



SHEERING CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whole School Attendance Policy

*At our school everyone is given the opportunity to be the best they can be because
Everyone Matters*

Sheering School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Harlow attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets. The school uses the services provided by Harlow Education Consortium to review our attendance procedures and monitoring and to support the school and parents of children whose attendance is a concern. The legal duties for attendance, such as the imposition of a fine, are still supported by Essex County Council.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

Parents and carers are encouraged to telephone school if their child will be absent that day with a reason for absence. The school's answer phone is checked daily. If a telephone call is taken before school begins the child's name and reason is recorded and teachers are informed. If a child is absent for registration with no

recorded reason teachers must enter the child's name on the 'first day calling' sheet which is returned to the office in the register folder. Office staff will telephone parents to ascertain the reason for absence. Every effort will be made to contact parents or carers. If the school is concerned for the child's safety when no contact with parents or carers has been possible, advice will be sought from Social Care.

If a child is absent for more than one day with no notification from parents or carers, a letter will be sent by the Headteacher to advise that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Five Days' Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for five consecutive days, will be reported to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to the Education Welfare Team. The school will include details of the action that they have taken. This is a last resort decision. Every effort will have been made up to this point to contact parents and encourage them to bring their child to school.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents or carers. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Home School Liaison Officer.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The school actively promotes good attendance by presenting yearly attendance cup to the Team with the best attendance. Attendance targets are regularly shared with parents and governors. Individual attendance certificates are presented to children with 99% or 100% attendance.

Holidays in Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make clear that head teachers should not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Our school's Governing Body have made the decision only to authorise term time holidays in exceptional circumstances. Applications for term time holidays should be made by the parent with whom the child resides. It should be submitted at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed holiday accompanied by a letter explaining why holiday is requested. A letter, clearly stating the decision whether to authorise or not, will be sent to each parent/carer. Should holiday be taken when it hasn't been authorised, the school will consider imposing a fine as directed by Essex County Council.

Pupils who keep a child away for longer than was agreed

If a parent /carer keeps a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised and a letter sent to each parent/carer advising such.

Pupils who fail to return to school within ten school days

If a pupil fails to return to school within ten days immediately following the date they were due to return, it could be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and the school will follow our safeguarding procedures and Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. After a minimum of ten days, if both the school and Local Authority have made all reasonable checks and there is no justifiable reason why the child has not returned to school, they can be removed from roll but only with the agreement of the Local Authority.

Parents who do not apply for leave of absence

If a parent/carer does not apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. If the school wishes to pursue the matter and request a penalty notice to be issued, a letter

will be sent to each parent/carer outlining the reason why it is our belief the child(dren) was absent for the purpose of a holiday. The letter should provide parents with a date to respond by, outlining why it was exceptional circumstances. If the parent/carer provides a rationale, the school should write again, clearly confirming whether or not the absence was authorised. If the absence remains unauthorised, a warning must be given that a penalty notice may be issued.

Penalty Notices

The decision whether or not to apply for a penalty notice is entirely at the discretion of the head teacher. If the school does decide to follow that course of action, the Local Authority requires the application for the penalty notice to be sent to them within 2 school weeks after the pupil's return to school following the unauthorised absence.

At Sheering school penalties will be issued to parents who have taken their children out of school during key periods of the school year i.e. the first 2 weeks of the school year, during the run-up to planned assessments (e.g. SATs; see school dates on the weekly newsletters and on the school website) and after long school holidays.

The registration system

The School will use manual paper registers for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity

W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Entries in paper registers must be in black ink.
All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

It is the responsibility of the class teacher, or the adult supervising the class in the teacher's absence, to ensure that registers are completed accurately, neatly and on time. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and, as such, could be used as evidence should prosecution of parents be pursued.

The Headteacher will complete regular register checks and the Home School Liaison Officer completes a monthly register sweep to highlight children whose attendance is causing a concern.

Register Security

The registers are safely stored in the school office.

Equal Opportunities

(See school's equality scheme)

All pupils (regardless of gender, cultural background, class, disability and ability) will have the opportunity to achieve the highest possible achievements without making impossible demands on them.

All children will be encouraged to value their own and other people's contributions.

For further details see the School's Equal Opportunities Policy.

September 2015