ATTENDANCE POLICY

SANDON PRIMARY ACADEMY

Mrs R Beckett (Principal)

Review date: September 2024

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The trustees are responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Mr A. Lipscomb is the link trustee for attendance and leads the above actions.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Refers to the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notice, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Laura Williams and can be contacted via (01782) 319097 or info@sandonprimary.org.uk

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

> Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal

> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the Principal/Vice Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs D. Harbron and can be contacted via 01782 319097 or info@sandonprimary.org.uk

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office both morning and afternoon.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (via voicemail before 8.30am, telephone call after 8.30am, email or dojo message) and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

> Ensure that school is aware of any planned absences - e.g. holiday – via the appropriate form completion

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not; for pupils of compulsory school age

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. Pupils arriving after 8.45am but before 9.15am will be marked as late. Pupils who arrive after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by; voicemail (before 8.30am), telephone (after 8.30am), email or dojo.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence where possible. If evidence cannot be provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised at the Principal's discretion. Parents/carers will be notified of this.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents can obtain an absence request form from the school office or via the school website.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> 8.45-9.15am (before the register has closed) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After 9.15am (after the register has closed) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Alongside attendance, punctuality is monitored daily by office staff and any concerns are raised to the senior leadership team. Weekly, whole school monitoring of attendance and punctuality by Mrs. L Williams and the Education Welfare Officer highlight children who are at risk of persistent lateness; support is then offered to improve the number of lates. Continued lateness will result in parents receiving a letter to inform them that their child's punctuality is being monitored and an invitation to an attendance clinic. Further lateness may result in formal monitoring periods and parents being liable for a fine.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may arrange for a member of staff to visit the home or contact the police

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

> All absences without reason provided from a parent/carer will be coded unauthorised

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via;

- Class Dojo
- Attendance reports
- Attendance letters

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

> Family bereavement

> Involvement in a public performance

Legal sanctions

From 1st January 2019, changes to **Stoke on Trent City Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices** were implemented with a top priority on raising pupils' levels of attainment through improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.

Following these changes, any period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine with the following actions applied;

- A Penalty Notice payable of **£60 per parent, per child**
- Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 6 days unauthorised absence or is late 12 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local Principals and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.stoke.gov.uk/education.

To view Stoke on Trent City Council's Code of Conduct for the issuing of Penalty Notices (2018), click here.

Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we actively promote good attendance for pupils by:

- Announcing weekly class attendance during celebration assembly
- Rewarding classes with the highest weekly attendance
- Half termly attendance reviews, letters for parents and certificates for pupils to reward attendance levels
- Celebrate pupils whose attendance has seen an improvement after any school based intervention

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day