



## Somerford Primary School

### Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Updated:** September 2023

**Review:** September 2024 (or before to reflect changes to evolving procedures)

Written in line with the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's child protection policy.

For the purpose of this policy, a parent means:

- all-natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

#### **Aims**

- To ensure all children attend school regularly and punctually in order to make rapid progress and achieve their potential
- To work collaboratively with parents and support them in ensuring their child attends school regularly and develop good habits
- To remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships
- To work together with families and agencies to ensure the right support is in place
- To create a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

#### **The law on attendance**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

#### **The importance of good attendance**

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 nationally have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and

serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

### **Expectations**

#### **We expect that all children will:**

- Attend school every day
- Arrive at school on time
- Arrive at school ready for their learning

#### **We expect that all parents will:**

- Ensure their child attends school every day
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time
- Ensure their child arrives ready for their learning with everything they need
- Ensure they contact school on the first day of any absence and every other day thereafter
- Contact the school promptly to discuss any problem that may keep their child away from school
- Make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day
- Book holidays outside of term time

#### **We expect that school staff will:**

- Have a clear attendance policy and share this with parents
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children twice a day
- Monitor every child's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible but on the same day, when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Encourage good attendance; developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Challenge poor attendance and put effective strategies in place to support good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children that is safe
- Provide a sympathetic response to any concerns from parents and carers
- Consult with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Authority, through the Inclusion Team, if legal action, such as fines and prosecution are appropriate in cases of persistent absence
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools, the local authority and other partners where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

### **Start and end times of the school day**

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Start time</b>	<b>End time</b>	<b>Gate</b>
R	8.55	3.25	Front
1	8.50	3.20	Front
2	8.45	3.15	Front
3	8.45	3.20	Front
4	8.40	3.15	Front
5	8.40	3.15	Side
6	8.45	3.20	Side

### **Register closing time**

The registers close at 9.15am. Any child arriving after this time is marked as U (unauthorised absence) for the morning session. Any child arriving after their start time but before 9.15am, will be marked as L (late).

## **Absence from school**

If a child is too unwell to attend school, parents are requested to inform school on the first day of illness by 9.15am and every other day thereafter. Parents can contact the school in the following ways:

- Call 01202 485436 and press 1 to leave a message
- Email [office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk)
- Click on 'Report an absence' on the Marvellous Me app
- Email child's class teacher on their class email address

## **Leave in term time**

Schools are not allowed to authorise any absence from school during school days except in exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not an exceptional circumstance. If a parent wishes to remove their child from school for a period of leave they must complete a request form and provide any evidence for their request. Forms are available from the main office.

The decision to authorise or not authorise the leave lies with the Headteacher and it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. The Headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If the Headteacher does not authorise leave and the child does not attend school, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

## **Staff responsible for attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Role in attendance</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Helen Frampton	Headteacher	Responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school	<a href="mailto:office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk">office@somerford.dorset.sch.uk</a> 01202 485436
Lucy Macmillan	Pastoral Leader	Link for parents to contact for support with attendance	<a href="mailto:lmacmillan@somerford.dorset.sch.uk">lmacmillan@somerford.dorset.sch.uk</a> 01202 485436
Steph Rice	Navigator	Providing more in-depth support for parents with attendance	<a href="mailto:Steph.rice@bcpcouncil.gov.uk">Steph.rice@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</a>

## **Day to day processes for managing attendance**

At the close of registers (9.15am), a list of children with unexplained absences will be generated. All parents will then be contacted to ensure the school knows the reason the child is not at school and to ensure parents are aware that their child is not in school. This will happen by 9.45am.

Any child who is late to school will be directed to report to the main reception to sign in. Children in YR and Y1 will be walked to class by a member of staff. Children in Y2-6 will walk to class on their own.

Parents are asked to provide at least two contacts for their child and all contacts will be tried if the school cannot reach the parent.

If no contact can be made on the phone, the school will use email and Marvellous Me to make contact.

If no contact is made and there are concerns about the child's welfare, the school may conduct a doorstep visit.

If the child does not attend school for 2 days or more and no contact can be made, a doorstep visit may be made.

### **Promoting and incentivising good attendance**

- Children are made aware of the importance of good attendance in assemblies
- Sharing the school's attendance on the school newsletter
- Information leaflets for parents which is shared with all new families to the school
- Rewards for children for good and improved attendance throughout the year
- Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance termly
- Reviewing attendance of each pupil weekly
- Individual attendance plans for key pupils
- Stickers and prizes for improved attendance
- Attendance assemblies termly to reward children over 96%
- Inter class competitions
- Non-uniform day for a class with 100% attendance for a week

### **Using data to target attendance improvements**

Early intervention is crucial to ensure good attendance. Therefore, the school uses regular data analysis to identify and provide timely additional support where needed.

