



## **Attendance Policy**

Version date: Summer 25

Review date: Summer 26

Vision
Shenley Primary School places a high priority on achieving standards where excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential, children cannot learn if they are absent from school. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Regular, punctual attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working alongside parents to ensure the school achieves a minimum of 96% whole school attendance.
Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.</li> <li>To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.</li> <li>To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.</li> </ul> <p>Good school attendance assists children to achieve the following 5 outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be healthy</li> <li>To stay safe</li> <li>To enjoy and achieve</li> <li>To make a positive contribution</li> <li>To achieve economic well-being</li> </ul>
Responsibilities
Attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – parents, pupils, Governors and all staff. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

#### **Parents/Carer:**

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- On the first day of absence, notify the school that their child is absent or late, by phone call to the school office or via email.
- Be aware of their child's absence levels via the Arbor app/portal.
- Complete a request form for a leave of absence in term time for exceptional circumstances. This must be completed prior to the first day of leave of absence.
- Share medical evidence for 3 or more days absence due to illness, or at the request of the School.
- Meet with the/or a member of the school 'Attendance team' when necessary.
- Are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance via newsletters, Headteacher blog, parent's evenings, school prospectus, transition meetings, etc.

#### **Teaching staff:**

- To complete registers correctly and keep them up-to-date at all times.
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the 'Attendance team'.
- To remind parents that absence must be explained. If the absence remains unexplained, liaise with the office staff to ensure that there is an explanation.
- To make parents aware of concerns over their child's attendance and the impact on their learning.

### **The School Office Staff:**

- To maintain attendee and absence records electronically.
- To request explanations for absence if none have been forthcoming.
- To maintain a system of monitoring, alongside the 'Attendance team', for children who have regular absences in order to aid monitoring by the School and an Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO). To telephone parents on the first day of absence for all children who are absent.
- To notify a member of the 'Attendance team' when an individual child has a significant or unexplained period of absence.
- To attend meetings with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) and the 'Attendance team' to discuss concerns regarding attendance for individual children.

### **Attendance Team (HT, DHT, Office staff):**

- To monitor good attendance at the school.
- To consider authorisation for exceptional circumstance requests.
- To work with parents and children directly in supporting poor attendance.
- Monitor official registers and take actions where concerns have been identified.
- Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance record where appropriate.
- To maintain a system of monitoring, alongside the 'Attendance team', for children who have regular absences in order to aid monitoring by the Headteacher, DHT and Attendance Monitor Improvement Officer (AIO).
- To monitor attendance through analysing 'persistent absentees' reports.
- Inform Governors of attendance records and provide half-termly reports.
- To liaise with the Attendance Improvement Service in taking action for any child whose attendance is causing concern.
- To maintain attendance as a high profile issue with parents (e.g. through regular reminders in the school newsletter/blogs/school website).
- To celebrate attendance successes.

### **The Governors:**

- To receive attendance updates from the Headteacher.
- To work with the 'Attendance team' in supporting attendance.
- Nominate a named Governor for Attendance.

Registration and Late procedures
Registers will be marked promptly at 8.45am and then again at 12.45pm for the Early Years and 1.00pm for Key Stage One and Two. School's registers are completed on Arbor. Pupils, who arrive late (after the doors close at 8.55am), must be signed in at the office by the adult accompanying them. The reason for lateness is requested. A member of the office staff will update the register with their correct mark. If a pupil is persistently late, the Headteacher/Deputy Head or member of the 'Attendance team' will contact the parents by telephone or letter. Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged as parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.
Absence
Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school, either via email or by telephone. The Headteacher will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence. Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sickness</li></ul> In the majority of cases, a parents' communication explaining their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern (we expect medical evidence to be provided for absences of more than 3 days). In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

- Unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours).
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement.

If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 10.00am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted by a member of staff.

#### **Term time holidays**

Children attending Shenley Primary School are not allowed absence for term time holidays. The School will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances. Parents may choose to complete a 'Leave of absence' form (see appendix A) explaining why they are removing their child during term time. This should be returned to the school office. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised. Any Absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention will be coded as Unauthorised – (O), Family holiday not agreed or (G).

