**Sunninghill**
PREP SCHOOL DORCHESTER

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# Attendance & Absence Policy

| Owner: | SLT |
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☐    Policy required by ISI (inspection use)

☐    ISI requirement for publication on website

☐    Internal decision to publish on website

☐    Internal only

☐    Required reading for all staff

## Contents

Sunninghill Prep School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential.  We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## 1.1     Promoting attendance
The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

The policy is not exhaustive and recognises that attendance can be a very complex and diverse issue and that each individual's circumstances are different.

## 1.2     Admission and Attendance Registers
The law requires the school to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.

## 1.3     Admission Register
The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended. For further information on Admissions refer to the Admissions Policy.

## 1.4     Expected First Day of Attendance
Pupils must be entered on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly.

The local authority must be informed within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register using the form provided. This does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of Reception.

## REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

**This policy follows The Department for Education Guidance on School attendance (August 2020) which states:**

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every child is:

- Present
- Present but attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus

There is a special code for every circumstance. When you are in the electronic registration program on 3sys, codes are listed for you to choose from which include:

| | |
|---|---|
| / | Present am |
| \ | Present pm |
| C | Other authorised circumstance |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) |
| I | Illness |
| L | Late |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided |
| U | Unauthorised absence |
| R | Religious observance |
| V | Educational visit |

More detail on codes can be seen in Appendix 1

The school should follow up any unplanned absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register which is used to download data to the School Census

## PROCEDURE FOR REGISTRATION:
### 1.5    Morning Registration

Is taken during tutor period from 8.15am. The procedure is as follows:

1. Register all children present using the electronic register on 3sys.

2. Any child not present by 8.20am (with circumstances unknown) is to be marked with an N.

3. At 8.20am the registration details should be saved on 3sys and registration closed. Those children who have an early morning music lesson from 8-8.30am should make sure their tutor knows where they are. This information can also be found on the music timetables.

4. Children arriving once registration is closed are to report to the School Receptionist on arrival to sign in. A late mark will be given using the code L. Late arrival information is essential to validate the reason why a child is late. With no validation (and for a child who is regularly late after 8.30am), it is perfectly reasonable to enter the code U (unauthorised absence).

5. The registers will be checked by the School Receptionist from 8.30am then printed off. For any children marked N whose parents have not contacted the school to confirm their absence there must be an attempt to contact them by phone by 9am. The reason for their absence must then be added to the register as appropriate. If the parents cannot be contacted by phone a Ping, email or text message should be sent.

6. If the School Receptionist is regularly unsuccessful in ascertaining why a particular child has been absent from school, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will contact home to ask for support in notifying the school.

### 1.6 Afternoon registration

1. Tutors (or designated persons) are to complete the register after lunch for example, 1.30pm for Form 3 and 4 children or 2.00pm for Form5-8. The period of time allowed for afternoon registration is 5 minutes. After this period of time has elapsed, a late mark should be added. Information should be saved and registration closed.

2. Any children absent without authorisation are to be marked with N and the School Receptionist contacted to ascertain the location of the child. There are a number of reasons why a child may be missing from the class including, medical room, music lesson, left school for an appointment. If there are still concerns for an absence then the Missing Child protocol should be followed.

3. The registers will then be checked and then printed off by the School Receptionist.

Details of days absent from school will be written on the twice yearly reports.

**Please note:**

There are particular times of the day and week when special circumstances exist and where particular attention should be paid to registration. These include Wednesday afternoon fixtures for the Senior Prep children and Friday enrichments for the Senior Prep. On both these occasions children may well be travelling beyond the school grounds in different peer groups, all departing at separate times. In these circumstances, the teacher in charge of this activity group should register the group using the Out of School Trip List. A copy of this should be given to the School Receptionist who will then fill in the electronic register on 3sys.

# ABSENCE

Sunninghill Prep sets an acceptable absence rate of being less than 10% in any one term. The school will first discuss their concerns with the parents of the child involved. It this proves to be unsuccessful, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) (who is also the school's Deputy DSL) will inform the local authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

## 1.7    Children leaving during the school day
Pupils are not allowed to leave the school premises without prior arrangements and permission being agreed between parents and school.

Parents are requested to inform school of any planned absence with the reason and times of the absence during the day. Where possible dental appointments etc. should be made outside of the school day.

Any pupil leaving school during the day will need to sign out at the school reception.

## 1.8    First Day Absence
Parents must contact the school before 9am if their child is going to be absent. If we do not receive a call and the child is marked N on the register, the receptionist will contact the parents to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. The receptionist will add the appropriate reason to the register.

## 1.9    Ten Day's Absence
Any child who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services School Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

## 1.10    Absence notes
Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## 1.11    Frequent Absence
Within the school it is the responsibility of the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

## 1.12    Welcome Back
It is important that on return from an absence all children are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the child is helped to catch up on

missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other children.

### 1.13   Leave of absence in term time
Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The Head Teacher will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

# Appendix 1
## Absence and Attendance Codes

### Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Schools is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools is certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity   or where a pupil is at home doing school work. School should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

### Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school should be recorded only. School should ensure all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

### Code J: At an interview with another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with another educational establishment.

### Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

## Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

### Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

### Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

### Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

The application must be made in advance. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

### Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. School should authorise absences due to illness unless there is genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, parents can be requested to provide medical evidence to support illness.

The absence can still be unauthorised if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt but should advise parents. Schools are generally advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

### Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. However, we encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code R: Religious observance**

We must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

# Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where the reasons given for the absence are unsatisfactory. Absence codes are as follows:

**Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head Teacher.**

If the Head Teacher does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

School should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.
This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

**Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**
(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

-guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care or

-any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or
 transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). School should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

# Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

### Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

### Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).
This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

### Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

### Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training.