

# South Bank Primary School



## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

### The School Day

FS2 - Y6     8.50am - 3.00pm

FS1 am     8.45am - 11.45am

FS1 pm     12pm - 3pm

## 1 Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day on time, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures.

1.2 From September 2013, parents no longer have the right to request leave of absence for their children for an annual holiday. The amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations make clear that Headteachers *may not* grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are *exceptional circumstances*.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the 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 those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which children are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school or writes a note to explain the absence.
- 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. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

## 2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason (i.e. without the permission of the school) even if the parent is supporting the absence.

## 3 If a child is absent

3.1 School operates on a first day contact system which means that if a child is absent without a reason being provided, the class teacher records the absence in the register which informs the school office who then contacts a parent or carer. This will be repeated daily until contact is made and also every third day for progress of any illness.

3.2 Parents or carers are encouraged to telephone the school on tel. **453451** by **9am** on the first day of non-attendance. If contact has not been made, when the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence.

3.3 If a child has a medical appointment, proof must be provided to the school. For example, a hospital letter, a copy of a prescription or a dental card.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the general office or Headteacher. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child. If we are unable to reach anyone by telephone, a home visit will be made.

## 4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are **really exceptional** circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. We expect parents to contact the school at least two weeks in advance.

4.2 From September 2013, parents no longer have the right to request leave of absence for their children for an annual holiday. The amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

We recognise that the employment of parents and carers can impact on choices regarding holidays; if holidays are dictated by the employer (e.g. for armed forces or emergency services personnel), rather than just availability of holidays as part of an employer's rota, this will be considered. Proof from the employer will be required.

If there are exceptional circumstances, the "Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted."

Each request will be taken on its own merits and **all** criteria will be taken into account for every request - **Proof will be required**. We use the following criteria to decide whether such requests for absence will be granted:

- Permission **will not** be given at any time in September
- Permission **will not** be given to children in Year 2 or Year 6 at any time prior to SATs (September to mid June)
- Permission **will not** be given for children who have a poor attendance or punctuality record (Usually less than 95% in the current and previous year is considered unsatisfactory)
- Permission **will not** be given for a child unless the circumstances are **really exceptional**, (e.g. extreme family circumstances) and this will have to be discussed with the Headteacher before a decision will be made.

4.3 Holiday absence taken without approval will be recorded as an unauthorised and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who will then decide, in conjunction with the Headteacher, on the appropriate action to take. This will be either a formal written warning or the issue of a penalty notice.

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 issued to each parent if paid between 1 - 21 days after issue, increasing to £120 if paid between 21 - 28 days. If payment is not received within 28 days you may be prosecuted for the offence of non-school attendance under Section 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 and could be fined up to £2500 and / or receive a prison sentence of up to three months.

## **5 Long-term absence**

5.1 When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for an extended period, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work, if appropriate.

5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for a greatly extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

5.3 Work will **not** be provided for pupils who are absent due to holidays.

## **6 Repeated absences**

6.1 The school regularly monitors the attendance and punctuality of all children. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) regularly visits the school to monitor attendance figures and discuss specific cases where attendance patterns are a cause for concern. The EWO may send a letter, or telephone the parent or carer, or may visit the home to ensure that they understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who take their child out of school when the absence has not been authorised and/or who fail to provide proof of regular absences and/or repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **7 Rewards for good attendance**

- 7.1 All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term receive a certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There is also an award for any child who has 100% attendance for a whole year. We also acknowledge children who have made a real effort to improve their attendance over time.
- 7.2 Each week, class awards for the best attendance are celebrated.

## **8 Punctuality**

- 8.1 Children are expected to come to school **on time every day** so that they can make the most of what school has to offer. Punctuality is linked to good attendance and as a result achieving their potential. We believe that it helps children develop good habits and make friends which leads to self confidence and greater success. The first part of every day is used to inform the children what is happening and is prioritised to the teaching of reading - if the children are not there we cannot teach them!
- 8.2 Late before registers close: The pod doors are locked at 9am and children will have to come into school through the front door. This will be recorded as late in the register.
- 8.3 Late after registers close: Register closes at 9.20 am. If children arrive after this time they are 30 minutes or more late, and it will be recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence. It will also be recorded on the child's attendance record.

## **9 Rewards for Punctuality**

- 9.1 Children who struggle with good punctuality are given targeted support to improve this quickly. If they achieve their weekly target then they go into a draw for a prize.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance. The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body on attendance issues in the termly Headteacher's Report. The Governing Body 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.
- 10.2 Class teachers, the general office, the pastoral co-ordinator and the Headteacher collectively monitor attendance. If the class teacher is concerned about a child's absence, they contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher.
- 10.3 A detailed report on each child's attendance is included with their annual report in order to keep their parent or carer fully informed.
- 10.4 This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.