

Seaford Primary School



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ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Seaford Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a 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 may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- ❖ **truancy before or during the school day**
- ❖ **absences which have never been properly explained**
- ❖ **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way,

the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures:

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- The school makes first day absence contact to establish reason for absence if the parent does not notify.
- Absence forms are completed by parents wishing to remove children in term time.
- No holidays in term time are authorised in line with ESCC policy, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Authorised absence is granted for exceptional compassionate circumstances, e.g. close family bereavement. See below.
- If a child's attendance falls below 95% or a child is persistently late, contact is made with parents or a letter is sent out to inform them of the fact and request that attendance rate is improved.

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Reporting a child's absence (see adaptations in response to COVID-19 in appendix (iii))

Parents are asked to ring the school **01323893450** and leave a message stating name, class and reason for absence before 8.45am. If a parent knows in advance that a child will be absent e.g. for a hospital appointment, then a letter can be sent in or the school secretary can be told before the day in question.

If a child is off for more than one day, the office will still need to be informed before 8.45 am each day and this is for safeguarding reasons.

If a child is off for more than three days, this would be concerning so a visit to a GP would be expected.

Late Arrivals (see appendix for COVID attendance timings)

At Seaford Primary School we take the register by:

- 8.45am in KS2 and
- 8.55am in KS1/EYFS

Children arriving after these times must enter the school by the office and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code L).

Pupils arriving late after the register has closed at 9.15 am will be marked as late after registration (Code U) and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will result in a letter being sent to parents. If no improvement is seen, a meeting will be generated to discuss reasons for lateness and targets for improvement with parents.

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time are likely to cause disruption to children's education. There is a form available from the school office which parents/ carers must use to inform the school of their intention to take a family holiday. The Headteacher will decide, with reference to the checklist provided by East Sussex County Council whether to authorise this holiday. In cases where the level of attendance is unacceptable or a child is removed from school for a period of more than 5 days without authorisation from the Headteacher, parents/ carers will be referred to the Attendance and Behaviour service, which may result in a subsequent fine. DFE and East Sussex County Council guidance is that holidays should not be authorised by Headteachers, unless there are exceptional circumstances. See appendix (iii)

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects: The School's attendance target for the forthcoming year is 96.5%. An attendance action plan is implemented in school and the attendance of all pupils, both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is monitored termly. Where an individual's attendance is persistently low, this monitoring may well take place weekly. To help us work with parents to improve attendance, we will be issuing letters or contacting parents when attendance drops below 95%. Parents will be invited into school if poor attendance persists. If attendance does not improve, we will refer a case to the ESBAS team.

The attendance of all children and vulnerable groups is monitored and prompt action is taken to follow up absence. Where a child is missing in education the Children Missing in Education policy is followed. The school has a rigorous safeguarding policy which is referred to in conjunction with this policy if we have safeguarding concerns.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Chris Davey (Headteacher) and Helen Crees (Deputy Headteacher)

