



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Policy Name: Attendance Register Policy

Policy Number: 6.3

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1 Introduction

1.1 At Sidcot we see education as a partnership between the family and the School. The School is committed to providing the highest quality of education for students and we look to parents and guardians to support this objective.

1.2 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, 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 children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards the School. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

2 Scope and Distribution

2.1 This policy applies to all children attending the junior and senior school of compulsory school age. This starts at the beginning of the term after that in which the child becomes 5, and ends on the last Friday of June in the school year in which the student becomes 16.

2.2 It also applies to children falling within the participation age range. Students starting year 11 or below in September 2013 will need to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday.

2.3 Children attending the nursery setting are not included in this policy, however, parents are encouraged to facilitate their children's consistent attendance to support their learning, social skills and preparation for school.

2.4 Sixth form students are also expected to attend school on a full-time basis.

2.5 This policy is available on the School's public website and on the staff intranet. It is also available in hard copy form and in accessible formats upon request.

3 Promoting Equality

3.1 The School is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics including race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability or special educational need.

3.2 The School will also make the best provision it can for those enrolled children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school temporarily.

4 The Attendance Register

4.1 All students must be registered on the attendance register by law.

4.2 In the Senior School the Form Tutor takes the attendance register. In the Junior School and Nursery this task is undertaken by the Class Teacher.

5 Parents' Responsibilities

5.1 For the purposes of this policy, in accordance with Education Law, references to a parent include:

5.1.1 All natural parents, whether they are married or not

5.1.2 Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and

5.1.3 Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

5.2 Parents must ensure that their children:

5.2.1 Attend regularly

5.2.2 Arrive at school on time – 8.30am for the Senior and Junior School, and between 8.30am and 9am for the Nursery

5.2.3 Are properly dressed and have all that they need as per the uniform lists on the internet or as advised for any particular activity;

5.2.4 Are in a fit condition to learn;

5.2.5 Keep the School informed of all absences whether planned or unplanned.

5.3 Parents should submit requests for planned absences in accordance with this policy.

5.4 Whilst it is the legal duty of a parent to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, it may be that in the case of overseas boarding students that the student's guardian is contacted and involved in discussions with the School in the first instance. The student's parents will also be notified of the issues.

5.4 Educational guardians are unlikely to share parental responsibility for the child, but may have certain functions delegated to them by the parents. Educational guardians will be covered by the provisions of this policy, when caring for a student.

6 Approval of Absence

6.1 Only the School can approve absence, not parents. The School does not have to accept the parents' offered explanation as a valid reason for absence.

7 Authorised Absence

7.1 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 parents. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parents write a note or telephone the School to explain the absence.

8 Unauthorised Absence

8.1 An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school and the school has not given permission for the absence. If there are doubts about the reason offered, if the reason for the absence is not acceptable, or if no reason is given, any absence will be treated as unauthorised.

9 Long Term Illness and Disability

9.1 If the School is satisfied that a child is absent as a result of illness, the absence will be treated as authorised. Children who experience long term absences are supported by the School both during and after the absence through direct contact with parents.

9.2 The School may ask parents to seek a report or other evidence from a health professional to provide further information regarding the nature of the illness and a possible date for return to school.

9.3 The School adopts and implements its policy around supporting students with medical conditions and disabilities.

10 Recording Absences - Senior School

10.1 It is the parents' responsibility to report absence from the first day. Parents may either phone, leave a message on the answer phone, use email or send a written message. This message should be received by the School by 9am under all usual circumstances. If the child is ill then the School should be notified of the nature of the illness, and if possible, the expected date of return. If there is no clearly identifiable period of illness, (for example an incubation period, or advice from a medical practitioner) then parents are expected to report the absence daily.

10.2 All attendance, including absences and lateness, are recorded on SIMS (the School's information management system) by the Form Tutors and Front Office. Entries are made at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, and are updated in the School Office during the School Day. Teachers also register students' lesson attendance by using Lesson Monitor on SIMS. In the event of an absent student during their lesson, where a student had been registered by their Form tutor in either the morning or the afternoon registration, class teachers will contact the Front Office by email at the earliest opportunity. The Front Office will then contact the Health Centre, the Head's PA and the Senior Management Team to ascertain the whereabouts of the student.

10.3 All absences are registered as authorised or unauthorised and the School uses a set of Local Educational Authority (LEA) codes, Appendix 1, to classify the absences. It is important that these codes are used consistently. Instructions for marking the register and the list of codes may be found on SIMS.

