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Attendance Policy 2020

Skelton Primary School offers a positive, safe learning environment for its community, in which everyone has equal and individual recognition and respect. We celebrate success and are committed to the continuous improvement and fulfilment of potential in every child.

We encourage increasing independence and self-discipline amongst the pupils. Everyone within the school has an important role to play in sharing responsibility for the development of positive behavior and attitudes.

Presented to Governors: Spring 2020



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Skelton Primary School Attendance Policy recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. It is an assumption so widely understood but insufficiently stated that children and young people need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind and achieving less in both primary and secondary school.

The overall aim of the attendance policy is to:

- Keep children safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with safeguarding practice.
- Provide a stable environment in which our children can learn.
- Support parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are of compulsory school age and registered at the academy, attend school regularly
- Maximise educational opportunities for all our pupils, ensuring there is a consistent and fair approach with equal opportunities for all.
- Encourage good habits of school attendance with a vision on early intervention by supporting families with children in the Early Years Foundation stage, reflecting our Policy of early intervention.



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We do this by:

- Applying a robust attendance process.
- Notifying parents at the earliest opportunity where attendance is below expected national standards.
- Ensuring pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school on time.
- Working with parents to reduce illness and medical absence
- Working in collaboration with partner agencies, such as health visitors, school nurses, children's services and youth services across all levels of the needs assessment.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; which includes individual education plans.
- Identifying vulnerable children who may have a specific area of need to enable them to attend school
- Analysis of attendance data to highlight areas of concern, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, including the identification and tracking of persistent absence pupils
- Working with the families of children in the early years' foundation stage to ensure there is a readiness to learn.
- Highlighting the importance of attendance with pupils through achievement and rewards.

The legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, academies, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents, are contained in:

- *The Education Act 1996, sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013*

Safeguarding

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff who during the course of their employment have direct or indirect contact with the pupils and their families, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupil. This includes effective joint working practice with external agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise and ensuring attendance practice and record keeping reflects this responsibility.

Attendance

As with all aspects of a child's life, it is the parents/carers who have the pivotal role in ensuring their child's best interests are taken into consideration at all times. The law in relation to the regular attendance of a child at school is strict in the application of this responsibility. We want to support our parents in carrying out this responsibility but at the same time we will tender challenges where a child's level of attendance falls behind expectations. To this end, the policy is robust in its early identification of attendance concerns and structured to ensure the appropriate level of support is put in place. The policy is relevant to every child on roll at S.P.S.



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A child's learning journey starts at the very beginning of their Early Years education, this being an important time for parents to embed good habits of attendance with their child, which will follow them through their school life. The parent is expected to have good routines in place to ensure their child is prepared for school each day and is ready to learn by attending regularly and being in school on time. Once established, we believe the child will easily become accustomed to all school routines and will grow through their education to become an independent learner.

We also recognise that at times difficulties may arise within a family, which can impact upon a child's learning and school attendance. In such cases, it is important for a pupil or parent to speak to our Family Support Worker Mrs Smith, who in confidence, will listen and discuss the best way forward. We believe in working closely with the pupils and parents to ensure a child's education is not interrupted and they can continue to attend school regularly.

Roles & Expectations

<p><i>We expect that all pupils will:-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attend school regularly and understand the need for doing so.</i> • <i>Arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the school day.</i> • <i>Inform a teacher of any problems that might hinder them from attending school.</i>
<p><i>We expect that all parents/ carers will:-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Encourage their children to attend school and be aware of their legal responsibilities.</i> • <i>Work in partnership with school to encourage high attendance of pupils.</i> • <i>Ensure that they contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend first thing in the morning.</i> • <i>Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, well prepared for the school day.</i> • <i>Contact the Family Support Worker in confidence should any problem occur that might keep their child away from school.</i> • <i>Try to ensure that appointments and holidays are taken out of school time</i> • <i>Notify school immediately of any change in contact details</i>
<p><i>Parents and children can expect the following from the school:-</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A high quality education for their children.</i> • <i>Regular, efficient and accurate recordings of attendance.</i> • <i>First day contact before 10.00 am (and each subsequent day of absence) when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.</i> • <i>A letter will be sent home if an explanation for an absence or regular lateness is not received.</i> • <i>Contact with parents/ carers if a child is regularly late for school.</i> • <i>Mrs Smith, our Family Support Worker is available to meet with you and support any issues that you may have. This is confidential and support will be offered in the best interests of your child.</i> • <i>Steps will be taken to encourage good attendance.</i>



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Compulsory School Age

A parent is responsible for ensuring their child being of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. This is a legal requirement.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

(School Attendance November 2016)

Attendance Registers

The law requires all schools to have an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the register. The attendance register is taken twice daily. On each occasion a record is made as to whether a pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will follow up any absences to:

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

All attendance information is kept in accordance with confidentiality and data protection practice. The main attendance register is compiled electronically using the School Information Management System (SIMS).