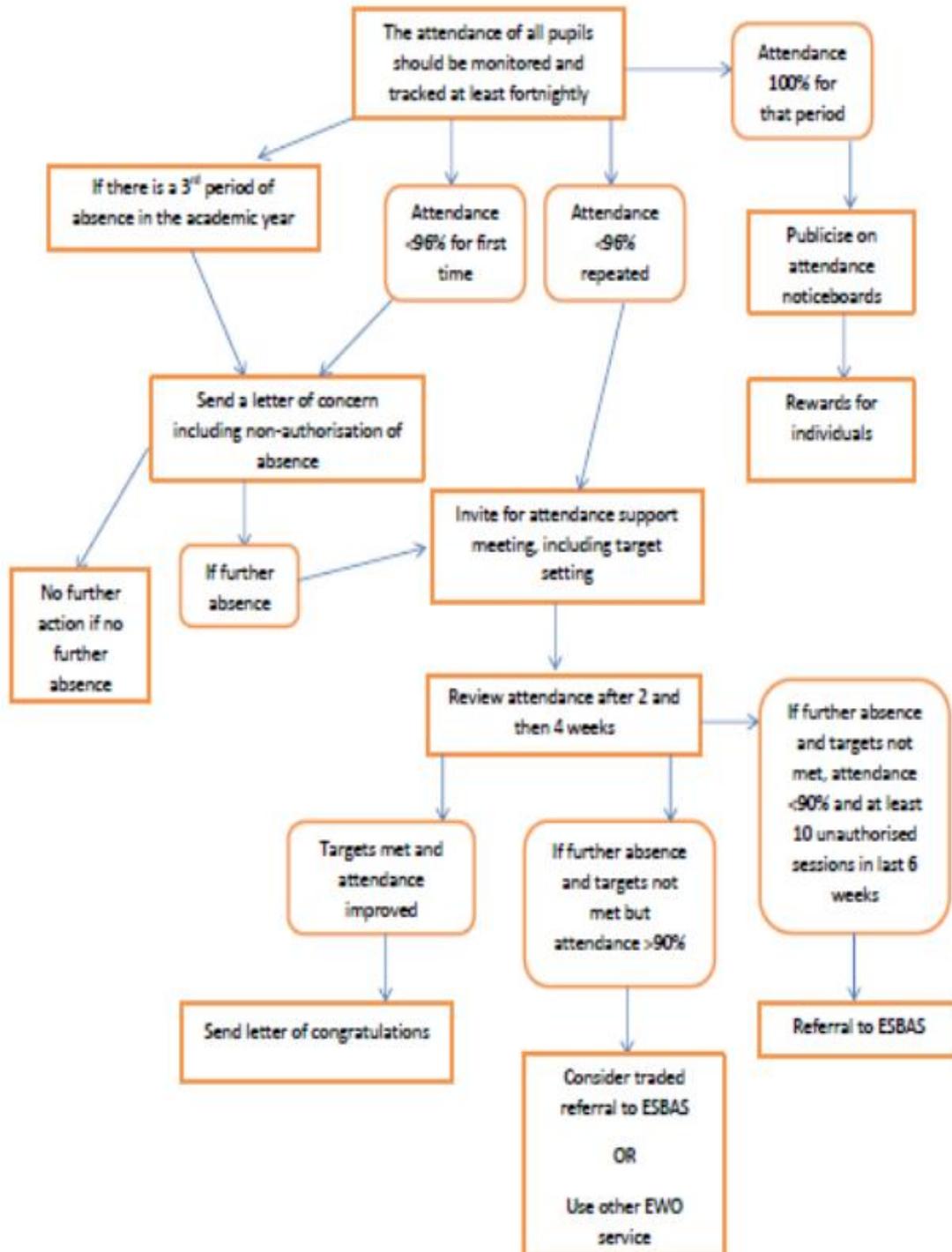
Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

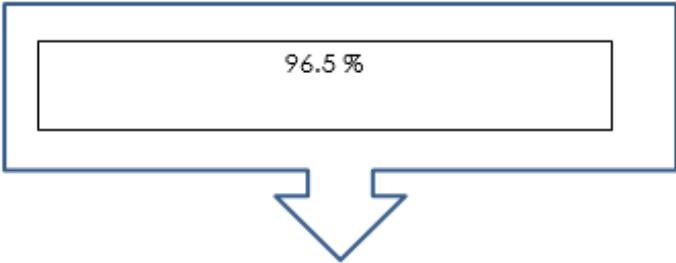
Date of last review October 2022

Appendix (i)

Monitoring and tracking attendance (East Sussex County Council)



Appendix (ii)



Exceptional Attendance

Individual 100% attendance rewarded termly via Class Dojo.

Highest class attendance certificates awarded.

All children with good or better attendance will be entered into a prize raffle at the end of the school year.

Low Attendance

Low attendance letter will be the first point of acknowledgement.

Attendance procedure is followed. See Appendix (i)

County Council involvement if there are no signs of change.

Appendix (iii)

COVID-19

With regards to school attendance during the Pandemic, the Government published the following:-

'Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education'

As the Government states, attendance is mandatory and, from September, our usual attendance procedures resume (these procedures are explained in the main body of this policy). In the event of children demonstrating Covid-19 symptoms, follow the reporting guidance below:-

Reporting your child's absence

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school, college or childcare, or do their normal activities

They can go back to school, college or childcare when they feel better or do not have a high temperature.

If your child has mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or mild cough, and they feel well enough, they can go to school, college or childcare.

Parents are asked to ring the school **01323893450** and leave a message stating name, class and reason for absence before 8.45am. You must inform us that your child has COVID-19 symptoms. Your child can return to school when they feel better or no longer have a temperature.

