

# Summerfield School



*The Best You Can Be - Everyone, Every Day*

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Approved:** June 2019  
**Review:** June 2020

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Summerfield, we recognise the importance of regular school attendance and believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also vitally important that children arrive and leave school on time.

Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

### **The Law**

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering the child at a school or by arranging an effective alternative to school.

Local Authorities have various powers to ensure that parents meet their duties.

### **Responsibilities of Parents**

**All requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on a leave of absence form (*Appendix A*) obtained from the school office.**

There are legal obligations on parents to secure education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise, and to send them to school regularly once they are on the school roll. It is your legal responsibility to ensure your child's fullest possible attendance during school hours.

If the school is to achieve its attendance targets, parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education, and support the school in the following ways:

- ensure the fullest possible attendance
- when absence is unavoidable, please contact the school by telephone by 9am or via ParentMail absence
- when absence continues for more than a day, contact the school by 'phone or in person
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time for 8:55am registration
- If no reason is given for the absence, then a letter will be sent home requesting this information (*Appendix B*)

### **The Role of Ofsted**

The school's Ofsted grade is dependent on pupil's attendance and punctuality and it is important that parents support the school to achieve high attendance and punctuality.

Ofsted Guidance September 2018 – Attendance and Punctuality

Inspectors will consider:

- overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups in relation to national figures for all pupils
- the extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons.

## The Role of the School

It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to deal with problems which may lead to non-attendance. The school will employ strategies to improve and encourage good attendance. The Headteacher will inform governors termly of the school's attendance analysis.

## The Importance of Registration

Registers are important legal documents and are kept securely. The law requires schools to call the register twice-a-day:

- at the start of the morning session, i.e. 8.55am;
- once during the afternoon session. At Summerfield, the register is called at the start of the afternoon session, i.e. 1.30pm.

Calling the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by staff, children and parents. Children are marked either present or absent. Particular attention is given to accurate registration; staff use consistent rules and coding for registration.

When a child is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. This information is entered onto the computer by an office administrator.

## Notification of Absence

All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent by 9am, giving a reason for the absence. This can be done by:

- **telephone:** an office administrator will then pass the message to the class teacher and enter the reason for absence directly onto the computer;
- **ParentMail:** via the absence tab. This will inform the office administrator who will enter the reason for absence onto the computer;
- **in person:** an explanation may be given personally to either the class teacher or an office administrator when the child returns to school.

If no notification is received about a child's absence, the following protocol will be actioned:

- Call to parents using the priority listing on contact sheets
- SMS message notifying that an absence has not been reported
- Should no contact be made, a home visit will take place by a member of school staff

## School Responses to Absence

### Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Where a child is absent at the time of registration, the law requires schools to indicate on their attendance register whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or that an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted. The law requires that absences not agreed in advance are recorded as unauthorised, unless (and until) a satisfactory explanation is given.

By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents. The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence if it doubts the explanation. If the school is satisfied that the circumstances are both genuine and exceptional, the absence may be authorised.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can disrupt continuity of learning. The school will, therefore, watch for emerging patterns of authorised absence by individual children.

### **Examples of Unauthorised Absence**

The school cannot accept any of the following as a reason to authorise an absence:

- shopping during school hours;
- special occasions, e.g. birthdays;
- no uniform, shoes, etc.;
- overslept;
- haircut;
- false illnesses;
- at home due to family illness.
- Children arriving at school after the register has closed (Arriving after 9:20)
- Family Holidays
- Routine dental appointments

### **Parents can support their child by:**

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

### **Holidays During Term Time**

- Headteachers are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school in term time for holiday. If you take a holiday which is not authorised by the school, then they may refer the matter to the Local Authority who will consider the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Summerfield follows the Local Authorities guidance.
- If Parents/Carers take children out of school for a holiday which results in the child missing 10 or more sessions (5 school days), a referral may be sent to the Local Authority. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are issued to each parent and are for each child. A FPN is £60 if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.
- The school will follow the guidance as set out in the 'School Attendance Enforcement Policy in relation to non-school attendance and Code of Conduct for the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices'.

### **Examples of Authorised Absence**

- *Sickness/Illness of the Child:* if the school is satisfied that a child is absent as a result of illness, the absence must be treated as authorised. Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school can refer the matter to the School Nursing Team or make contact with the child's GP, with parental permission. If a child is absent for a prolonged period or the school notices a pattern of absence emerging, early contact will be made with the School Nursing Team.

- *Medical and Dental Appointments:* leave for medical or dental appointments requested by the organisation for treatment or procedures may be authorised (however this will still be recorded as an absence from school). It would be preferable if parents would make such appointments out of school hours. Routine dental checks should be taken out of school hours.

Where a child is present for registration, but then has to leave school to attend an appointment, the School Business Manager / Administrator must record in the signing out book that the child, although registered, is not physically present. Similarly, the School Business Manager / Administrator will note in the late book, the presence of a child who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

- *Close Family Bereavement:* the school will respond sensitively to requests for leave of absence for close family bereavements.
- *Days of Religious Observance:* children may be absent from school in order to participate in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Parents should give the school advance notification of religious observance days on a leave of absence form (*Appendix A*).

Both in the school prospectus, at the new intake evening and as part of a new child induction pack, parents are informed that family holidays within term time will not be authorised so that their child's education is not disrupted. Parents will also be reminded termly in a Headteacher's Newsletter.