#### **Penalty notices**

At Shenley Primary School, we expect parents to work with us to address poor attendance. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

#### **Strategies for Celebrating Good Attendance**

- An attendance cup will be awarded each week to the class with the highest percentage attendance. This will happen during celebration assembly.
- Children ranging from 98-100% attendance will be celebrated with a certificate and school-based activity at the end of the school year during a celebration assembly.
- Where appropriate, individual 'Good attendance' and 'Improved attendance' certificates are sent home to acknowledge positive attendance.
- Weekly whole school and class attendance is shared via the school website and on the monthly newsletter.

## **Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time.**

**Dear Parent/Carer,**

All schools **by law** must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance relating to school attendance. They must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code, and follow the criteria set out within the guidance. The statutory guidance states:

- ☐ A leave of absence **must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance.**
- ☐ A leave of absence must be requested **in advance** by a parent who the pupil normally lives with
- ☐ Schools must judge **each application individually**, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.
- ☐ Where a leave of absence is granted, **the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.**
- ☐ **A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**
- ☐ A school **cannot** grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted.
- ☐ Where this guidance refers to a parent, the school and/or local authority will need to decide which adult(s) is most appropriate. Generally, parents include:
  - ☐ All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
  - ☐ All those who have parental responsibility.
  - ☐ Those who have day to day responsibility for the child.

Please note all schools are expected to regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.

## Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time.

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child, a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below (further information can be attached if required).

<b>Pupil's full name</b>	
<b>Pupil's Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Year Group</b>	
<b>Class / Registration</b>	
<b>Pupil's full address and postcode</b>	

<b>First date of absence</b>	
<b>Last date of absence</b>	
<b>Date of return to school</b>	
<b>Number of school days absent</b>	

**Please be aware**, as per our school's attendance policy and the Hertfordshire published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the parent the child normally lives with; and
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

**Please also note that**, if on the rare occasion circumstances are deemed exceptional by the head teacher, the duration your child is permitted to be away from school may only be determined by the head teacher.

**Reason for request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional.**  
(Further details may be attached to this form)

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**If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please detail their name/s and which school/s they attend below**

**Pupil's name, name of school and school telephone number:**


<b>Full name of person making request</b> (note requests must be made by a parent who the pupil normally lives with)	
<b>Relationship to child</b>	
<b>Full address and postcode</b> (if different from child's above)	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

## Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time. School Response

<b>Dear</b>		
<b>Copy sent to</b>		

**Re: Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time**

<b>Date of response from school</b>	
<b>Date application received by school</b>	

<b>Pupil's full name</b> <b>Pupil's Date of Birth</b> <b>Year Group, Class / Registration</b> <b>Pupil's full address and postcode</b>	
<b>Pupil's percentage attendance year to date</b> <b>Number of sessions absent this academic year (total)</b> <b>Number of which are authorised</b> <b>Number of which are unauthorised</b>	

