

Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools

Attendance Policy

2012/2013



The Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools Attendance Policy

The pyramid is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students. It recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting regular school attendance and excellent punctuality so that all young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on excellent attendance.

Aim

To promote a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality are seen as a fundamental requirement for all learners.

Objectives

To have systems and procedures in place that:

- Encourage attendance and punctuality to school and lessons
- Inform parents/carers of absences and involve them in any attendance concerns for their children
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Promote effective partnerships with the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and with any other relevant services and agencies.
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was written and will be monitored and reviewed by the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools.

Approved by staff: 24.01.13

Approved by Governing Body:

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Further Reference

Appendix A - Attendance guidance for parents and carers

Appendix B - Term time holidays

Appendix C - Application form for term time holidays

Appendix D - Persistent Absentee: first warning

Appendix E - Persistent Absentee: second warning

Appendix F - Persistent Absentee: Individual Care Plan

Appendix G - Term Time Holidays: First Penalty Notice

Appendix A - Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parent/carers at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance.
- Make sure parents/carers have access to attendance data.
- Recognise good or improving attendance.

2. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

2.1 Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

2.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and
- Participation in group activities around raising attendance.
- All PA cases are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service and the school's Education Social Worker.

3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

3.1 If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Report reason for continued absence;

3.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Worker/Education Social Worker and/or Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service; if attendance falls below 85%.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

4. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be required to sign in at the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.
- If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked in to school to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

5. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME - see Appendix B

6. ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the APSS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The table below is a guide to indicate what may happen when a student's attendance falls below a certain percentage. Previous attendance history and the time of the year will be taken into consideration.

First day absence	Phone call home
90-95% attendance	Letter home
85-90% attendance	Letter home Parental interview Action plan and set targets
Below 85% attendance	Letter home Parental interview APSO involvement Use of Action Plan/Parenting Contract by APSS Warning letter from APSO Fixed Penalty Notice

7. SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix B - Term Time Holidays

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person's future prospects and reducing absence from school continues to be a priority for the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools. Reflecting national concerns around attendance, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) issued revised guidance in October 2007 strengthening the view that as a general rule, children should not be taken out of school for the purposes of a holiday.

Time off school for family holidays is not a right, but schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family under special circumstances.

These might include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

All requests from parents for holiday absence must be made in writing to the school in advance, at least two weeks prior to the holiday being booked, using the "Application for Pupil Leave of Absence from School for a Holiday" form, which is available from the school office. The request should be sent for the attention of the headteacher and outline the specific reasons why the request meets the requirements of "special circumstances".

The school will not authorise holidays, which are requested for the following reasons:

- Availability of cheap holidays;
- Availability of the desired accommodation;
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with beginning or end of term.

The head teacher will determine if the request is reasonable. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the school will not approve any term time holiday:

- For any Key Stage 4 students (years 10 and 11).
- Any student in full time education (years Reception-9) where current attendance is less than 95%.
- Statutory exam periods.
- In the month of September

Where family holidays or extended holidays are taken without proper authorisation, the schools may respond as follows:

- The absence will be treated as unauthorised and recorded on the child's Record of Achievement.
- Parents can be given a Kirklees Penalty Notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.
- In certain circumstances, the school may delete pupils from the register who fail to return on the date they were expected back from extended leave.

Appendix C

This form has been designed to clarify the process of holiday requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education) and the LA (Local Authority).

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR A HOLIDAY		
Pupil Name:		Class:
Any other school age children:	Name(s):	School(s):
Absent from school date:		Back at school date:
Total amount of days absent from school:		
Does the holiday overlap with the beginning or end of term? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please state the reason for your travel:		
Signature of Parent/Carer:		Date:
Where a parent is unable to take holidays during the school holidays, evidence from the employer will be needed to verify this (with the exception of armed forces personnel).		
The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whether the request fits the 'special circumstances' criteria outlined by Kirklees LA and the DFE The child's attendance history (above or below 95%). The time of year (Controlled Tests, Exams or September). The length, destination and purpose of the holiday. The family circumstances and the parents' reasons for wanting to take their annual family holiday during term time. 		
Penalty Notice:		
Where the Headteacher decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct or there is a possibility that your child may be taken of the school roll.		
Office use only:		
Current attendance %		
Number of late marks:		
Number of days requested:		
Would granting this request mean attendance would fall below 95%		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Office use only:		
Signature:		Authorised: <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised: <input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons:		

Each request can only be judged on a case by case basis. You will receive a reply from school in writing.

Appendix D

Date:

Dear

Please find enclosed an absence analysis report for your child

As of (date), (child's name) has a total attendance of ___% with ___% authorised and ___% unauthorised absences. This is well below the national average attendance of 95.6% (11/12).

May I stress the importance of reducing all absences to a minimum, and of eliminating unauthorised absences altogether. By working in partnership with parents and our children, we want to encourage regular school attendance. As a parent we are sure you recognise the importance of regular attendance at school for (child's name) educational and social development. It has been shown that regular and sustained absence often leads to gaps in learning, lower attainment and social difficulties.

We would be grateful for your support in ensuring (child's name) attends school on a regular basis.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix E

Date:

Dear

Please find enclosed an absence analysis report for your child

As of (date), (child's name) has a total attendance of ___% with ___% authorised and ___% unauthorised absences. This is well below the national average attendance of 95.6% (11/12).

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We would be grateful for your support in ensuring (child's name) attends school on a regular basis. Please inform school before 9:30 a.m. if your child is sick. We will inform you whether we feel (child's name) could actually attend school or whether they should stay off. To this end we would also ask that from this date, any absence for medical reasons must be accompanied with a doctor's note in order for it to be authorised.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Appendix F

School and Parent Individual Care Plan

The aim of this contract is to work together to improve school attendance and to avoid the need for referral to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and possible legal action (penalty notice / prosecution).

Name of Pupil:	
Date of Birth:	
Date of Meeting:	
Meeting attended by:	
Overall attendance:	
Unauthorised attendance:	
Lateness:	

Discussions / Issues:
The parent / carer will:
The pupil will:
The school will:

The target for attendance during the next ___ weeks is ___%

This plan will be reviewed at the school on:
Date: _____ Time: _____

If this agreement is not followed and the target attendance figure is not met the referral will be made to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service.

Signed: (parent / carer)

Signed: (school)

Date:

Appendix G

Dear (Name of Parent/s)

Penalty Notice Warning – term time holidays

It has come to my attention thathas taken days leave in order to go on holiday from To This holiday absence was not authorised by the school.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school for a holiday, and that if a holiday is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Since September 2012, payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £60 and payment after 28 days, but within 42 days, is £120.

On this occasion I have decided not to issue a Penalty Notice against you. You should consider this letter as a warning that any further holidays taken in term-time without prior permission **will** lead to such action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher