Attendance Policy

Adoption by Governing Body:

September 2026

To Be Revised:

September 2027

Squirrels Heath Primary School Attendance Policy

Aims

- To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- To act early to address patterns of absence

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

The home school support worker:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the Local Authority education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Class teachers

- Are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

- Are responsible for responding to calls and e-mails from parents about absence and recording it on the school system.

Recording attendance

We record school attendance on class registers. Registers are taken at the start of the morning sessionand at the beginning of the afternoon session each day. Registers record whether pupils are absent or present.

Unplanned Absence

If a child is not attending school, the parent/carer, must contact the school **on the first day of absence and all subsequent days of illness**, in person, by e-mail (office@squirrelsheathprimary.org.uk) or by telephone (01708 446472 option 1) or via the school app before 9.30am stating briefly the reason for absence. If we do not receive information regarding a child's absence, we will call the parent or carer to find out the reason for absence and to ensure the child is safe. If we are unable to reach the parent or carer, we will ring the other contact numbers we have listed. The school takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously and if we are unable to reach anyone on the contact list, our Home School Support Worker will conduct a home visit. During the home visit our HSSW will attempt to speak to the parent/carer about the absence and will ask see the child.

If the school still has concerns about the absence or is unable to speak to parents/carers despite repeated attempts, we will refer the case to Local Authority Education Welfare Officer for further follow-up. Failure to provide an explanation for absence or medical evidence will result in the absence coded as unauthorised.

Appointments

Appointments (e.g. GP, dentist) should, where possible, be arranged outside of school hours. Where it is unavoidable and appointments have to be made during school hours, the school should be notified in advance. The appointment card or a note is acceptable. Parents are requested to minimise the amount of teaching time that the child will lose as a result of such appointments, by registering the child for the first lesson if the appointment is not until later in the morning / afternoon and ensuring that they return to school as soon as possible following the appointment.

Persistent Absence

At the end of each half term if a child's attendance falls below 95%, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer to make them aware that their child's attendance is causing concern. Parents may also be contacted by the Home School Support Worker to understand the barriers to good attendance. If the pupil's attendance fails to improve, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may contact parents to discuss the issues surrounding low attendance levels. Below is a table to show the impact persistent absence has on attendance:

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent days lost	Equivalent sessions lost	Equivalent weeks lost
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 weeks
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks

Lateness

It is very important that children arrive in good time for school. Pupils are permitted to enter the school from 8:30am onwards. Children in Reception must be in class at 8:40am and children in Yeas 1 to 6 at 8.45am when the registers are taken. Children arriving after 8.45am must report to the school office. They will be asked to give a reason for their late arrival. Where a consistent pattern of lateness is identified, the Home School Support Worker will contact parents to discuss the issue further. If the problem persists, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. Any pupil arriving after 9.20am will be marked as having arrived after close of registers and will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence. The table below shows the impact persistent lateness has on attendance:

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absences are those which the school agrees are unavoidable e.g. illness, or medical appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school considers unreasonable and for which no 'Leave of Absence' has been granted. These could include minor ailments, shopping trips and birthday celebrations.

If a child is absent leading up to or following a school holiday, the parent / carer will need to provide medical evidence in order for the absence to be recorded as authorised absence.

If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is important that parents/carers discuss the problem with the Home School Support Worker at the first opportunity rather than keeping the child at home. The parents may also contact the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the matter.

Leave of absence

Parents who wish to take their child out of school during term time, should fill in a Leave of Absence form which can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will consider the reason for absence as well as the child's progress and current attendance record. If the request is not granted, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised family holidays will be reported to the Local Authority who will issue parents with a Penalty Notice.

1st Offence - £80 fine – This will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days If payment is not received within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 and must be paid within 7 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 will result in prosecution in the magistrates' court.

2nd Offence within 3 years - £160 fine – This will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 within 21 days will result in prosecution in the magistrates' court.

3rd Offence within 3 years - This will result in prosecution in the magistrates' court. In cases where a child has moved between local authority areas, the authority for that area will be contacted to check whether a penalty notice/prosecution has been actioned.

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent or guardian liable for the attendance offence. This means if a child is residing with a parent and is taken on unauthorised leave with another parent or guardian, both would be issued with a penalty notice fine regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence

Religious Observances

We understand that parents may wish to take their child out of school for religious observances. The school will authorise no more than one day, per religious observance, for this purpose. In these instances, parents are requested to fill in a Leave of Absence Request form and return it to the school office in advance of the intended absence. Please be aware that the school may seek supporting evidence from the parents' religious body to support the applications.

Reporting to Parents

Parents / Carers receive information about attendance and lateness in their child's termly report and End of Year Report.

Strategies the school uses to encourage good attendance and punctuality

- We monitor absence and lateness rigorously and meet with the Education Welfare officer every four weeks to discuss pupils who are causing concern.
- Parents are reminded regularly about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through newsletters.
- Display boards are located near each pupil entrance to remind parents about the impact of school absence on a child's education and well-being.
- Letters are sent to parents/carers when a pupil's attendance or punctuality is causing a concern.
- The Home School Support Worker may meet with parents to discuss barriers to good attendance and punctuality.
- The importance of regular and punctual attendance is highlighted to pupils in assemblies.
- A display in the school hall shows weekly attendance figures.
- Attendance awards are given to children with attendance above 97% at the end of the academic year.