School Day

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day. Afternoon registration will take place immediately after lunch. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. In such cases, to ensure effective safeguarding practice is in place, it is important that the pupil's details are recorded in school as being signed out by a member of staff. In the case of a primary school aged child a signature from the appropriate adult collecting the child is also required. Accordingly, where the pupil returns to the school, they should be signed back in. Reasons for signing a child out of school, in every case must be confirmed by the parent. Evidence will be requested to support the reason.

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones the school or



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writes a note to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/ carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason (i.e. without the permission of the school) even if the parent is supporting the absence. Absence without a valid reason or explanation is recorded as **Unauthorised**. Examples are:- shopping trips, birthdays, allowing a whole day for a medical/dental appointment, helping parents, holidays. In addition, a pupil whose attendance is a cause for concern will not have any absence authorised without medical evidence. Unauthorised absences will result in Family Support Worker intervention which in turn is likely to result in a referral to the Attendance Welfare Office intervention and the issuing of a fine. We pride ourselves on working with our families and urge parents/ carers to do the same.

Registers close at 9.30. For statistical reasons, arrival to school after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be subject to formal attendance processes. Afternoon registration closes after the register is taken. Regular school attendance is determined between the hours prescribed by the school. As part of a parent's responsibility to ensuring their child attends regularly at school, it is important for parents to ensure their child is arriving on time to school. Repeated lateness is not acceptable and reasons will be contested. Staff strive to ensure each pupil within their care is taught to good and outstanding national curriculum requirements. This cannot be achieved where a child is late to school and is not ready to learn. It is important that a child arrives to school on time. Once the school entrance is closed, the pupil and/or parent as appropriate will be required to sign in at the office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded.

Lateness to school is a safeguarding factor which is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning. The minutes late are accumulated on each occasion a child is arriving late to school. Each half term the parent is notified in writing of the amount of time which their child has missed from their learning, by arriving late to school. Following receipt of a letter, the expectation is for lateness to school to improve.

Lateness

Lateness to school can be a very upsetting

- Before the beginning of the school day, it is important for the child to have contact with their peers as they arrive and settle down. This is one of the times during the school day where they can share quality time with their peers and are able to forge friendships. Children who are late to school miss this opportunity and can quickly become anxious and lacking in self esteem, feeling left out.
- Children who are late to school readily become identified amongst their peer group as a person who is unprepared for school and who disrupts the learning of others. This can leave the child feeling confused and unsettled, having to play catch up with their work without having had the appropriate instruction from the teacher. In turn this may lead to the child becoming unhappy and disaffected with their learning and not wanting to come to school.
- All the business of the school day is generally given to the pupils at registration. When a child is late, they miss out on vital information. In addition, the social time of sharing a book and a bagel (between 8.30-8.40) is a valuable settling in time together.



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Attendance and Absence Codes

A list of all the codes and their meanings are contained in the *Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006*. The codes enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps the school, local authority and Ofsted to gain a greater understanding of the level and the reasons for pupil absence. Absence from school is a safeguarding factor and is monitored to identify pupils who may be vulnerable for welfare reasons or identified as not making progress in their learning.

Monitoring Attendance

The office staff and Family Support Worker ensure that the attendance policy is applied consistently and fairly. S.P.S expects at any one time throughout the school year to be attaining at least 97% attendance. This equates to at least 5 days (10 sessions) absence within the school year. This requirement is in accordance with OFSTED guidance which rates attendance as follows:

100%-99%ATTENDANCE	GOOD
98%-97% ATTENDANCE	SATISFACTORY
96%-95%ATTENDANCE	INADEQUATE
94%-91%ATTENDANCE	CAUSE FOR CONCERN
90%-86%ATTENDANCE	SERIOUS CONCERN
85%ATTENDANCE AND BELOW	

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance. The Head Teacher reports to the Governing Body on attendance issues in the termly Head Teacher’s Report. The Governing Body has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

Class teachers, the office and the Head Teacher collectively monitor attendance. If the class teacher is concerned about a child's absence, they contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher. A detailed report on each child’s attendance is included with their annual report in order to keep their parent or carer fully informed.

Children Missing from Education

A pupil who is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days is regarded as a ‘child missing from education’. In such cases, a referral will be made to the local authority. Before doing so, the school will have made all necessary enquiries to trace the pupil, through any additional contact numbers. This is regarded as a major safeguarding concern and may involve contact being made with the Police or the local



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authority children's services. It is important that all absences are notified to S.P.S. on each day of absence and a change to contact information is updated.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016)

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The parent/carer who has responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school, should write to the Head Teacher for any leave of absence in term time. Leave of absence in term time is not a parental right. Head Teachers will not grant leave of absence in term time during September or times of testing in May and June, nor if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. However, there may be exceptional circumstances, for granting leave of absence in term time, which will be determined by the Head Teacher.

