



# **Scargill Church of England Primary School**

## **Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy**

Approved: November 2021

Review date: November 2021

Signed by:

Mrs Hallsworth

Head of School

Date: November 2021

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Mrs Webster

Chair of governors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: November 2021

## *Contents*

### Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Definitions
4. Training of staff
5. Pupil expectations
6. Absence procedures
7. Contact information
8. Attendance officer
9. Lateness
10. Term-time leave
11. Truancy
12. Missing children
13. Religious observances
14. Appointments
15. Young carers
16. Monitoring

Scargill Church of England Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:-

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## **1.**

## **2. Legal framework**

2.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)

2.2. This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2016) 'School attendance'

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

- 3.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school.
- 3.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 3.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- 3.4. The Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school.
- 3.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 3.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 3.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- 3.9. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

#### **4. Definitions**

- 4.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
  - **"Absence"** as:
    - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
    - Not attending school for any reason.
  - 
  - An **"authorised absence"** as:
    - 1.1.
      - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
      - Medical or dental appointments which **unavoidably** fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
      - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
      - An absence due to a family emergency.

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- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - 1.2.
    - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
    - Truancy before or during the school day.
    - Absences which have never been properly explained.
    - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
    - Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
    - Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
    - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  - 1.3.
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason.**

## 5. **Training of staff**

- 5.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 5.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 5.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## 6. **Pupil expectations**

- 6.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96 percent throughout the year.

## 7. **Absence procedures**

- 7.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- 7.2. Parents are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns with a explanation of why they were absent.
- 7.3. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
- 7.4. A text will be sent to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first morning that they do not attend school.

- 7.5. This will be followed up, if necessary with a phone call and ultimately a safe and well check.
- 7.6. If a pupil's absence drops below 90 percent, the Local Authority may be informed and the child monitored.
- 7.7. If improvement is not seen, parents will be contacted and a formal meeting may be arranged.

## **8. Contact information**

- 8.1. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 8.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.
  - 1.4.

## **9. Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

- 9.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the Local Authority who will attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.
- 9.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Local Authority has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

1.5.

## **10. Lateness**

- 10.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 10.2. The school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 10.3. Registers are marked by 9.05am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 10.4. The register closes at 9.20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 10.5. After lunch, registers are marked by 1.20pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 10.6. The register closes at 1.20pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 10.7. Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- 10.8.

## **11. Term-time leave**

- 11.1. At Scargill Church of England Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 11.2. The Head of School is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 11.3. The Head of School is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the Head of School will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 11.4. The Head of School will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Head of School.
- 11.5. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 11.6. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
  - Immediately before and during assessment periods
  - When a pupil's attendance record shows any [unauthorised absence](#)
  - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 11.7. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head of School, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## **12. Truancy**

- 12.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 12.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 12.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.55am and 1.15pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 12.4. If truancy is suspected, the Head of School or most senior member of staff is notified, who will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

## **13. Missing children**

- 13.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day.

13.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Head of School or most senior member of staff immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Head of School or most senior member of staff.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - All other internal spaces
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be informed.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

13.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any special educational needs, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

13.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

13.5. The Head of School will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

13.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.



- 13.7. The Head of School will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 13.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- 13.9. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

#### **14. Religious observances**

- 14.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 14.2. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

#### **15. Appointments**

- 15.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 15.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 15.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

#### **16. Young carers**

- 16.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 16.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 16.3. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

#### **17.16. Monitoring**

- 17.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year in conjunction with the Local Authority.

## Appendix 1

**Morning Protocol**

Time		
8.40	Gates unlocked. Daily rotation of Hallam way and Rec gates	Phil
	Children walk into school via normal point of entry.	Supervised by SLT
8.55	Register taken	Class teacher
9.00-9.05	Rec gate locked first	Phil
	Hallam way gate locked immediately after	
	Children arriving in class registered as present	Class teacher
9.05	Register closes	Class teacher
9.05-9.20	All children now recorded as L	Admin team
	All children entering via reception recorded as late.	
9.20 +	All children arriving from this time, until the end of the session recorded as U	
Admin Team		
Before 9.00	Take parent absence messages	Nominated member of admin team
By 9.30	Text sent to first parental contact.	
By 10.00	Phone call to first parental contact.	
	Any non-responses will necessitate calls to other contact numbers.	
By 10.30	Conduct a safe and well check (S&W)	2 members of staff (including most senior member of staff on site)
Consideration will be made to conduct an earlier S&W check if there are safeguarding concerns about the family.		
If no response to S&W	Call 999 or 101	

Appendix 2

<b><u>Monitoring of Attendance Concerns</u></b>
Attendance reviewed termly and analysed by LBP (KC)
Where attendance falls below 90% a letter A may be issued, dependant on reasons for absence, along with a copy of 'School attendance – the law' DCC leaflet.  This may be followed up with letter B.
A Penalty Notice fine may be sent to the parent of a child who has unauthorised absences from school
Early Help Assessment Completed
Further advice sought from external agencies.

## *Child Not Collected from School Protocol*

### **1.1 Statement of intent**

We believe it is essential to ensure all pupils are safe when they leave school at the end of the day. We appreciate that, for many families, arrangements need to be flexible and it may be that several people care for the child after school.

Our intention is to:

- Keep pupils safe.
- Ensure all staff members are aware of the correct procedures for the end of the school day.
- Make parents aware of the expectations regarding collecting children.
- Highlight the importance of parent-school communication.

