

SILVER BIRCH ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

DATE

November 2017

REVIEW DATE

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Introduction and Background

The Silver Birch Academy Trust (SBAT) recognises that punctuality and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment, and to ensure they can benefit fully from all that school has to offer.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our Trust ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

Statement of Intent

Chingford Hall Primary Academy aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality. In order to ensure our pupils, gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved. In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect attendance by all pupils on roll to be 100%, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the pupils to attend regularly, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support those who don't.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all, where pupils want to come and learn.

We recognise that pupils alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Through accepting a place at Chingford Hall Primary Academy, parents agree to ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

The school day is broken up into two sessions, by law schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The Attendance Registers are marked at the start of the morning session at 8.30am and again in the afternoon.

Registers are checked by the office staff and all absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes at 8.40am, the office staff check the messages. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then a telephone call will be made to parents to check on why a pupil is not in school.

Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Head of school, the senior leadership team and the Trust Attendance Lead who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children as well as regular reviews of attendance as a whole.

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about absence is always required.

The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised and unauthorised absence.

Authorised absences can include –

- illness
- emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. (It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during outside school hours.)

- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Exclusion

Unauthorised Absences can include –

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been satisfactorily explained
- Arriving late at school after the registers have closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips, long weekends and holidays not agreed by school

Leave of absence (Term time holidays)

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 ²

- The Head of school shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head of school must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- The Head of school will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the Local Authority may consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. We understand that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Parents and carers ¹should be aware that if they fail to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

What attendance figures mean in real terms:

98%+ attendance = Less than 5 days absence

93.5% attendance = 14 days absence (approx.)

90% attendance = 20 days absence (approx.)

88% attendance = 30 days absence (approx.)

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week and a whole school year over their primary school career.

The 3 Letter system

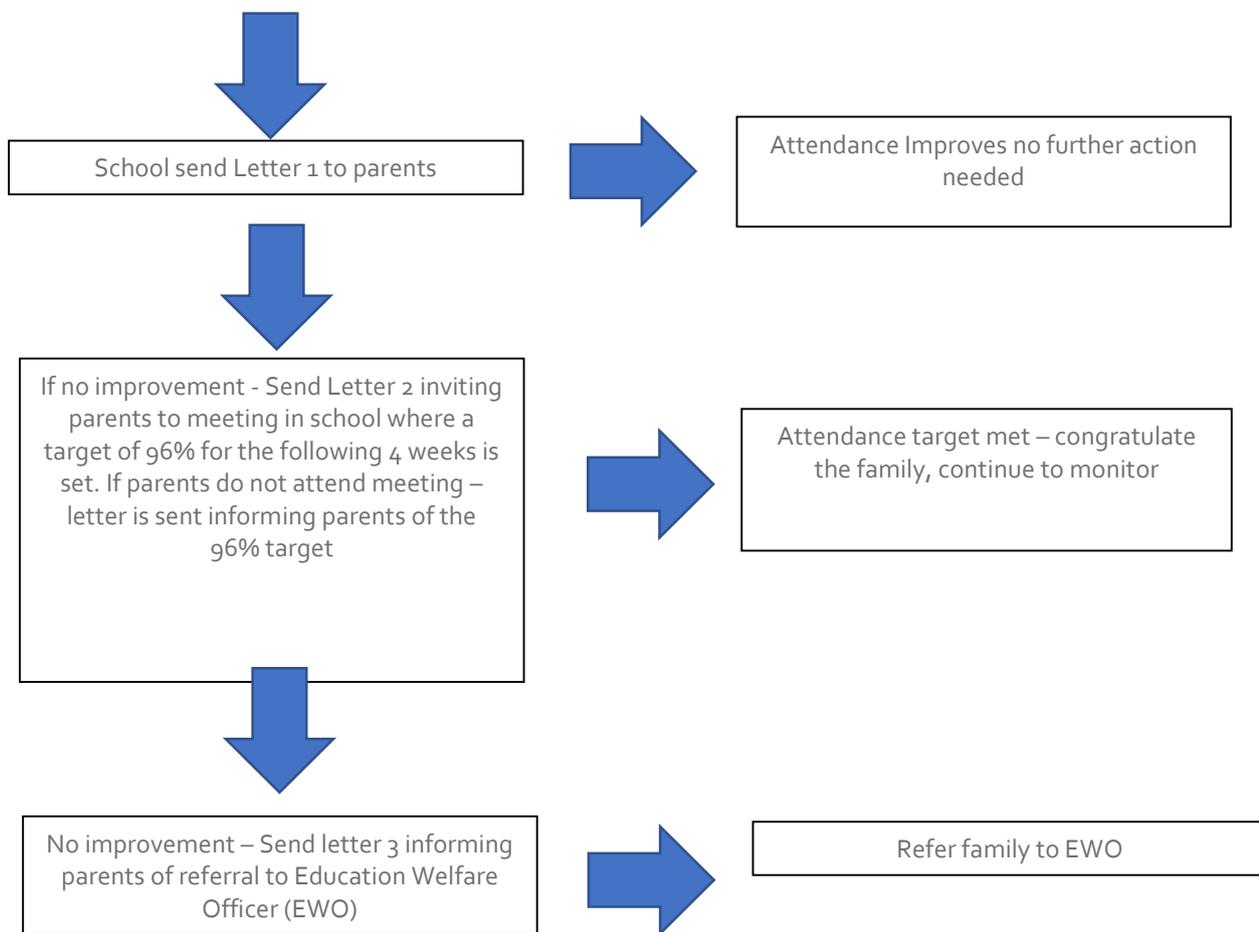
Where appropriate, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the national average of 96%. If attendance drops below 90% a 2nd letter may be sent informing parents/carers and inviting them to a meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance. If a child's attendance continues to drop and there are no satisfactory reasons for this decrease, the school may then refer the pupil's parents/carers to the local authority Education Welfare Service where legal action may be taken.

Flow Chart for the 3 Letter System

Please see below.

Attendance drops to below national average

¹ In Education Law the term "Parent" applies to any parent or carer who has day to day care and attention of the child, not necessarily someone with parental responsibility.



Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. Lateness is monitored as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. School starts at 8.30am, there is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. Registers will close ten minutes after registration at 8.40am. Any pupil that arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school. Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the school will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the EWO.

Persistent Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence can seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. The definition of a persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions (days) a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions (3.5 days)
Half term 1-2	14 or more sessions (7 days)
Half term 1-3	20 or more sessions (10 days)

Half term 1-4	25 or more sessions (12.5 days)
Half term 1-5	31 or more sessions (15.5 days)
Half term 1-6	38 or more sessions (19 days)

Celebrating Attendance

The school celebrates good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements and rewarding good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Publishing Figures

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. This policy will be made available to parents and published on our school website.

The policy will be reviewed at least every two years and updated as appropriate unless a statutory requirement or issues identified in the practical application of the policy occur prior to the scheduled review of the policy

