

ATTENDANCE POLICY

| Review Date | Reviewer | Review Completed | Adopted | Implementation |
|----------------|------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | September 2017 | September 2017 |
| September 2018 | A Inkster | September 2018 | September 2018 | September 2018 |
| September 2019 | A Bartlett | September 2019 | September 2019 | September 2019 |
| September 2020 | A Bartlett | July 2020 | September 2020 | September 2020 |
| September 2021 | | | | |



Statement of Intent

Sacriston Academy recognises the importance of good attendance and aims to ensure that all pupils achieve and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and punctuality are prerequisites to a good education and are therefore a priority to us. Sacriston Academy is committed to providing a full and inclusive educational experience for all pupils.

For our pupils to reach their full potential we need strong and consistent support from parents. In practice this means ensuring pupils attend regularly, on time and in a suitable condition to learn.

Irregular attendance will place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a school, therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of regular attendance and punctuality. In this matter, the partnership between school and home is vitally important.

School Attendance – The Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944 – Establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Pupil Registration Regulations 1995 (amended) gives school discretionary powers to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 (amended) provides the new registration categories of

Approved Educational Activity. (Amended Regulation 3(2), (3), (5) of the Education Regulations 1995).

Education Act 1996 places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

Education Act 2002 (Section 53) enables an overall absence target to be set, covering authorised and unauthorised absence, supporting school improvement and raising community awareness of the issue (September 2003).

The 2007 Penalty Notice Regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school, or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must currently pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to the 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. From 1

September 2013 parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows LAs to act faster on prosecution.

School Ethos

Sacriston Academy is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils.

We believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell. We will endeavour to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in our partnership with parents/carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents or Carers

The school wishes to work with parents/carers to achieve good attendance. The minimum target attendance for all pupils is 96.5%.

Our Home-School Agreement emphasises the importance of attendance and punctuality and the expectations of parents and children in supporting the school's policy.

Regular attendance includes children being punctual.

Parents/carers should contact the school on the morning of the first day of a pupil's absence. They should state the reason for their child's absence and also the date they are expected to return to school. Information from parents/carers regarding absences are received in good faith. Only the Headteacher has the power to authorise the absence.

When an appointment has been made for medical reasons (these should be made outside of school time when possible), the appointment card should be shown in advance to the Class Teacher and a school leave of absence request form submitted.

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the School Prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meeting held each year for children about to enter the Reception class the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always stated along with other school routines.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons. The target attendance for all pupils is a minimum 95%.

The Governing Body

The governing body has responsibility for school attendance and will be familiar with current legislation.

They will be acquainted with the registration system in the school.

They will request the Headteacher to report on attendance at each termly governing body meeting in order to monitor attendance.

Governors will participate in training on attendance issues and will form part of the School Attendance Panel when required.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher has the day to day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets the legal requirements for all aspects of school attendance, set required targets for attendance, reduce unauthorised absences and will publish attendance figures.

The Headteacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of the Home-School Agreement.

Deputy Headteacher

The Deputy Headteacher has a specific Attendance role and will take responsibility for overseeing registration procedures, monitoring overall attendance, collation and reporting of attendance information. They will be responsible for ensuring that class teachers keep registers in a correct manner, will meet regularly with the education welfare officer and will discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school's monitoring system. They will also be responsible for supporting class teachers in following up all attendance issues.

The Class Teacher

Class teachers have a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in school. They will notify senior leaders of any attendance concerns after their efforts have failed to achieve an improvement.

Class teachers will be responsible for welcoming pupils back to school following their return from absence. They will also notify other staff members if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties, allowing for confidentiality.

Holidays

As a result of recent amendments that have been made to the Department for Education's Pupil Registration Regulations (April 2013) to address attendance issues, the governors have agreed to adopt a standard practice of **not authorising any family holidays in term time**. If parents/carers, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school for a holiday then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This can lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Service and the possible issue of a 'fixed penalty notice' amounting to £60 per child per parent/carer which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 42 days. These have been introduced as part of the government's drive to improve attendance.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Absence from school under exceptional circumstances is different from taking a holiday in term time and might include:

- A special one-off family event (e.g. 30th wedding anniversary of grandparents, parents' wedding etc.) ... but that doesn't happen on an annual basis
- A funeral which requires the family to travel some distance
- The receipt of a special award which means the family need to travel some distance and stay overnight
- A parent who has the potential for a new job and wants to take their family with them to see if they like the area
- A parent who is in the Armed Forces might be considered.

Parents who have set holidays due to their work patterns are not considered to be exceptional circumstances.

Response to Absences

When a pupil is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to Child Protection, Behaviour and Discipline and Anti-Bullying policies. The class teacher will have a particular role in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole school staff.

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern with the deputy Headteacher who will then work out patterns of absence and lates and if necessary contact the school's educational welfare officer.

Attendance Review

The school office manager will process attendance data and provide up-to-date information on class and individual returns. The Headteacher and deputy Headteacher will be informed of any subsequent findings.

The Head of Attendance for North East Learning Trust will meet with the Deputy Headteacher to discuss attendance issues and offer advice and support.

Rewards

The school officer manager will provide the Headteacher and deputy Headteacher with weekly class attendance data and the Headteacher will reward the two classes (one in each key stage) with the best overall attendance each week.

Children who achieve good attendance will be rewarded at the end of every term at a special presentation assembly. The Headteacher and deputy Headteacher will analyse the attendance data provided by the school office manager and reward those children with attendance rates of 95% and above. Children who achieve attendance of 95%-97% will receive a bronze award, children with 97.1%-99.9% silver, and children with 100% gold.

Truancy

All staff are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, who then contacts the parent and the educational welfare officer. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Headteacher talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

Partnerships

At Sacriston Academy we will discuss pupils and contact parents if there are concerns, likewise within the partnership that we have with parents and pupils, we expect to be contacted by parents if they have any concerns about their child's attendance, or any other matters. The school will arrange to meet with parents who have concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in the interest of their child.