11 Reporting Absences - Junior School

11.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the SIMS register. The School Office has access to the register and will endeavour to contact the parents.

12 Boarding Students

12.1 If a boarder is absent from school for an authorised reason e.g. interview, medical appointment etc, boarding staff will inform the tutor who will mark the register accordingly.

12.2 If a boarding student is unwell and not able to attend school, the Health Centre will inform reception who will code the Register accordingly. The Student will remain in the Health Centre if necessary, or return to the Boarding House if supervision is available. On occasion, it may be necessary to ask the boarding student's guardian or parents to care for them away from school. Please refer to medical policy.

13 Unexplained Absences

13.1 The Junior School or Senior School Office will telephone the parents on the first day of an absence, if no contact has been made with the School.

13.2 If parents fail to notify the School of the reason for their child's absence, it is the School's responsibility to investigate the reason for the absence either by contacting parents, or by involving the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in cases of persistent or suspicious absence. Please refer to paragraph 22 of this policy for further information concerning the EWO.

13.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the Class Teacher should take immediate action by notifying the School Office. The School will then be in contact straight away with the parents, in order to check on the safety of the Child.

13.4 When a child returns to school after an absence, a note must be provided by the parents, if parents have not communicated with the School (via phone or email). In the absence of an explanation from the parents, the Form Tutor will inform the Year Head who will then contact the parents by telephone to request a written explanation for the reason for absence. SIMS will be updated accordingly

14 Lateness

14.1 Lateness is strongly discouraged as it is disruptive to the learning process in class. If a child arrives at school after registration, they must 'sign in' at the Front Office of the Junior School or the Senior School as appropriate.

14.2 The back door to the Nursery is locked at 9am and access must be gained via the Junior School Reception.

14.3 If a child is persistently late, their parents will be asked for an explanation and in extreme circumstances, the EWO at the Local Authority will be involved (please refer to paragraph 22 for further information concerning the EWO).

15 Repeated Unauthorised Absences

15.1 If there is ongoing concern about a child's attendance, the Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral) or Headmaster (Senior School), or Junior Head will invite parents or guardians (where the student's parents live overseas or a substantial distance from the School), to a meeting to discuss problems, prior to making a referral to the EWO at the Local Authority.

15.2 The School will contact the parents of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the School and discuss the problem.

15.3 Ultimately, in addition to any referral to the EWO, it may be that parents are requested to withdraw their child if they are not in agreement with the School's policy on attendance.

15.4 Repeated absences may also be indicative of child protection issues – please see below.

15.5. In appropriate cases, the behaviour policy will be invoked.

15.6 In the case of students who have the benefit of a Tier 4 sponsorship, 10 days unauthorised absence will in most cases lead to a withdrawal of sponsorship.

16 Requests for Absence

16.1 Medical and dental appointments

16.1.1 Wherever possible, parents should try to make such appointments out of school time.

16.1.2 Parents should aim to give 24 hours' notice of a medical appointment during school time, preferably in writing (including through email communication).

16.1.3. All senior school students must 'sign out' in the School Office and 'sign in' on return.

17 Holiday

17.1 Holidays in term time

17.1.1 The School has a discretionary power to grant leave for purposes including an annual family holiday. It is of course more educationally sound for such holidays to be taken during school holidays, and this is strongly encouraged. Where holidays of more than two weeks are planned, for example to visit overseas relatives, the School endeavours to discuss with parents the best timing for the trip from an educational point of view. Children must attend educational provision "regularly" in accordance with the law.

17.1.2 Parents are asked to complete a Leave of Absence form. The Junior Head, or Headmaster, as appropriate, will consider the application forms. 14 days' notice is required, as a minimum, under most circumstances.

17.1.3 Parents will receive email communication from the School either agreeing that the absence will be authorised, or classifying it as an unauthorised absence.

17.2 Other events

17.2.1 Parents should notify the School if they would like to request their child's absence for any other occasion. The School will consider each request on an individual basis.

18 Other Absence from the School Site during the day

18.1 With the exception of the students in years 12 and 13 (Sixth Form), students are not allowed to leave the site during the School Day, unless they have been given express permission by a member of staff, for a school trip or sporting fixture.

18.2 Study Leave is only ever granted to students in Years 11, 12 and 13 for the purpose of sitting public examinations. Provision is made for those students who want to continue to come into school to revise.

19 After School Procedures

19.1 Following the conclusion of the School Day, boarding students and many day students will still be on site to attend activities, prep, tea and so on. Junior School children may be booked into after-school care.

