

Attendance

Speen School Attendance Statement

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at School, on time, every day the School is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Indeed, any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at School is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from School without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly.

The minimum level of attendance for Speen School for the academic year 2016– 2017 is 90% but our target is 98%. We will keep you updated regularly about progress towards this level.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of School staff.

The School will encourage good attendance by:

- making School a lively and interesting place to be
- cultivating a positive learning environment for all pupils
- creating a positive environment where children feel safe and secure
- improving the quality of play in the playground
- being sympathetic and supportive to pupils who experience problems in School
- emphasising the importance of regular School attendance to enable pupils to benefit fully from their schooling
- monitoring attendance data in a systematic manner
- developing a system of rewards for good attendance
- reminding parents on a regular basis of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality
- offering help and advice to resolve any difficulties the pupil or parent/carer may have in fulfilling these responsibilities

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from School must be classified by the School (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from School for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Please do note, however, that routine medical/dental appointments etc. should be organised out of School time wherever possible.

Unauthorised absences are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Education Welfare Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- day trips and holidays in term time

Whilst any child may be off School because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend School. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, the parents and the child straight away.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must contact us by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If we do not hear from you on the first day of absence, we will telephone you or make a home visit. If appropriate, we will invite you into School to discuss your child's attendance and any problems he/she may be experiencing. If we feel that the School Nurse may be able to help, we will seek your permission to make a referral to this service. If your child's absence levels fall below 90% then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the School year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All cases at risk of becoming PA are automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Service

Parents are expected to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems. This is nearly always successful. However, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School may refer the child to the Education Welfare Service. This service will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve your child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, this service can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the Education Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the School and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the School Office or from Bucks Learning Trust.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Taking leave of absence in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in School time. Any application for leave must be made in person. Leave in term time is not agreed by us:

- when a pupil is just starting the school
- immediately before and during assessment periods or any other examinations
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 95% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking leave

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the School, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

- **attending school every day = 100% attendance**
- **attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year**
- **attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career**
- **attending 3 ½ days each week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed**
- **an average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school Being late for school reduces learning time**

Absence for Family Holidays

The Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the accompanying guidance make it clear that parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

There are 190 statutory school days a year, so there are 175 other days available for holidays that would not have a negative effect on a child's education. By taking a child on holiday in term time, he/she may be getting an unspoken message that school is not important. The school will not authorise children going on holiday during term-time.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Consequently, we expect all pupils to arrive and be ready at school for the start of the day which is 8.40 am.

- **if your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year**
- **if your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss is 2 weeks of learning each year**

Attendance and Punctuality in the Early Years

Establishing good habits from the start will help your child to settle more quickly and build good habits for later life. Coming to School on time, every day helps to develop confidence. Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem. Even if your child only has a part time Nursery place, regular attendance is vitally important.

Please refer to Attendance Policy

Make Every Minute Count