



Old Hill Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2021

Review date September 2022

Old Hill Primary is a successful school and together we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For the children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

School attendance is '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 schools' (Department for Education July 2019).

Our school target is 96% and this policy sets out how we as a school community will strive together to achieve this.

The members of staff responsible for attendance are:

Mrs S Fenby - Head Teacher
Mrs Linda Ramsden - Parent Support Advisor
Mrs K Raybould - School Business Manager

Why regular attendance is important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absences will seriously affect their learning, disrupt the teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. It is the parent's/carers legal responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and promptly.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Therefore, school will:

- Monitor attendance on a weekly basis, communicate and share with parents and staff any concerns/achievements.
- Request all parents sign an Attendance Agreement.
- Give parents/carers details on attendance
- Inform parents/carers at least half-termly about your child's attendance percentage.
- Celebrate good attendance by acknowledging achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parent), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED absence. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised sessions are absences taken, either morning or afternoon, with a genuine reason for example: illness (not including minor ailments), emergency medical/dental appointments and immediate family bereavement. Head Teachers cannot grant any absence of leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised sessions, not classed as exceptional circumstances include:

- minor ailments
- routine dental/medical appointments
- family holidays
- visiting relatives or friends
- shopping trips
- looking after other family members
- birthdays
- or more than one day for religious observances (school will authorise only one day for each Religious Observance).

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill sometimes children may be reluctant to attend school. If parents/carers have any concerns with their child's attendance these are best discussed with the school immediately. Our Parent Support Advisor, Linda Ramsden is available should you wish to discuss any issues impacting on your child's attendance/punctuality.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90%. We monitor all absences thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is addressed immediately.

The Attendance and Prosecution threshold for referrals is 10 unauthorised sessions within a five week period (25 days). Absence at this level is considered damaging to a child's education and school require parents' fullest support and co-operation.

Absence Procedures

If a child/ren are absent parents/carers must:

- Contact the school office before close of register at 8.55am either by telephone or in person. The school office contact number is 01384 569213.

If your child is absent without a reason we will either:

- Contact you by telephone
- send a text message (teachers2parents)
- complete a home visit.
- If necessary, refer the matter to the Attendance and Prosecution team.

Parents/carers **must** provide two contact telephone numbers and school ask that these are updated as and when contacts change.

Attendance and Prosecution Team

The school works closely with the Attendance and Prosecution team and they support school with our monitoring system.

Parents may wish to contact the Attendance and Prosecution team to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Sandwell Local Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and when your child arrives late, they will miss the introduction to a lesson or phonics and this can be detrimental to their learning. Furthermore, when children arrive late it disrupts the class and is also embarrassing for the child.

How we manage lateness:

The school gate opens at **8.45am** and the register closes at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class before 8.55am. (Note: Nursery start times are: 8.45am for morning nursery and 12.15pm for afternoon nursery). Each class register closes at **8.55am** and all children who arrive after this time **must** sign in at the electronic system at the school office detailing the reason for lateness. Children will receive a late mark (L) up till 9.10am. If your child arrives after 9.10am, in accordance with the Regulations, they will receive a 'Late after registration mark (U), this mark is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness is monitored daily therefore if your child has persistent lateness we will contact you. If you are having issues getting your child to school on time, please contact the school office or Linda Ramsden (Parent Support Advisor).

Children not collected after school hours

We understand there may be rare occasions and emergencies when parents are not able to collect their children promptly from school, if this happens we ask parents/carers to contact the school office immediately. Although, in accordance with our Late Collection Policy, if a child is not collected from school we will contact the emergency numbers provided and, in line with our Charging Policy, a fee may be applied. If after one hour we have been unable to contact a child's parent/carer the Head Teacher or staff in charge will contact the referral team at Sandwell Children's Trust and the local police may also be informed.

Holidays/Leave of Absence in term time

In line with our safeguarding procedures any request for absence of leave must be submitted on the appropriate form (available from the school office) prior to the commencement of the absence. **School do not authorise any requests for family holidays in term time.** The Head Teacher may authorise requests for absence of leave in exceptional circumstances, this may require a telephone conversation or if necessary a face to face meeting.

Any period of absence of leave taken without agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as an unauthorised unagreed holiday (Code G). A fine of £60 (per parent, per child) may be issued as a result of an absence of leave (holiday) taken in term time. If payment of the fine,

to the local authority is not made within 21 days (or a penalty notice being issued) the penalty will rise to £120 (per parent, per child).

Inclement Weather

The school follows the Sandwell Safeguarding Policy on emergency closures with regard to absences due to inclement weather. In summary, if the school closes completely, all pupils will be marked as Y “forced or partial closure”.

As agreed with our local community of schools and following contact from a parent the school will use the “Y” code for any child/children whose parent/carer believes it is unsafe for them to attend in inclement weather.

Alternative Provision

The school work closely with approved alternative provision providers and monitor pupil’s attendance in line with the school attendance policy and procedures. Alternative providers have a duty of care to inform school of unauthorised absences and school will regularly contact the alternative provision to monitor and action any attendance concerns or issues.

Appendum relating to COVID

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school.

Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they will be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where a child is unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they will be recorded as code I (illness). For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X will apply.