19.2 Please refer to the supervision of student's policy 2.10 for further details of supervision of students in these circumstances.

20 Child Protection

20.1 If a child is noted to be missing from the School site, the missing children procedures (policies 1.2 and 1.2a) will be followed. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Children who go missing may be at potential risk of abuse including child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, travel to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

20.2 If there are any such concerns, the child protection procedures will be invoked as per policy 2.1. All staff should be alive to this, noting the issue on "My Concern" where appropriate or liaising direct with the DSL or social care where appropriate.

21 Liaison with the Local Authority and Other Agencies

21.1 The School is under a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the Local Authority – including 10 days or more of unauthorised absence and a failure to attend regularly.

21.2 The School must inform the local authority where the school is based (North Somerset Council) where a child's name is to be deleted on certain grounds; including where the child has been taken out of school to be home educated, where the family has apparently moved away or when the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend, or has been permanently excluded. Please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy (2.1). The School will also inform the local authority where the child is normally resident by copying it into any correspondence.

21.3 The school has a significant number of students who study in the UK on a Tier 4 Visa. The school is likely to have to report any absence of 10 consecutive days or more unauthorised absence or if a student leaves the school to UKVI.

22 The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

22.1 The Education Welfare Officer, who is part of the local authority, works with schools and partner agencies to ensure all children of statutory school age have maximum access to education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (eg. attending alternative provision or being electively home educated).

22.2 The EWO can provide a range of support services to students, parents/carers and schools to achieve improvements in attendance and punctuality. These include:

- Developing robust systems to ensure follow up with attendance issues and
- Ultimately prosecution, although this would be a rare event at Sidcot.

22.3 The contact details for the EWO may be found at Appendix 2.

23 Complaints

23.1 The School's complaints policy is available on the intranet, school website and in hard copy form upon request.

24 Monitoring and Review of this Policy

24.1 The School will keep and maintain accurate attendance records.

24.2 In the Junior School, class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they must 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 Junior Head, who will contact the parents or guardian.

24.3 In the Senior School, the Deputy Head and Assistant Head (Pastoral), identify significant patterns and trends. In appropriate cases (especially where a safeguarding or child protection concern exists), the Governors will be made aware of issues concerning attendance in reports to the Board.

24.4 This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if major incident or change in guidance or statute dictate.

25 References

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Children Missing Education – Dfe 2016

School attendance – July 2019 Equality Act 2010

The Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS)

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1) (3) (4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 2010 and 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (E regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The (Education) Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2014

The ISI Commentary Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (September 2019)

27 Related Policies

- 1.2 Missing Child Policy and Procedure
- 1.2a Missing Child Policy and Procedure (Junior School)
- 1.4 Uncollected Child Procedure
- 2.1 Safeguarding and Child protection
- 2.6 Complaints procedure
- 2.10 Supervision of Students
- 2.10a Supervision of Students (Junior School)
- 2.11 Equal Opportunities (children)
- 4.1 Medical Policy
- 4.2 Supporting students with medical conditions and disabilities
- 4.4 Mental Health and Wellbeing
- 5.1 Behaviour (Senior School)
- 5.1a Behaviour (Junior School)
- 5.11 Exclusions policy

Appendix 1 – Absence and Attendance Codes

| | |
|---|---|
| / | Present (AM) |
| | Present (PM) |
| B | Educated off-site (not dual registration) |
| C | Other approved educational activity (not covered by other codes and descriptions) |
| D | Undefined |
| E | Excluded |
| F | Agreed extended family holiday |
| H | Agreed family holiday |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late but arrived before the register closed |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| N | No reason for the absence provided yet |
| O | Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Day set aside exclusively for religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late and arrived after the register closed |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience (not work based training) |
| X | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students |

Appendix 2 - Contact Details

North Somerset Council – Education Welfare Office – 01934 888 888

Document Change History

| Date of change | Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 03.12.2016 Adopted by Board | Redraft of policy |
| 07.10.2017 | Reviewed by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review |
| 16.04.2018 | Reviewed and paragraph 10.2 updated to reflect the use of "Lesson Monitor" |
| 20.02.2019 | Reviewed – no changes required. |

| | |
|------------|---|
| 26.10.2019 | Updated to reflect that MyConcern has replaced Flagit as the mechanism for staff to report safeguarding concerns. |
| 06.03.2020 | Definition of authorised absence reworded and obligations to report unauthorised absences to UKVI clarified. |