



School Attendance Policy

This policy represents the agreed principles for School Attendance. This policy has been agreed by Governors and the Headteacher.

School Aims:

Our school community (children, staff, parents and governors) aims to:

- Learn and grow together within the safe, caring and happy environment;
- Encourage achievement in all aspects of school life;
- Motivate all children with a broad and challenging curriculum;
- Treat everyone with honesty, respect and tolerance;

At Shepherd Primary School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Shepherd Primary School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Shepherd Primary School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Shepherd Primary School aims to reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states

Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

Target Setting/Monitoring

In November 2010, the Department for Education issued the following information to schools and local authorities about attendance targets from Summer 2012. Schools may wish to paraphrase this and include all or part of it in their Attendance Policy.

‘Local authorities and schools should note they are no longer required to set targets for persistent absence and overall attendance respectively and the regulations will be amended accordingly. The Department however remains firmly of the view that unnecessary absence is unacceptable and must be prevented and tackled by schools.

The Department therefore expects all schools and local authorities to continue focusing on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence. Absence will continue to be monitored closely via the pupil level school census and the Secretary of State’s power to require an

individual school to set absence targets where a school's absence record is of particular concern is being retained.'

A new inspection framework for maintained schools and academies will be introduced in January 2012. The quality of teaching and learning judgement relates to attendance because, however good the teaching, it does not benefit pupils if they are not present.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them.

Expectations for School

- Shepherd Primary School will provide a safe learning environment for all children.
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- Shepherd Primary School will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- Shepherd Primary School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- Shepherd Primary School will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- Shepherd Primary School will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record As a minimum this will be shared on mid-year and end of year school reports.
- Shepherd Primary School will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern

Expectations for Parents:

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- Parents will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school. Parents are asked to call the school office by 9am to explain their child's absence.
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

Expectations for Pupils:

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to their class teacher
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn
- Pupils will not leave the school without permission

Doors open

- School doors open at 8:50am for pupils in years 1-6 and 8:55 for pupils in Reception and Nursery. Pupils may enter the building at that time. Pupils should not arrive at school before 8:30am. Pupils in Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2 should be accompanied by a parent/carer until the doors open and they go in to school.

Registration

- Registers are taken at 8:55am and 1:15pm. Registers close at 9:10am and 1:20. Registers are marked consistently by staff.
- Any pupil arriving after closure of the register will be marked absent for the whole of the session
- Pupils should be called by name and respond in the prescribed formal manner – ‘here’, ‘present’ etc.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance.

Lateness

- Any pupil arriving after 8:55am should report to the school office where they will need to be signed in to school by their parent/carer.
- Parents/carers will need to complete a record of lateness statement.
- ‘Record of Lateness Statements’ will be monitored by the Headteacher.
- The names of pupils who arrive late will be given to the Headteacher and INCO.
- Parents whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by the Headteacher or INCO who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

Absences

- Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school by calling each day of absence and following up in writing upon the child’s return.
- The Headteacher will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence. It is the school and not the parent who authorise absence
- Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:
 - Sickness
 - Unavoidable medical/ dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours
 - Days of religious observance
 - Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement

Following up Absences

- Shepherd Primary School follows up all absences from school
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil’s absence by 9am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil’s absence a letter will be sent to the parent of the pupil
- If a pupil returns to school after an absence without a written explanation from his/her parent a letter requesting this will be sent to his/her parents
- Parents whose children have more than 5% absence from school in a period of 1 term will be contacted by the Headteacher or INCO who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in attendance.
- Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer

Leaving and returning to School during School Day

- Pupils/parents must notify school staff if the pupil leaves the school site during the school day
- Parents should sign pupils out of school at the school office

- Parents must sign pupils back into school on their return at the school office
- The signing in and out record will be the responsibility of the school secretary in the event of fire

Term Time Holidays

- Shepherd Primary School will not authorise family holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances
- Parents must request absence for holiday during term time using the attached form
- Any absence for holiday must be requested in advance
- A retrospective request for authorisation of a family holiday in term time will not be granted
- Shepherd Primary School may interview parents requesting family holidays in term time
- During SATS, exam periods and the first two and last two weeks of the school year, term time holiday absence will not be authorised at all

Penalty Notices

At Shepherd Primary School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 (per parent) if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 (per parent) if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

Rewards for good attendance

At Shepherd Primary School, we will reward good attendance using the 'Herts County Council Award Scheme', weekly rewards during Celebration assembly and annual trophy awards for good and improved attendance.

Integrated Working

Shepherd Primary School works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance.

Shepherd Primary School will demonstrate full commitment to integrated working by:

- using the Common Assessment Framework
- sharing information
- encouraging staff to take on the role of Lead Professional
- working with other agencies and being part of 'teams around the family'.

Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

- Shepherd Primary School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school
- Information to enable the AIO to carry out an effective consultation visit and/or home visit will be provided by the Headteacher or INCO.
- Shepherd Primary School will endeavour to ensure that any information which could assist the AIO to keep safe is given to them
- Shepherd Primary meets the AIO on an agreed schedule
- Shepherd Primary School works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO the

school will make a referral to Children, Schools and Families for the AIO to work with the family on a formal basis

Publication of Information

- Shepherd Primary School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff
- Shepherd Primary School may provide current attendance statistics on the school website
- Shepherd Primary School may provide attendance information and statistics in each newsletter
- Attendance is a standing item on the agenda of school Governors' meetings
- Pupils will be informed about the importance of school attendance through assemblies, displays in school
- The Headteacher will be responsible for ensuring that data collected by DfE is accurate.

