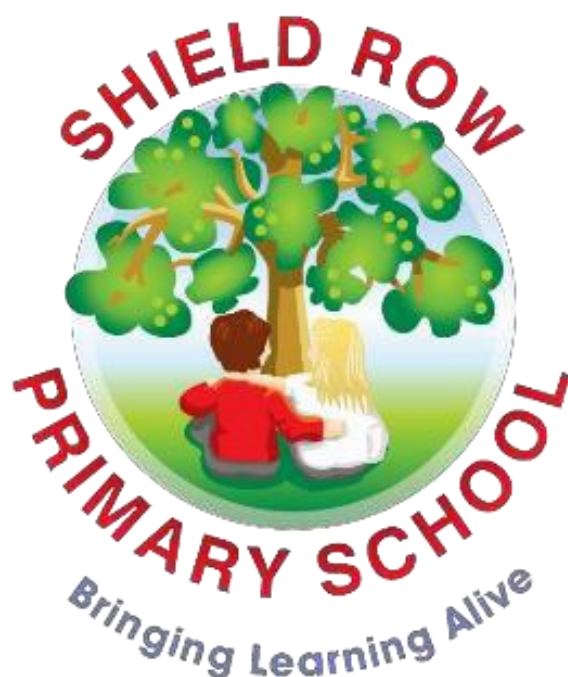


Shield Row Primary School



Attendance Policy

2024/2025

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Jill Cooke	Head Teacher / Senior Attendance Champion	01207 239661
Lisa Bambridge	Attendance Champion	office@shieldrow.co.uk
Helen Bainbridge	Office Manager	

If a pupil is going to be absent from school, parents/ carers should follow school's absence procedures:

- Inform school before 9:30am by telephone on the first day of absence. This can be done by calling 01207 239661 and selecting option 1, where you can leave a message. Alternatively, you can hold to speak to a member of staff.
- If leaving a message, please leave your child's full name, reason for absence and expected return date.

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Miss Cooke	Headteacher	01207 239661
Mrs Tyrrell-Scott	Pastoral Lead	
Miss Carolone Shield	SENDCo	

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school knows about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupils whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treated as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Shield Row Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer. Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date and are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The doors open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am so that registration can be completed and the school day can start promptly at 9am. Children should enter school via the playground doors between these times.

Registration is at 8:55am. The register will close at 9:20am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9:20am. Pupils who are not present before the register closes, but attend during the session, will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Miss Cooke if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded. School will also log how many minutes late they are.

If a child is late for school on a number of occasions

School will email parents/ carers to express early concerns and make an offer of support. This may include access to breakfast club, a soft start to the school day, meet and greets or a possible referral for external support.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

School will invite parents/ carers into school to discuss these concerns and identify any barriers. If, after an offer of support, lateness is still a concern, school will refer the case to the Local Authority.

Term dates and planned Inset days

All parents/ carers are sent a yearly planner in September which outlines term dates and teacher training days. These are also published on the school website.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent/ carer the pupil normally lives with completing the form. Leave of Absence forms can be requested at the school office and they are available to download from the school website.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school in-line with government guidance.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

School's Day to Day Procedures

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School by telephone before 9:30am providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school.

A text message will be sent to request a phone call to provide a reason for the absence. If school have still not been contacted by 10am, the office will phone the emergency contacts we have on file to ascertain a reason.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

If a pupil is not well enough to return to school on the day parents/ carers informed school was anticipated, parents/ carers will need to contact school and provide an update and a return date.

No reason for absence provided

If after school have sent a text message, and tried to phone the emergency contacts on file, and a reason for absence has not been given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

If there are concerns about a child's welfare, or a child has been absent for a period of time with no reason for absence provided, school will carry out a home visit and/ or contact children's services and in some cases the police.

Where 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the Local Authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

If a sickness absence follows an unauthorised leave of absence, school will seek evidence for the sickness absence. Failure to provide this will lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised and if the total absence equates to 5 or more days in a 10

week school period, it will be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice or relevant legal action.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

School will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters and on the school website
- Promote the benefits of high attendance to pupils through assemblies and rewards
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance;

Attendance data

School monitors pupil attendance daily following the procedures outlined above. In addition to this, pupil attendance data is analysed on a fortnightly basis. Children whose attendance drops below 94% are tracked carefully to ensure attendance rates don't continue to fall and to ensure there are no patterns to their absence.

For children whose attendance drops to 92% or below, school will flag up early concerns with parents/ carers via email.

If a child's attendance drops to 90% or below, school will invite parents carers into school for a meeting to discuss concerns and see what support – if any – is required.

This approach means poor patterns of attendance are addressed as soon as possible so that all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to other professionals where this is relevant.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent

School will work with families to identify and address any barriers to good school attendance. This may be Social and Emotional intervention, soft landings, access to breakfast club, in-school adaptations, referrals to external support services or a referral to Early Help.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent.

School will initiate meetings with parents/ carers as soon as a child's attendance drops to 90%. A plan of support will be drawn up to address any barriers. Support may be requested from external services such as the school nurse, the Emotional Wellbeing and Effective Learning team, CAMHS or support will be accessed through Early Help. The impact of this support plan will be reviewed every 4 weeks.

If, following a plan of support, attendance is not improving, school would seek support from the Attendance and Inclusion Team and a formal, planned approach will be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority to prevent severe absence (persistently absent pupils 70% or below).

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the Local Authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.

If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, school has considered its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying
- Safeguarding

APPENDIX 1

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

