



**Nythe Primary School**  
Attendance  
Policy

Date of approval      January 2019  
Approved by  
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## 1 Introduction

- 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 the children to attend and believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is 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 also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils 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. (Absence figures are now published annually.)

### Child Protection Procedures

This school takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in its care.

“The welfare of the child is paramount.” Children Act 1989.

#### **All action is taken in line with the following legislation / guidance:**

- South West Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP), [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)
- Section 175 Children Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2014
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007

We will follow procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of further guidance issued by the DCSF, and the Local Authority (LA)

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

For more information refer to Child Protection Policy.

## 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 guardian.
- 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 the permission of both the school and a parent.
- The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- If a child arrives late after the register, this will be recorded as late in the register. For national statistics, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## 3 If a child is absent

- ✓ Parents should contact the school by telephone or e-mail as soon as they realise their child is unable to attend that day, no later than 9.30 am (tel: 524024 or e-mail: [admin@nythe.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@nythe.swindon.sch.uk) )
- ✓ When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and the school office will then endeavour to contact a parent or guardian if no information has been received.
- ✓ A parent who has not made contact by the time the child returns to school must send in a note explaining reasons for the absence,
- ✓ A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- ✓ Parents need to provide the school proof of medical appointments unless in the case of emergency.
- ✓ 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 parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## 4 Requests for leave of absence

- Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Amendments to the 2006 regulations by the Department for Education make it clear that a Principal may not grant **any** leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. (**See Appendix 1 – Request for Holiday Absence**)
- Amendments have also been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2013 and came into force on 1 September 2013. The regulations reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days for each child.

## 5 Long-term absence

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home or provide online learning opportunities, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an 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.

## 6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be sent a letter informing them of the problem and if the poor attendance persists will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the



LA support services (Education Welfare Officer), who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

- The Principal, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **7 Attendance targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **8 Monitoring and review**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The administrative assistant will be responsible for monitoring attendance, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, she will share her concerns with the head teacher immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will also be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- This policy will be reviewed by the governing body annually.



## Appendix 1

### Request for Holiday Absence

#### Principles

This policy has been discussed with Governors in line with new DfE Guidance.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>

Any absence has a detrimental impact on a child's education. Absence can and should be avoided. 90% attendance is the equivalent of missing half a day of school every week. Children are required to attend 190/365 days per year, leaving 175 days during which holidays can be taken.

Principals are expected to uphold the law when parents request leave during term time and schools are required to be proactive in discouraging absence.

Parents of registered pupils have legal duty under the Education Act (1996) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis; children become of statutory school age the term after which they become 5 years old. Parents do not have an automatic entitlement to holiday during term time.

#### Absence Applications

Unauthorised absence, i.e. absence not approved by the school, may incur a fine from Swindon Borough Council.

Families wishing to request an authorised absence must complete and submit a request form at least three weeks prior to families taking a holiday.

Holiday applications will not be considered more than 9 months in advance.

Holidays can only be requested by the carer/apparent with whom the child resides.

#### Authorisation

**Only in special circumstances will** holiday leave be authorised during term time.

#### **Example of such special circumstances include:**

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after crisis.
- Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- One off special event e.g. family wedding, graduation. (no more than 3 days)

#### **Guidance states that principals should not authorise a request if it:**

- Is during assessment week, National Curriculum SATs or examination periods
- Overlaps with the beginning or end of a new term
- Is due to availability of cheaper holidays
- Is due to poor weather experienced in school holiday periods



### **Principal's Discretion:**

**Only** when the above special circumstances are met do principals have the discretion to authorise up to 10 days (20 sessions) absence for holidays in school year.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Where the above special circumstances are not met, holiday during term time will not be authorised. If parents still take their children out of school, then the local authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is **£120 per parent per child**. (reduced to £60 if paid within 28 days).

We have also included a number of frequently asked questions regarding requests for absence:

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- Q.** My work means that I cannot take holiday during the school summer holidays. Can I take my children away during term time?
- A.** *No; there are many opportunities, other than the summer holiday period, for family holidays. Please use the week-long breaks at half-term or the two weeks available at Christmas or Easter.*
- Q.** I like to add an additional day's holiday onto a half term break?
- A.** *The government guidance does not allow me to authorise leave in term-time. Ofsted also look very poorly on this.*
- Q.** My brother is getting married in Germany. We would like leave of absence to attend.
- A.** *I am required by law to authorise only 2-days for travel to a family wedding, and one day to attend. No more than 3 days can be authorised.*
- Q.** The children's grandparents have booked and paid for a holiday in term-time. We have to go.
- A.** *Holidays in term-time are against government guidance so I am unable to authorise it. Should you choose to go away at this time a penalty notice would be served.*
- Q.** My children receive free school meals. We cannot afford a holiday except in term-time.
- A.** *Holidays in term-time are against government guidance, given the detrimental impact on learning. Should you choose to go away at this time a penalty notice would be served.*
- Q.** My child has been invited to go away with Swindon Football Academy during term-time. Will this absence be authorised?
- A.** *This would be considered to be an educational opportunity but taking place off-site and can be authorised.*