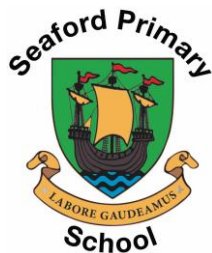


Seaford Primary School



Acting Headteacher: Suzannah Ayres
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Artsmark
Gold Award
Awarded by Arts
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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 Attendance Support Team or to the Early Help Keywork Level 2 Team for children severely absent (below 50% across two consecutive terms). 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. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.



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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.

Parents are asked to ring the school **01323893450** and leave a message stating name, class and reason for absence before 8.30m. 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. A copy of the appointment letter will need to be handed in to the school office.

If a child is off for more than one day, the office will still need to be informed before 8.30 am each day 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.

If the School receives information that confirms a child was absent for a different reason to the one given, the absence mark recorded may be changed to reflect the correct reason.

Late Arrivals

At Seaford Primary School we take the register **at**:

- 8.40am

Children arriving after these times must enter the school by the main office and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. Parents will need to complete a form giving the reason for being late.

The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code L) if they are signed in before 9am.

Pupils arriving late after the register has closed at 9.00 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 arranged 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 Local Authority, 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.

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 regularly. 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 Attendance Support 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. Children being absent, particularly repeatedly, and/or for prolonged periods and children missing education can act as a vital sign of a range of safeguarding issues and concerns will be reported to and monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Leads in line with Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE 2024).

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Suzannah Ayres (Acting Headteacher), Corinna Scott (Acting Deputy Headteacher) and Elaine Wattam (Lead DSL).

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 2024.