Attendance Handbook

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Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial for students to achieve optimal learning outcomes. At The Southover Partnership, we prioritise the goal of maintaining a high attendance rate of 95% for our pupils. This ensures that they have the opportunity to attend school consistently and make significant progress in their education. We firmly believe that parents also play a vital role in ensuring their child's regular attendance and are committed to working together with families to achieve this goal.

Promoting Attendance

In order to promote attendance, we:

- Have regular communication with the families regarding attendance expectations
- Share pupils' attendance with their family in the school's termly report
- Ascertain the reason of absence from family on a daily basis
- Contact the families to share a cause for concern
- Establish different platforms to remove school barriers
- Seek support from external multi-agency
- Celebrate improving and maintaining attendance
- Home visits

Different types of absences

Southover has the responsibility to classify every half-day absence for pupils, as either **'authorised'** or **'unauthorised'**. Therefore, this is why information about the reason of absence from parents and carers is **required**.

Unauthorised absences are defined as absences where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in The Education Regulation 2006 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established. This includes but not limited to:

- families keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy on or before the school day

- Absences without clear reasons
- Pupils arrive at school late after the registration period is closed.
- Activities such as birthday parties, shopping or socialisng with others outside of school
- Trips during term time which have not been formally agreed by the school

Southover understand that pupils can be reluctant to attend school at times. Therefore, any regular attendance related issues are best resolved between the school, family and child. We will:

- work with the family to understand the cause of the problem;
- Have an informal conversation with the parents / carers when a pupil's attendance drops below 90%; and
- Have a formal meeting highlighting immediate actions with next steps should there be a lack of engagement from the families during the informal conversation

We understand that when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, it significantly impacts their education. To address this, we require the full support and cooperation of families. If a pupil's attendance does not improve within the given timeframe, even after a formal meeting, we will inform the Local Authority about our concerns.

Punctuality

- Our school day starts at 09:30 and finishes at 14:30.
- Our AM registration opens at 09:30 and closes at 10:00
- Our PM registration opens at 12:20 and closes at 12:50
- The present codes are:
  - / = AM
  - \ = PM
  - L = Late

Being punctual is an essential life skill that greatly contributes to a pupil's overall well-being in school. Arriving on time allows them to start the day calmly, relaxed, and happy. When a pupil is late and misses the beginning of the day, they not only miss out on important work but also crucial information and updates from their teacher. Moreover, late-arriving pupils can disrupt their and others' lessons, and even contribute to increased absence.

It's important to note that the attendance register is a legal document that is taken twice a day. Each school day is divided into two sessions, and both sessions are accounted for in the register. Families and local authority transport teams are provided with clear information regarding the timings to ensure everyone is aware of the expectations.

- Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed.

'… This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.' (DfE, 2022)

- Code U: Arrived in school after registration is closed.

'Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence.' (DfE, 2022)

Further information on different codes can be found on Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Absence reporting procedure

- All parents and carers must call the school (020 8446 0300) before 08:30 to report their child's absence;
- A voicemail must be left on the school's answer phone should we fail to pick up;
- If parents and carers are unable to phone, they must contact the school via email (info@southoverpartnership.com) to report their child's absence;
- All absence reports must contain information including the name of the child, the site they attend and the reason of absence.

Absence management

- Our school administrative team will notify relevant Heads of School or Outreach every morning by 08:30;
- Respective Heads of School or Outreach will arrange cover where possible and necessarily.
- For Outreach, some lessons may have to be cancelled on occasions due to staff absences.

Attendance register procedure

- The Head of School and Senior TA open and close the register between 09:30-10:00 for the AM register, then 12:20-12:50 for the PM register.
- The school will contact the parents / carers to ascertain the reasons for lateness or absence throughout the day.
- The school may conduct a home visit to check in on the welfare of the children should the family fail to provide a reason for lateness or absence.