<b>Has this pupil had any previously recorded unauthorised leave of absence?</b> <b>Was a Penalty Notice Fine requested as a result?</b> <b>Are you aware of <u>any</u> Penalty Notice Fines that the parent or parents may have previously received for this pupil and/or a sibling/child for whom they hold parental/day to day care and responsibility?</b>	
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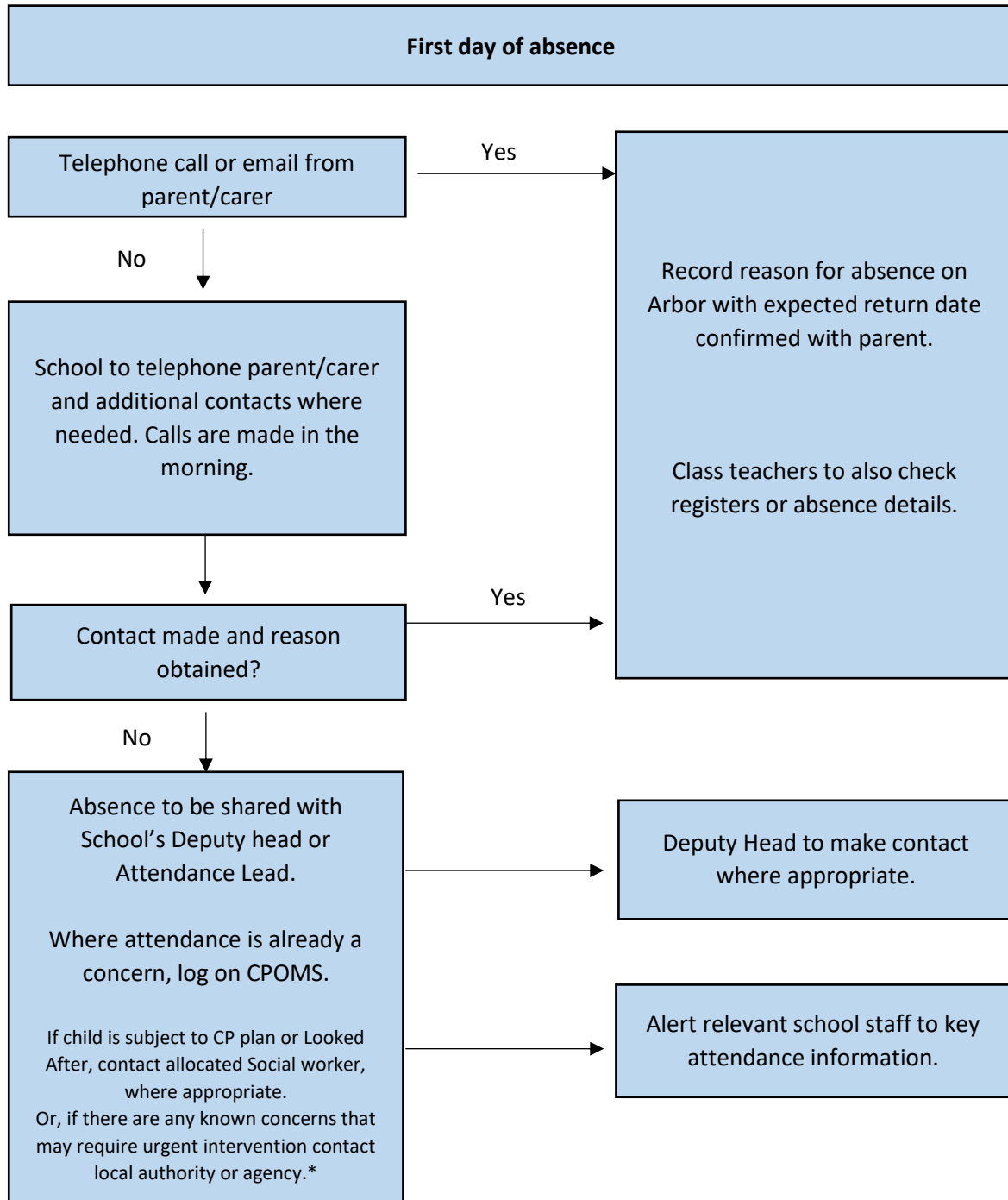
<b>School response to parent/s request for leave of absence</b>

<b>Number of requested sessions authorised</b>	
<b>Number of requested sessions unauthorised</b>	
<b>Date pupil required to return to school</b>	

<b>Headteacher Signature</b>	
<b>Headteacher Name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

## Appendix B

### Attendance: First response



***If at any point there are concerns about the safety or welfare of the pupil, follow safeguarding procedures immediately.***

*\*In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic.*



## **Appendix C**

### **When the school is worried about your child's absences**

The school monitors pupils' attendance regularly because children need to be in school to learn and make progress. When a child is absent it disrupts their learning.

The following lets you know what process we follow to ensure every child attends as much as possible. Parents/carers are encouraged to come and talk to the school at any stage of this process to discuss their concerns, difficulties or have their voice heard. The process can be stopped at any stage when attendance improves and absences decrease significantly.

<b>Each day of absence</b>	<p>The school office will call or receive a message from the parent/carer.</p> <p>If this reason is authorised there will be no further action taken.</p>
<b>When attendance falls below 93%</b>	<p>The school office may send a letter to the parent/carer on the importance of attending school.</p> <p>Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence.</p>
<b>When attendance falls below 90%</b>	<p>The parent/carer may be invited to meet someone from the attendance team in school to support their child/children's attendance.</p> <p>The school office may send a letter to the parent/carer inviting them to attend a meeting with the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher and the School Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Future absences are at risk of being unauthorised without medical evidence.</p>
<b>Where there is no improvement or up to 15 sessions* of unauthorised absence.</b>	<p>The school will send a Formal Penalty Notice Warning Letter</p>
<b>When 15* sessions of unauthorised absences occur in 2 consecutive terms</b>	<p>An application for a fixed penalty notice will be issued.</p>

\*Sessions (half days)