#### **Daily**

Any child with an unexplained absence is highlighted and parents are contacted

#### **Weekly**

The class teacher monitors each child's attendance and punctuality through the use of Arbor and makes swift contact with parents if a child is missing sessions

#### **Fortnightly**

The attendance for the whole school and each year group is shared with parents on the school newsletter

#### **Monthly**

The Headteacher and Pastoral Lead identify Persistent Absentees (below 90%), Severe Absentees (below 50%) and those at risk of becoming a Persistent Absentee. An analysis of year group and Key Stage attendance is carried out. An analysis of the attendance of key groups is carried out (such as Pupil Premium, SEND, Children in Care, Service children, gender) and this information is shared with the staff who have responsibility for these groups in school.

If a child's attendance has dropped below the expectation of 96%, a letter will be sent home informing the parents, offering support and reminding them of the importance of their child attending every day.

#### **Half termly**

A thorough analysis is carried out to identify patterns and trends. This includes groups of children but also use of codes, days of poor attendance and punctuality. Attendance reports are shared with Governors.

#### **Termly**

Attendance data is shared with parents for their child. This shows the attendance percentage, how many days missed this equates to and a visual representative of how close to the expectation of 96% their child's attendance is.

## **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Any child whose attendance falls below 90% is considered a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA). The Headteacher and Pastoral Leader will identify these children on a monthly basis and the following action plan will be put in place:

- Class teachers will be informed of the child becoming a PA
- The Pastoral Leader will contact the child's parents to establish a reason for any absences and encourage them to send the child to school if possible
- An attendance meeting will be held with the Headteacher, Pastoral Leader and the parents to establish any barriers to attendance and agree actions to support the family in raising attendance. This may be by removing in school barriers or by working together to support parents to access support to overcome out of school barriers. A review period will be agreed and another meeting will be held to evaluate the success of the support.
- If attendance does not improve after the review period, the parents will be invited to an Attendance Panel meeting and further actions will be advised including the possibility of legal action.
- At this point, a formal Parenting Contract may be considered as part of the Fast Track process. This will agree actions for the school and the parent as well as support offered. There is a review after 6 weeks and 12 weeks.

At the start of an academic year, class teachers are informed of any children who were PAs the previous year so this action plan can commence immediately.

A child is considered to have 'Severe Absence' when their attendance falls below 50%. The school would already have worked through the actions for Persistent Absentees for a child who has Severe Absence. Therefore, the school will look to work with partner agencies if a child has, or is at risk of having, Severe Absence. This will include working with the LA Attendance Team and considering if legal action is appropriate. It is also likely to include a voluntary early help assessment and possible support through children's social care.

Any child who has persistent or severe absence will have a clear attendance plan with a named Lead Professional monitoring the plan.

## **Formal and legal sanctions**

The school will explore all possible support before considering legal action. However, if a child's attendance does not improve and / or the parents are not engaging with support offered, the school will consult with the Local Authority and agree the most appropriate action. This may be a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Parents who take their child on unauthorised leave in term time, e.g. a holiday, will also be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child.

## **Children with specific needs**

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but in doing so the school will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

If a child has a long-term medical condition, conversations will be had with the parents to ensure good support is in place for the child. This may include reasonable adjustments, an individual health care plan or a referral to an external service for additional support.

**What will be done when children stop attending school, schools have been unable to contact those children and they are believed to have left the area without parents notifying the school or the children are missing?**

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority. These enquiries will include but not be limited to:

- Making telephone contact with parents, relatives and neighbours.
- Writing to the known addresses
- Making informal enquiries to relations or friends of the child
- Referring to the LA for support
- Checking local databases within the LA
- Checking Key to Success or school2school systems
- Making enquiries via other local databases and agencies
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and / or the Border Force
- Checking with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with the LA and school from which the child moved originally
- Checking with the LA and school to which the child may have moved
- On receipt of such a referral the LA will complete checks to locate the child.
- If the child has been missing, with no contact from parents or carers and no information as to where the child is for 10 days, a Child Missing Education form will be completed and sent to the LA.
- If the school has any Child Protection concerns about the child it will follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact the MASH **immediately**.

The Attendance Officer will notify the Local Authority Admissions Team when removing a child from the Admission Register. The reasons for this will be discussed and any further action required will be agreed.



Excellent attendance. Accessing all learning opportunities.

- Rewards issued
- Termly attendance sheet sent home

96%-97%

Good attendance. Accessing most learning opportunities.

- Rewards issued
- Termly attendance sheet sent home

93%-95%

Risk of under achievement. Missing learning opportunities.

- Class teacher informed
- Letter sent to parent

90%-93%

Strong risk of under achievement. Missing many learning opportunities.

- Parent invited to Attendance Meeting
- Barriers identified
- Plan created to overcome barriers and improve attendance

Below 90%

Severe risk of under achievement.

- Parent invited to Attendance Panel
- Barriers identified
- Formal Plan or Parenting Contract created to overcome barriers and improve attendance
- Named Lead professional
- Risk of legal action explained to parent
- No absences authorised without proof

Remains under 90%

Severe risk of under achievement.

- Parent invited to Attendance Panel review meeting
- Legal action considered
- Work with partner agencies started
- FPN warning issued
- Fast Track process instigated
- Local Authority made aware