



## **Shamblehurst Primary School Attendance Policy 2024-2025**

Policy: Attendance

Date of Issue: September 2022

Date of Last Review: Feb 2024

Next review Date: March 2025

### **Shamblehurst Primary School Attendance Team**



**Mrs Jones**  
Headteacher



**Mrs Curry**  
Family Link Worker



**Mrs Jessica Comper**  
Admin Assistant

### **Introduction**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens – either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. This means your child should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines parent as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

## **The School Day**

The school day begins for each year group as follows;

Year R start at 8:40am (and finish at 3:05pm)

Years 1 & 2 start at 8:40am (and finish at 3:15pm)

Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 start at 8:30am (and finish at 3:05pm)

.At *Shamblehurst Primary School*, we expect all pupils to:

- ✓ Be aware that they must attend every school day
  - ✓ Be aware that they must attend school punctually
  - ✓ Be aware that they must attend school prepared for the day
  - ✓ Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
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- We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.
  - We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for any poor attendance, supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.
  - Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach and is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (May 2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance.'
  - Every pupil should be able learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.
  - This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.
  - This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and all-inclusive practice within school.

## **Expectations**

It is our responsibility, as parents/ carers and school, to establish and maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems. Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance is Anna Jones, members of our team who also support attendance are Mrs Jess Comper and Mrs Sarah Curry. It is all staff, children and parents/ carers responsibility to champion attendance. Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## **School's Commitment**

- ✓ We commit to having open, honest communication regarding attendance with parents and carers.
- ✓ Shamblehurst Primary School will strive to build positive working relationships rooted in kindness and honesty where there are tough messages, which may need to be shared.
- ✓ We commit to always working in partnership with parents to maintain the highest expectations of your child's attendance and ensuring that they attend school and are punctual to lessons in order for them to access their full educational entitlement.
- ✓ We commit to supporting parents with attendance.
- ✓ We commit to sharing what good attendance looks like and discuss with you any misconceptions or misunderstandings you may have in order to work together for your child/ren to attend school.

- ✓ We commit to having unwavering dedication to and a relentless approach to ensuring your child/ren are in school and on time.

### **We expect all our parents to:**

- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, non-emergency medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
- Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support us by becoming involved in their child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for their child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

### **Daily Routines**

- At Shamblehurst Primary School, our staff meet and greet our pupils at the school gate/ school office and playground, upon arrival. This begins at 8.25 am each day (Ks2) and 8.35 am (KS1)
- Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.
- Our school day begins at 8:30am (for Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6) and at 8:40am (for Year R, Year 1 and Year 2). The morning register will open and be taken at 8.40am (for children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) and at 8:50am (for children in Years R, 1 and 2). Any pupil arriving after 8.50am is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness. This will be recorded on SIMS.
- If children arrive within 20 minutes of the start of their school day, they will be marked as L
- If a child arrives more than 20 minutes after their start time, they receive U
- Our afternoon session begins at 12.30pm with a register taken at this time. This time is 1pm in Year R.
- Our normal school day ends at 3:05pm for Year R, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6, and at 3.15pm for Years 1 and 2.

### **Absence and Reporting Absence**

#### **What is Absence?**

School absence is the time your child/ren spend away from Shamblehurst Primary School when they are scheduled to attend. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Whilst we understand sometimes absences are necessary, the vast majority of absences can be planned outside of the school day as there are 170 non-school days per year.

#### **Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for your child to be away from school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. An authorised absence is still classed as an absence from school as the child is/was not in attendance. Authorised absences include medical appointments where medical evidence has been submitted. There are 170 non-school days per year, therefore we always strongly encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. On your child's registration certificate, an authorised absence will be marked as (I/ M)- Illness or Medical.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Examples of unauthorised absences include: holiday not authorised by the school; reason for absence not yet provided; absent from school without authorisation or arrived in school after registration closed. An unauthorised absence is an absence from school as the child was not in attendance. On your child's registration certificate, an authorised absence will be marked as O or G.

### **Requests for Holidays in Term Time**

Mrs Jones will not grant a holiday in term time. There are 170 non-school days per year and therefore all holidays should be booked during this time. Legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. If you take your child out of school during term time you could be fined or referred to Hampshire Legal Intervention Team.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, Mrs Jones may warrant a short period of leave where an application had been made in advance in writing and Mrs Jones is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. Any exceptional circumstances granted will still be recorded as a school absence, even if authorised

### **Religious Observance**

Children may take 1 day for religious observance. This must fall on a day exclusively set aside for the religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

### **Reporting Absence**

1. If a child is absent from school, parents should contact school office on the first day of absence, providing a reason for the absence. Any evidence eg: medical letters may also be provided. We request that you call each day with an update on your child's attendance and well-being.
2. Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, by no later than 5 school days after the session.
3. If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will follow the actions outlined in the table below.

Day 1	School will phone contact 1 and 2 if the parent has not contacted school by 9.30am. They will phone again in the afternoon.
Day 2	If child is still not accounted for school will phone and email all contacts.
Day 3	If child is still not accounted for school will phone and email all contacts again. If there is no adequate response then a DSL, accompanied by another member of staff, will visit the home by lunch time. They will deliver a letter stating the school has concerns and has endeavoured to contact parents or adults with parental responsibility. This letter will also be emailed to all contacts. The letter will state that if school does not hear from parents by 4pm then school will inform the police and ask for a welfare check and fill in an interagency form for Children's Services alerting them to our concerns.
Day 4	Phone all contacts and liaise with Police and Children's Services.