The exceptional circumstance criteria will focus on:

- a recent serious illness/bereavement of an immediate family member;
- a member of the Armed Forces whereby they need to undertake a tour of duty which conflicts with school holidays;
- restrictions on police leave, where a police officer has specific duties in relation to a national event which conflicts with school holidays.

Each parent will be informed in writing within 10 school days of the application being received.

Where the decision is made not to grant leave of absence in term time and the leave is taken without prior approval, or without application, each parent will be informed in writing of the decision to refer the matter to the local authority.

Where this is the case, the matter will be referred to the local authority for consideration of the issue of a penalty notice. In doing so, Skelton Primary School adheres to the local authority Penalty Notice Code of Practice in making the recommendation for the issue of penalty notices. A penalty notice may be issued to each parent/carer in respect of each child who has been absent. Further information on the code of practice can be found at redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/Attendance & Welfare Service.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Payment is made to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

To enhance safeguarding practice, the Trust requires an application for any leave of absence in term time to be completed (with the exception of medical absences). This includes where a child is participating in a sporting activity, performance, or where the absence is for religious observance. In such cases, the academy will make enquiry as to the safeguarding arrangements of any external provider, before agreeing to the absence. Evidence will be requested to support an application.

Travelling children

Where a child is to be absent from school to travel in the course of a parent's business, a letter is required to be written to the Head Teacher by the parent, giving details of the duration of the period of absence and the expected date of return. With this information, for short periods of absence, the school will consider authorising the absence. Where this information is not provided and the period of absence is in excess of 20 school days, the academy will remove the child from the school roll.



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Whilst travelling, ideally the child should be registered at another school. This will ensure that a child's learning continues. In such cases, the child will remain on the school roll as a dual registered pupil. If required, the school can help the parent/carer to identify a school in another area.

Alternative Provision

The school is responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, the school will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider, to provide attendance information. Where possible, this should be provided daily, at the least weekly. All unexplained and unexpected absences are to be followed up in a timely manner. S.P.S is expected to make challenges to an external provider which is not providing attendance information or following up absences.

Pupils may be present at an off-site activity which has been approved by the school. The appropriate code (B) is used in such cases and in using this code the academy is certifying the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard children. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work.

A pupil may be dual registered at more than one school. Where this is the case, the appropriate code (D) is used to indicate the pupil was not expected to attend the session as they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

Encouraging Good Attendance & Punctuality

S.P.S. will encourage good attendance and punctuality in the following ways:-

1. Parents will be informed of the schools' procedures for monitoring and recording school attendance. Further information for parents can be found on the website.
2. Attendance Assembly is held every Monday.
3. Attendance information is shared on the weekly 'Friday Flyer'.
4. Classroom door signs display the class' weekly total.
5. Parents are informed of individual data twice a year on school reports
6. Any family identified through the Care team are invited to attend a Nurture breakfast daily at 8am. Children can join the group and bring their family if they choose.

Acknowledging and Encouraging good attendance

- All the children who have 100% attendance in any one term receive a treat. (Children with medical appointments who have notified school and return to school within the school day will not compromise their attendance record)
- All children with 100% attendance (Sept- July) attend a celebration attendance trip in July (Y6 receive a voucher).
- Any class with 100% attendance for a week receive cookies in Attendance assembly.

Acknowledging and Encouraging good punctuality

- Any class with 100% attendance and punctuality for a day receive a gold coin to bank and invest in classroom wet playtime equipment of their choice



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Every Day Counts

As few as 19 missed days over the school year reduces a child's chances of success. Their SAT or GCSE results could drop by one grade across all subjects.

Education is important to all children regardless of ability. It builds a child's resilience and offers a safe and nurturing environment in which a child can learn lots of exciting new skills and knowledge every day, as well as learning to work with others and forging friendships which will support them through their childhood, with some friendships lasting well into adulthood.

Being organised the night before with appropriate bedtimes is an important and common sense approach to ensuring a child attends school and is ready to learn. Once established, this is a habit which will follow them through life.

Attendance in the latter years of a child's education can significantly impact on their opportunities when leaving school, with further education providers and prospective employers requiring references, for which the academy is legally bound to provide an honest and accurate account.

Any questions about this policy or further information and advice on school attendance matters or parenting support, can be obtained from the Family Support Worker.

Other useful contacts

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council 01642 774 774

Attendance & Welfare Service School Admissions

School Nurses & Health Visitors

Families Information Services (FIS)

0800 073 8800



Skelton Attendance / Punctuality Flow Chart

Attendance

- Fortnightly attendance meetings
- <97% monitored
- 95% letter a
- No improvement letter b
- 93% invitation meeting JS AW
- Referral to AWO
- prosecute

Punctuality

- 3 lates in one half term trigger the opening of a PUNCTUALITY CASE
 1. beginning of banking lost minutes
 2. explanations from slip accumulated
 3. half termly letter with lost minutes and reasons
- what else can we do?