



All Semley School policies apply to year R to 6 inclusively or Semley School Staff	
Name of Policy	Attendance Policy
Agreed by the Governing Body	30/01/2023
Policy published (including on website)	30/01/2023
Latest revision	January 2023
Next review (date)	January 2025

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Member of staff responsible for Attendance: Abi Carlyle-Clarke (Head Teacher)

Governors also have responsibility for overseeing the attendance policy: Briony Brickell (Chair)

At Semley CE VA Primary School we know that for a child to get the best out of their school life regular and consistent attendance is vital. This includes impact on attainment, their wellbeing and chances as they move through school. Regular school attendance is the basis for creating lifelong learners and enables children to reach their full potential.

We are committed to providing a high quality education to all of our pupils and strive to create an environment that makes pupils feel valued and welcome.

Our children will gain the greatest benefit from their education if their attendance at school is regular and punctual. It is the responsibility of both parents and the school community to promote regular and punctual school attendance.

This policy represents our commitment to supporting the children at Semley CE VA Primary to achieve 100% attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. This will include the strategies that the school will undertake to support good attendance alongside any sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed.

The policy will be reviewed and updated in line with current legislation and guidance.

In May 2022 the DfE published new guidance “Working together to improve school attendance: guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.” This became effective as guidance from September 2022 and is likely to be statutory from September 2023. The guidance makes it clear that improving attendance is everyone’s business. DfE guidance states that attendance below 90% is considered persistent absence. At Semley CE VA Primary we aim to work with the families to ensure that a child’s attendance is the highest it can be. Aims of the policy

- Ensure that children will make the best they can of their educational opportunities by attending regularly and punctually ready to learn
- Semley CE VA Primary School has a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- Semley CE VA Primary School will have a consistent framework within which to improve the attendance of pupils
- Ensure that as a school we are fulfilling the attendance statutory rights as laid out by the DfE and LA

The attendance ladder below illustrates the impact that absence can have on a child’s education.

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

Attendance Ladder



There are two main categories of absence:

- **Authorised absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised absence:** when the school has not received any reason for the absence or has not approved the child's absence after a parental request.

Semley CE VA Primary will encourage, praise and recognise good attendance.

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents this means registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school may be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for prosecution in the magistrates' court.

To avoid this happening we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

Responsibility of the school:

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school parents and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations of what is required to secure excellent attendance for pupils at our school.

It is the responsibility of the school to support the attendance of the pupils and to manage concerns or issues that are leading to non-attendance.

The school should:

- Have a clear attendance policy on the website that staff, parents and pupils understand and that has been agreed by the Governors
- Ensure that there is a long-term culture of high attendance throughout the school
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed – these are legal documents and will be completed twice a day
- Ensure that there is a daily process which follows up absence which is understood by those taking responsibility for it
- Ensure there is a dedicated Senior member of staff who is responsible for monitoring attendance, the Head Teacher is responsible for this
- Ensure that the school has a knowledge of those who may be at risk of poor attendance and to be able to work sensitively and reflectively with the parents and pupils to solve issues
- Ensure that the school can signpost parents to appropriate support and also work with partners from multi-agencies if required
- Ensure that there is a working relationship with the LA if legal intervention is required
- Ensure that a wider knowledge of the school in the local area where siblings may attend also to have a common thread of effective practice
- Ensure that all pupils including those with SEND, medical conditions or who are disadvantaged have the same opportunities to maximise attendance
- Ensure that social workers are notified if there are any concerns about attendance

Our school attendance target is 97%. This means that we are expecting each pupil to have at least 97% attendance.

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day. At Semley CE VA Primary School the register is taken at 8:45am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 1pm. The registers will remain open in the morning in the classroom for 10 minutes until 8:55am. Pupils arriving after 8:45am children must be brought to the office by an adult to sign into the late book kept at reception. Registers will close at 9:15am. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised absent. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken. We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A pupil's attendance falls below 97% (reports are run monthly)
- A pupil has more than 3 weeks in a term where they haven't achieved full attendance (In Wiltshire there are 6 terms in an academic year)
- A pupil has more than 4 recorded lates in a term
- A pupil has a regular pattern of absence

Responsibility of parents:

It is the responsibility of parents to work with the school to ensure that children are attending school regularly and ready to learn. Parents can encourage good attendance by making sure that your child gets enough sleep and gets up in time in the morning. Establishing a strong morning routine that works for your family will really help. We ask that your child comes to school properly dressed and equipped for the day. Create a positive mind set around the school day to ensure that your child feels ready for the day ahead.

Parents should:

- Ensure that children come into school every day, on time, appropriately dressed and in a fit condition to learn
- Ensure that they work in partnership with the school to help child understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance and to take an active interest in the child's school career
- Ensure that they work in partnership with other agencies should they be required to resolve issues of non-attendance which may include engaging with more formal support if it is offered
- Ensure that they have notified the school by 9am latest if their child is unexpectedly absent and that they stay in touch with the school if the absence persists
- Ensure that as far as possible medical, dental, or other appointments are not organised during the school day
- Ensure that forms are submitted for a leave of absence well in advance. Each request will be considered individually and should meet the circumstance of being exceptional if authorisation is being considered

If there are concerns about attendance then we would welcome a conversation to help you as parents to see what we can do to support both you and your child.

The Local Authority should:

- Track local attendance
- Have a school attendance Support Team which provides support to all schools free of charge
- Offer communication and advice to schools
- Offer target support meetings to be held termly where schools can discuss any attendance issues they may be having
- Offer multi-disciplinary support for families
- Offer legal intervention should this be necessary
- Offer support for children with a Social Worker

Punctuality

8:30am: children are welcomed into school

8:45am: registration takes place and main gates locked – if children are late then they need to report to the office with an adult and sign into pupil late book

8:50am: Lessons or assembly commence

8:55am: children will be marked as late on the register

9:15am: the office will follow up on any children who are not in school if no information has come from parents/carers. If we cannot contact the parent or carer then the school will follow the 'Missing Children from Education' policies and procedures which will involve contacting the Education Welfare Officer.

Collection of children

We ask that you collect your child between 3:10pm and 3:20pm in the afternoon. If the parent/carer is going to be late then that needs to be clearly communicated with the school as soon as possible. If the child needs to be collected by an adult not on the regular pick up list then this needs to be communicated to the Office on the morning of the change except in exceptional circumstances. We will only release children to parents/carers or persons mentioned on the designated persons list which is held in each classroom. If a child is not collected on time they will wait in the front hall and will be supervised by a member of staff until a parent/carer collects.

Regular poor attendance

Persistent absence is defined as when the attendance of a particular child falls below 90%. This equates to a child missing 19 days or more during the school year. This will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

- The parent/carer may be asked to provide medical evidence to support the child's absence
- In the circumstance when the child has persistent low attendance the school (usually the Head Teacher) will contact the parent to discuss the matter and see if there is any support that could be put in place
- If the attendance continues to be poor then the parent/carer will be invited in to an attendance meeting
- If attendance is not improving the Education Welfare Officer will be informed

Role of Welfare officer

The Education Welfare Officer has a duty to implement statutory duties relating to absence and attendance. They also have a responsibility to discuss with the school about the Attendance Policy. Any concerns about attendance will ultimately be referred to the education Welfare Officer.

Penalty notices

If the attendance continues to be below where it is expected then the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice. Please see below for the information from the Local Authority website:

A penalty notice is an alternative to you being taken to court by the local authority. If your child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the school will inform our Education Welfare Service who may issue a penalty notice for each child to each parent. Anyone who has day to day care of a child is considered a 'parent' and legally responsible for making sure the child attends school, this could be a step parent or a parent not living at the child's home address.

What is the cost?

- The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. The penalty is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days
- If you do not pay the fine within 28 days we have no option but to prosecute you in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child.

Holidays in term time/leave of absence

In accordance with DfE guidance the leave of absence for holidays during school time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence form must be filled in and submitted to school. Please see below for the guidance from the Local authority:

You do not have a legal right to take your children out of school. It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If you do not ask their permission in advance, or they do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Headteacher's may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Family holidays are not generally considered to be an exceptional circumstance. You must make any requests for leave of absence in advance and you must be the parent the child normally lives with. It is important to give the Headteacher as much information as possible when applying for a leave of absence.

Other considerations of the Attendance policy

- The school will use up to date national and regional data to benchmark Semley's data.
- Establish procedures for re-integrating long absences
- Look at differentiation and flexibility in the curriculum where issues have been identified
- Have a clear procedure for school transfer to secondary to help with continuing good attendance after the transfer

Additional documents

This document should be read in conjunction with:

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The School's Admissions Policy

The SEN information and SEN policy

DfE and additional policies

See links on Attendance page