



# SAUNCEY WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

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<b>Responsible Committee</b>	<b>School Improvement Committee</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>November 2021</b>
<b>Ratified</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>
<b>Next review date</b>	<b>November 2023</b>

## **Our Mission**

'With care, support and friendship the Sauncey Wood family mission is to work with our community to welcome, educate and enrich every child, providing a personalised and excellent education where children are actively encouraged to challenge themselves and others to achieve their full potential.'

Sauncey Wood Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all students are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

## **Statutory Framework**

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

Maintaining good punctual attendance at Sauncey Wood Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents and staff. The Governors take a particularly strong view about poor attendance and lateness.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day that the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward children whose attendance is good and make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Board are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been notified by a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note, emails, rings the school or explains in person.

**Only the school can make an absence authorised.** Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent/guardian. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### **If a child is absent**

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and the School Secretary or Admin Support will contact the parent/guardian, usually by phone.

A note or email may be sent or a phone call made to the school prior to the day of absence when, for example, the child has a medical appointment.

Looked After Children are monitored closely by the LA, who ring the school daily to check attendance.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the best progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child.

Under new regulations that came into force in September, 2013, parents/carers no longer have the right to request up to 10 days leave of absence for annual holiday, nor does the Headteacher have the discretion to grant this other than in the most “**exceptional circumstances**”.

Parents must seek permission **BEFORE** booking a holiday and must give a reason, in writing, to the school as to the circumstances surrounding the need to take a leave of absence in term time. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if legitimate exceptional circumstances do exist, the school will consider granting the leave of absence.

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave previously granted in writing by the Headteacher.
- the pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'.
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- the pupil is the child of traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met.
- there is a family bereavement.
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.

- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance.

There are various circumstances where leave of absence will **not** be granted

- During the SATs period for children in Year 6
- During the “settling in” period in September
- Overlapping with the beginning or end of term
- If there is clear evidence that the holiday was booked BEFORE permission was sought.

### **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means that they will be away from school for over five days, the school will send material home in order to allow them to keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact our Attendance Improvement Officer so that arrangements can be made for that child.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

The attendance level of every child in the school is monitored on a regular basis by the School Secretary, Headteacher and the Attendance Improvement Officer attached to the school. Parents are contacted if the child’s attendance rate is below 90% and if there are concerns over the reasons for the absence. If an unsatisfactory rate of attendance continues, the school may choose to make a formal referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer.

The LA reserves the right in conjunction with the school to consider taking legal action against any parent/guardian who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Sauncey Wood Primary School offers an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken:

- A varied and flexible curriculum is offered to all pupils. Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to the pupils' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy/practice.
- Parents are regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The headteacher will make a report to the school’s governing board on attendance matters, at least annually.

- The headteacher has regular meetings with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in our celebration assembly. Children who attend school every day during a school term will put into our attendance raffle to win a prize. There will be additional certificates for any child who has 100% attendance over the whole year. Weekly class attendance is celebrated in our celebration assembly on a Friday with the class who have the highest attendance receiving an extra 10 minutes' playtime.

### **Attendance targets**

The school is required by law to set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Headteacher and governors at the annual target setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the SIP. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years and the LA target. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets. The school's current attendance target is 97%

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The Governing Board also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Rates of attendance will be reported in the annual School Profile.

The office staff are responsible for monitoring attendance and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a concern over a child's absence, they will contact the Headteacher immediately. If there is a longer term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Attendance Improvement Officer or equivalent.