decision. The school has a duty to report this change to the local authority.

Pupils leaving the school will not be removed from the school roll until such time as it is confirmed that they are enrolled in another school, or in accordance with the advice of the Children Missing Education team at West Sussex County Council.

Where a child is thought to have left the school, and no confirmation of a new school placement is provided, the child's absence will be reported to the Children Missing Education team at West Sussex County Council.

For further guidance please refer to the School's information booklet; '**Attendance and Absence – a guide for Parents and Carers**', and '**Key Questions about Attendance**' document. Both of which are available on the school's website.

## Appendix A

### PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Name of Child(ren)			
Date of birth			
Class Teacher(s)			
Name of person making request & relationship with child			
First Day of Absence:		Date Returning To School:	
Total Number of School Days of Absence Being Requested			

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The headteacher can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A weeks' absence for holiday and a weeks' absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 95%. The government considers attendance unacceptable below 95%.

The headteacher will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the headteacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

Why is this absence exceptional? (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)
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#### Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Signed:.....  
(Parent/Carer)

Date:

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

## SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

<b>To:</b>	<b>(Parent/Carer)</b>
<b>Your Child's Current Attendance Rate:</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>Your request is APPROVED and the absence as set out above is duly authorised.</b>
	<b>Your request is NOT approved. Therefore, if your child is absent as proposed above, it will be recorded as UNAUTHORISED and you may be issued with a 'fixed penalty notice'.</b>
<b>Signed</b>	<b>(Headteacher)</b>
<b>Date</b>	

## Appendix B

### Possible scenarios relating to absence

**It is my child's birthday and I want to take them out for a special celebration/to the zoo. Will this be authorised?**

*Because a child's birthday would not be considered "rare", this would not be authorised. Children are only in school for 190 days each year. There are 175 other days for holidays and other activities.*

**My child's grandparents have booked a surprise holiday for the family without realising the school holidays dates. Will this be authorised?**

*Because family holidays are not considered to be rare or unavoidable, this would not be authorised. Children are only in school for 190 days each year. There are 175 other days for holidays and other activities.*

**My child has been chosen to be a bridesmaid/page boy for a family wedding which falls in term time. Will this be authorised?**

*Headteachers will consider authorising an absence for the day of the wedding, as long as the child's current attendance is above 95%.*

**We have been invited to a family party to celebrate a significant birthday of a close relative, which would require us to travel some distance. Will this be authorised?**

*Whilst family celebrations are not considered to be unavoidable events, we appreciate that these are sometimes arranged outside of parents' control. In this situation, please speak to the headteacher, who may be able to authorise a limited amount of time for travelling.*

**We haven't had a family holiday for some years, and cannot afford to take one in the school holidays. Will this be authorised?**

*Although we appreciate the costs of holidays in term time is significantly cheaper, this would not be considered to be rare or unavoidable, and so this would not be authorised.*

We appreciate that in some circumstances, despite absence not being authorised, families may still choose to take children out of school. In these cases, it is important that school is notified about the reason for an absence, as we have a statutory duty to follow up and record absence accurately, to ensure that children are safe. We appreciate you being honest with us in such cases

**Appendix C (attendance between 96% and 90%)**

(date)

Dear

Attendance Review (XX - XX)

As I am sure you are aware, attendance and attainment are very closely linked. Regular and punctual school attendance will provide pupils with the opportunity to reach their full potential. The DfE expects all primary school children to achieve good attendance (96% or above).

Currently, XX's attendance is XX%, which equates to XX days absent from school. **If this pattern continues this will equate to XX missed days over the academic year.** I have attached a copy of XX's attendance for this academic year to date, together with a copy of our Home/School Agreement which you signed when XX started at South Bersted School. May I draw your attention to the Parent/Carer responsibility with regard to attendance, within this agreement.

***(REMOVE THIS PARAGRAPH EXCEPT IN THE AUTUMN TERM)***

*During the Autumn term, a child's attendance percentage is disproportionately affected due to the short amount of time that has elapsed since the start of the academic year. This means an absence of one day will more severely impact your child's overall attendance percentage during the autumn term than it would during the summer term. However, I feel it is important that I bring to your attention that should XX's attendance continue at the current rate, this would mean XX lost days of education by the end of the summer term.*

May I remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child is receiving full time education in accordance with the Section 7 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely



Mr Noel Goodwin  
Headteacher

**Appendix D (Attendance below 90%)**

Dear

Attendance Review Meeting (CHILD'S NAME, REG GROUP)

As I am sure you are aware, attendance and attainment are very closely linked. Regular and punctual school attendance will provide pupils with the opportunity to reach their full potential. The DfE expects all primary school children to achieve attendance of 96% or above.

Currently, (CHILD'S NAME) attendance is **XX%**, which equates to **XX days** absent from school. I have attached a copy of (CHILD'S NAME) attendance for this academic year to date, together with a copy of our Home/School Agreement which you signed when (CHILD'S NAME) started at South Bersted School. May I draw your attention to the Parent/Carer responsibility with regard to attendance, within this agreement.

I would like to meet with you to discuss this in more detail and agree ways that the school can support (CHILD'S NAME). The meeting will take place on (DATE) at (TIME). **Please complete the slip attached and return it to school within 5 days.**

May I remind you that it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child is receiving full time education in accordance with the Section 7 Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely



Mr Noel Goodwin  
Headteacher

Attendance Review Meeting

Child's Name: (CHILD'S NAME) Class: (REG GROUP)

I/we can attend the meeting on (DATE) at (TIME)

I/we are unable to attend\*

(\* an alternative date and time will be offered)

Signed: .....

(Parent/Carer)

Date: .....



**Appendix E** *(3 or more lates during a half term)*

Dear

We note from our records that (CHILD'S NAME) was late on XX occasions during the last half term.

Whilst there may well be perfectly understandable reasons for this, I would respectfully remind you of your statutory responsibility to see that your children arrive at school on time in order to be ready for a prompt start to the first lesson at 8.45am.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mr Noel Goodwin  
Headteacher

(CHILD NAME, REG GROUP)