### **18. Late collection procedure**

Parents will notify the school at the first possible opportunity if they believe they will be late to collect their child.

The school allows for a 10-minute window for late arrival.

If a pupil has not been collected 10 minutes after the specified collection time, a staff member will escort them to the school office before trying to contact the pupil's parents.

If the pupil's parents cannot be reached via the contact number provided, emergency contacts will be phoned.

The school will continue to try and contact the parents.

The pupil will join the after-school care club and the parents are liable to pay the cost for this service.

All staff members, including those in charge of after-school activities, are aware of the school's internal procedure for late collection and will ensure that the situation is resolved whilst causing as little distress as possible to the pupil.

Pupils will be supervised at all times, ensuring appropriate staffing ratios are met – including those outlined in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' where necessary.

Where appropriate, a staff member will sensitively ask the pupil whether they are aware of any reason that could account for their parents being late.

If the parents cannot be contacted, the **non-collection procedure** will be followed.

## **19. Recurrence of late collection**

The length and frequency of late collections are monitored by the school.

Concerns regarding a pupil's safety and welfare associated with late collection will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will keep a record of incidents on myconcern where parents are late with no reasonable explanation.

In the event of recurrence of late collection, where no reasonable explanation has been given, a letter will be sent home to the parents inviting them to a discussion about their circumstances.

Parents will be made aware of the arrangements that may be put in place if they continue to collect their child late.

## **20. Non-collection procedure**

The school will continue to try and contact the parents and named emergency contacts in the event of a non-collection.

A detailed record of the action taken, and the calls made, will be kept.

If no contact has been made with the pupil's parents or emergency contacts, and no one has arrived to collect the child within an hour since the original collection time –children's services and the police will be contacted.

A member of staff will stay with the pupil until children's services arrives.

Once the situation has been resolved, the reason the circumstances arose will be established and noted, and steps to avoid recurrence will be taken by the school and parents.

## Letter A

Dear XXX,

### Attendance Concern

Child: XXX XXX DOB: XX/XX/XX Registered pupil at XXXXXX XX XXX

Attendance: XX%

I am writing to raise concerns about your child's attendance at school. Good school attendance is very important and will ensure that your child gets the best start in life.

I would like to make you aware that we are available to support you with any attendance issues. In addition, the school health advisor/nurse is available should you have any health concerns regarding your child.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and we may invite you to meet with us at school if their attendance continues to decline or there are further causes for concern. Any pupil whose attendance is at or below 90% is classed as persistently absent by the Department for Education.

I must also advise you that as a parent / carer it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends the school they are registered at regularly. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against you. It is imperative that you contact school each morning that your child is absent.

In cases where attendance continues to be below the school target, use of legal sanctions will be considered.

Yours sincerely,

**Name**

## Letter B

<<Name of Parent/Carer>>

<<Date>>

Dear <<Parent name>>

RE: <<Pupil Name>> DOB: <<DOB>> School: <<School>>

I enclose a copy of your child's attendance record and remind you that as a parent/carer of a child who is a registered pupil at this school, you hold legal responsibility for ensuring your child attends school regularly.

All **name of LA** schools share the government's determination to raise levels of pupil attendance and achievement in order to ensure the best possible start in life for our children.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 an authorised officer of the City Council has the power to issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice for each of their children who fails to attend school regularly. A Penalty Notice is an early deterrent which is intended to prevent more extended periods of unauthorised absence developing.

Each such Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution.

Should your child incur any further unauthorised absence after the date of this letter, then further action, including the issue of a penalty notice or referral to City Solicitors for consideration of a prosecution, may be taken.

Any such penalty notice or prosecution may relate to your child's attendance record both prior to and subsequent to this letter.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available from our school and if you have any specific queries in relation to this letter, please contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,



# 1. REFERRAL CRITERIA AND CHECKLIST FOR UNSATISFACTORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

**PUPIL NAME:**

**SCHOOL:**

All cases will need to meet at least one of the following minimum criteria for unauthorised absence before a case can be accepted for investigation/consideration of possible legal intervention:

- Two consecutive weeks of unauthorised absence

OR

- Secondary schools: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5 week period.
- Primary schools: 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5 week period, or 10 sessions of authorised absence in a 5 week period where no medical evidence has been received.
- Persistent absence threshold met within the last 12 months and where there is a minimum of 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 5 week period.

## ATTENDANCE MONITORING CHECKLIST FOR CASES REFERRED BY SCHOOL

**An attendance printout should accompany the referral**

Child's current attendance:

Number of unauthorised sessions over last 5 school weeks (from pupils attendance print out)	
Is pupil persistently absent (90% or below):	
<b>WHAT WORK HAS SCHOOL DONE SO FAR</b>	
Telephone contact with parent to establish reasons for absence (dates):	
Letter contact with parent, offering support and explaining concerns/ consequences if unauthorised absence continues (dates of letters):	
Home visits (dates):	
Letter contact with parent asking for future medical evidence of absence (date of letter):	
Parent invited into school to discuss attendance concerns (dates of meetings):	
Outcome of meeting(s):	

Early Help Assessment completed:	
Parent placed on a school attendance panel (date of meeting):	
Was a Family Support Worker (EWL) present at the school attendance panel meeting?	
Outcome of panel process:	
Other agencies involved:	
Signature:	Date: