



Little Sutton Primary School Pupil Attendance Policy

1. Aims of this Policy

- To maintain and improve rates of attendance
- To monitor individual absence records
- To ensure unauthorised absences are minimised or eradicated

2. Roles & Responsibilities

- The 1944 Education Act placed a duty on parents or persons with parental responsibility to ensure that their child attends school and that they arrive at school on time.
- It is the responsibility of the school and Local Education Authority to ensure that children of statutory school age receive an efficient and suitable full time education. It is the responsibility of the school to publish term dates for all parents.

3. Systems

- The School operates the Facility ePortal electronic register system
- Registers are called at the start of every morning and afternoon session
- Registers are closed at 9.00 a.m. and 1.30 p.m.
- All pupils arriving after those times are marked as late

4. Procedures for Registration

Morning

- Children arrive at school for 8.45 a.m. when members of staff are on playground duty.
- The teacher will blow the whistle and children will line up to come into school. The external doors are then closed.
- Any latecomers should report to the Main Office to be signed in the Late Book.

Afternoon

- Reception– Lunchtime supervisors will blow whistle and children will line up at 1.05 p.m. to be taken to the classrooms. Registers will be taken at 1.10 p.m. when the afternoon session begins.
- Key Stage 1 – Lunchtime supervisors will blow whistle and children will line up at 1.10 p.m. to be taken to the classes. Registers will be taken at 1.15 p.m. when the afternoon session begins.
- Key Stage 2 – Lunchtime supervisors will blow whistle and children will line up at 1.20 p.m. to be taken to the classes. Registers will be taken at 1.25 p.m. when the afternoon session begins.
- Children who go home for lunch must return to school by at least 5 minutes before their class has register taken.
- Any latecomers should report to the Main Office to be signed in the Late Book.

5. Procedures for Reporting Absence

- Parents are requested to telephone, email or visit the school office on the first day of a child's absence to give the reason for the absence.
- Parents should send in a letter or email on the day the child returns to school confirming the reason for the absence.
- If the school has not been informed of the reason for absence on the first day of absence the school office will follow up the absence.

6. Unauthorised Absences

- The teacher will authorise absences only if there is a letter or a message from the office
- The teacher will send pro forma letter to parents of pupils with unauthorised absence.
- The office will list all unauthorised absences once per month to be followed up by the Deputy Head Teacher

7. Pupils Causing Concern

- Each class teacher will be given a list by the office of any pupils whose attendance causes concern
- Teachers should report to the Deputy Head Teacher any concerns
- The office will commission a monthly absence report for these children
- The Deputy Head Teacher will follow up all concerns with parents or Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

8. Pupils Causing Special Concern

- The Class Teacher is required to report absence on a daily basis.
- This is in extreme cases only
- The school will follow up the absence on a daily basis.

9. Publication of the Policy to Parents

- The policy will be published on the school website.
- Copies will be available from the school office.

10. Leave of Absence Arrangements

- From 1st September 2013 amendments to the Education(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Head Teachers may not authorise leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If the request is considered to be exceptional circumstances, it is the Head Teacher who determines the number of days a child can be away if the leave is granted. Birmingham City Council provide clear guidance on the procedures to follow in the 'Birmingham City Council Leave in Term Time Guidance for Schools and Academies'.
- Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 day off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. The school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- When parents request permission to take their child out of school during term time where there are exceptional circumstances an application form should be completed and submitted at least 2 weeks before the requested.
- Parents must contact the school and wait for the outcome of the application before booking flights or leaving the country even when unforeseen events occur e.g. family bereavements.
- The school will operate a formal process of application and may request an interview with parents / carer. If the leave is granted a Home School Contract will be issued stating the date of return and this must be agreed and signed by the parent.
- As part of their application for leave in term time in exceptional circumstances, parents/carers will be expected to demonstrate a willingness to make arrangements that cause the least disruption to their children's learning.
- The Head Teacher and Governing Body are within their rights to turn applications down and refuse authorisation for parents /carers to take their children out of school during term time.
- Such a decision will have been made in the best interests of the pupil's educational progress and attainment and with due regard to their previous attendance record.

11 **Circumstances under which leave may, or may not be granted**

- If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence. Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travel time, not extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- School will consider the needs of families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- The School will make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities as necessary.
- Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis.
- The HT may on rare occasions make a judgement that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term time.
- The following list is a guide to the exceptional circumstances when leave may be granted
 - Death of a parent or sibling of the pupil
 - Life threatening or critical illness of a parent or sibling of the pupil
 - Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
 - Leave for armed services personnel who are prevented by operational dates to take their leave at any other time
 - Leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within last 6 months and supported by documentation from previous school)
- The Head Teacher will also take into account the following circumstances:
 - the pupils current absence record
 - the number of previous similar requests
 - the year group the pupil is in
 - proximity of major tests/exams
 - the time of the academic year proposed
 - the duration of the absence and its impact on continuity of learning

Legal Guidance to Parents *Please refer to Appendix 1*

- Parents should be advised that if they take leave in term time which is not authorised, they may be served with a penalty notice by the Local Authority which may result in legal action via the Court.
- The school will record the number and frequency of leave of absence throughout a pupil's school career in order to assess the potential impact on a pupil's education of any proposed further term time leave.
- Failure to agree a home/school contract, or non-return by the agreed date, places the parents/carers at risk of being issued a penalty notice or the pupil at risk of losing his/her school place.

12. Promoting Good Attendance

- All pupils attending every day will be given a special certificate at the end of the academic year.

Approved by Governing Body 12th July 2016

To be reviewed: July 2017

Little Sutton Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, expects its staff and volunteers to do the same

Appendix 1

Legal Guidance for parents

It is essential for children to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that children can reach their full potential. To achieve this, children need to attend school every day. We are sure you would not jeopardise your children's academic progress by taking them away during term time.

The importance of school attendance is such the law has now changed and Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional. This is in line with Birmingham Local Authority's 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.

For example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child; nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from School. The Head Teacher will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teachers authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record