### **Persistently Absent Children**

A child is classed as persistently absent when their attendance falls below 90%. During weekly monitoring parents will be contacted to warn of low attendance and support will be offered to ensure improvement is seen. In our school we start to monitor attendance when a child's attendance falls below 95%, this is so we

can make parents aware at an early stage that attendance is falling below an average level, and to ensure we are putting support in place should it be needed.

If a child is persistently absent, we will look to increase contact with parents/ carers – to consider how to overcome any barriers to attendance or punctuality. We may look to invite parents/ carers to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance, or agree on a voluntary parenting agreement (if appropriate).

In some cases parents/ carers of persistently absent children must provide medical evidence to authorise any absence from school. Medical Evidence should be provided to the office either in person or via email - this can be in the form of a note from a GP or pharmacist, a prescription dated the date of the absence or similar, or evidence of an E Consult. Where we are concerned that a child is experiencing high levels of illness, over 15 days, the school might refer to the Inclusion Support Service in the form of a medical referral.

If we cannot contact a parent/ carer about a child's absence, and we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also request a welfare check to be made by social worker/ Police.

### **The Registration System**

Shamblehurst Primary School uses SIMS, a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>I</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>l</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

You can request your child's attendance certificate by contacting the office at [adminoffice@shamblehurst.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@shamblehurst.hants.sch.uk)

### **Managing Attendance**

**We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning:**

- Parents whose child's attendance is below 95% will be sent a letter explaining the steps if there is not an improvement in their child's attendance.
- Parents receive a monthly newsletter outlining their child's class attendance.
- Parents can request access to their child's attendance at any time through request at the office.
- Parents are invited to meetings with class teachers, Senior Leaders of the Head teacher regarding their child's attendance.

**We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the following to promote and celebrate good attendance:**

- Weekly Class Attendance Certificate – Each week in celebration assembly we will award a certificate to the highest attending class/es in the school.
- Newsletter Communication- Whole school and Class attendance is reported monthly to all parents via the school newsletter.

### **Prevention, Intervention and Support**

We will regularly analyse attendance data, to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable. We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.

Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance; changes in attendance; are identified as being either persistently absence or severely absent.

- If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality, then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.
- We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with school, following the Emotional Based School Avoidance pathway, to identify the most appropriate support for the child.
- We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children. We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school.

- Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.
- We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.
- If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing in Education procedures.

Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centred, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Examples of prevention, early intervention and targeted support are outlined below, although not limited to:

Prevention	Early intervention	Targeted Support	Statutory Action
Discussion with parents and pupils	Trauma-informed approaches	Attendance panels Referrals to support agencies	We will work with the local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/ or has a social worker</li> <li>○ Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school</li> <li>○ Family learning</li> <li>○ Reward systems</li> <li>○ Inclusion resources Additional learning support</li> <li>○ Behaviour support Personal, social and health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Early help referral options Reintegration support packages</li> <li>○ Anxiety-based school avoidance resources Parenting contracts Referrals to support agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Time limited part-time timetables</li> </ul>	These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parenting contracts</li> <li>○ Education supervision orders</li> <li>○ Attendance prosecution</li> <li>○ Parenting orders</li> <li>○ Fixed penalty notices</li> </ul>

education Learning mentors ○ Pupil Voice Activities ○ Friendship groups			
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Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family, however the decisions will be guided heavily by the graduated approach for attendance, contextual and education needs of the child and all decisions will be made in line with attendance legislation and school policies.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance, this includes Step parents who live with a child.

We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Shamblehurst Primary School will follow Hampshire County Council Penalty Notice Protocol:

A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a given period.

- Penalty Notices are an early intervention tool, to be used for emerging patterns of non-attendance.
- Where the unauthorised absence is generated by an unauthorised holiday/leave of absence in term-time, the Penalty Notice is issued without warning from the Local Authority.
- In other cases of unauthorised absence, a formal warning is issued by the Local Authority advising that any further unauthorised absence, within a specific period of 15 school days, will lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
- Penalty Notices are issued at £120 per parent per child, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. After 21 days and up to 28 days the fine is £120 per parent per child.
- The Local Authority is responsible for issuing the Penalty Notices to parents and is responsible for monitoring the collection of any payments.



- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid the parent(s) have not discharged their liability for the offence of unauthorised absence, so the case will automatically proceed to the Magistrates Court unless strong grounds can be proved otherwise.

**Summary of Responsibilities for Parents and Schools**

This table summarises the attendance responsibilities for parents and schools to support in maintaining high levels of school attendance.

All Pupils	
Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open, except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. <b>Mrs Jones</b></p>
Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent 95%-90%	
Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:

<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>
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**Persistently Absent Pupils 90%- Below**

<b>Parents are expected to:</b>	<b>Schools are expected to:</b>
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<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> <p>Provide medical evidence to support any absence from school.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>
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**Severely Absent Pupils 50%-below**

<b>Parents are expected to:</b>	<b>Schools are expected to:</b>
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<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>
<b>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance</b>	
<b>Parents are expected to:</b>	<b>Schools are expected to:</b>
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>
<b>Support for pupils with a social worker</b>	
<b>Parents are expected to:</b>	<b>Schools are expected to:</b>
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>