In exceptional circumstances, parents are asked to write a letter to the Headteacher outlining the circumstances. A meeting may be organised with the Headteacher to discuss the request focusing on the child's progress, current attendance, any previous term time absences, whether the absence coincides with a key assessment period and also the nature of exceptional circumstance. The school will respond in writing to these requests. Absences are counted as an unauthorised absence on the register but the reason for the absence is recorded so that no further action is taken.

If a family takes extended leave, their child's place at Summerfield may be at risk if they fail to return to school on the agreed date. Subsequently, a meeting will take place to discuss the child's place where the parents will have the opportunity to provide evidence of extenuating circumstances. If the child's place has been withdrawn; following this meeting, the parents will need to reapply to the local authority for a school place. Parents need to be aware that this may not necessarily be at Summerfield School.

All requests for leave will be responded to using a leave of absence response form (*Appendix C*)

## **Exclusions**

Where a child has been temporarily excluded [fixed term or permanent], he or she will remain on the school roll. The absence will be regarded as authorised. Once a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the child will be removed from the school roll.

## **Parental Concerns**

Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All the staff at Summerfield are concerned about children's regular attendance and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes, little things upset children, which mean they become unhappy and may not want to attend school. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and, hopefully, resolved.

The class teacher or a member of the learning mentor team will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these will be discussed with the parent/guardian and appropriate action taken.

### **Lateness**

It is our policy at Summerfield to actively discourage the late arrival of children at school. A child who arrives late may seriously disrupt not only his or her continuity of learning but also that of others. A firm line is taken on late arrivals. Where children miss registration altogether, they are marked in the late book along with their time of arrival with the reason for lateness. Particular attention is paid to emerging patterns of late arrival. If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, then the Headteacher will contact the parent concerned to notify them about this. If a child arrives between 9.05am and 9.20am then they will be considered late. Arrival after 9.20am is an unauthorised absence as the school registers are closed from this time. Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice. Parents may be requested to attend a meeting at school to discuss how the child's punctuality can be improved (*Appendix D*).

### **Communication with Pupils**

At Summerfield we believe that children need to develop an awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Attendance is celebrated regularly in the following ways to support this:

- Weekly Attendance trophies awarded to the class with the highest attendance in each Key Stage.
- Attendance display in the school hall to celebrate achievements.
- Termly certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% attendance.
- Certificates for improved attendance will be awarded when appropriate.
- School newsletters regularly identify class attendance.
- Medals awarded at the end of the school year for 100% attendance for the year.

### **Communication with Parents**

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

- All children, including those joining mid-year, are issued with a copy of 'Attendance Matters' (*Appendix E*). (Dual language versions are available and advertised)
- **School Prospectus:** information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the school prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.
- **Children starting in Early Years:** Early Years staff liaise with pre-schools to discuss any attendance issues. At the new intake evening held for children about to enter our Foundation Stage, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being collected at the end of the day on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only child left in the building. This information is repeated by Early Years staff when they conduct their home visits prior to children starting school.

- **Mobile Children:** children are also admitted to school at various times of the year into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are given a tour of the school. Upon allocation of a place, an appointment for the parent to meet the Headteacher or Deputy Head will be made. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance will be highlighted, along with other school routines.
- **Parent Consultation Meetings:** individual attendance data is shared at parent consultation meetings and discussions take place where attendance or lateness may be an issue.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

The Attendance team looks at individual pupil attendance regularly and analyses individual data monthly to identify patterns of absence/lateness. Where concerns are highlighted, parents are informed in writing of their child's attendance (*Appendix F*). The impact this may have on their education and steps which may be taken if the attendance does not improve will also be discussed. Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's attendance at an Attendance Panel with the Learning Mentor, to explore ways of improving attendance (*Appendix G*). Targets are agreed upon and a review date is set. If attendance improves then a letter is sent to parents to inform them of the improvements and to congratulate the child. If it does not improve, then further Attendance Panel meetings will take place with the SENCo or Headteacher.

### **The Role of the LA**

LAs are charged in law with enforcing school attendance and must ensure that schools and parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations including, where necessary, the taking of action through the courts.

## APPENDIX A



**Summerfield School**

*The Best You Can Be – Everyone, Every Day*

Downley Avenue,  
Bradwell Common  
MILTON KEYNES  
MK13 8PG

01908 662585  
office@summerfieldschool.org  
www.summerfieldschool.org

Headteacher: Ian Fraser

### Leave of Absence Application

We all wish that our children make the most of their skills, talents and opportunities. Regular attendance at school is vital if we are to achieve this aim. Without regular attendance, the learning process is **disrupted** and children do not achieve their full potential. **Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking family holidays during term time as this significantly affects educational progress.**

There is *no right* to take a child out of school for such a holiday. In certain exceptional circumstances leave of absence can be authorised. Applications should be made to the Headteacher who may grant up to 10 school days in a school year. Permission will not be granted for leave of absence during SATS week in May or if attendance is below 90%. This legal situation is defined under regulation 12 of the Education (Schools & FE) Regulations 1981.

I request that ..... (name of child/children)

Class: ..... be granted leave of absence FROM: ..... TO: .....

Please state clearly the reason for the request:

.....  
.....

Signature Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

.....  
(For School use)

Child/children's name ..... Class: ...../.....

Absence from ..... to .....

Application for leave of absence  authorised  unauthorised

Reason why absence has not been agreed:

We can only agree absence in exceptional circumstances.

Signed ..... Headteacher Date: .....





If you wish to discuss this application, please contact the school.

Current office files/Attendance/Leave of Absence application













## APPENDIX B

 <p><b>Summerfield School</b> The Best You Can Be – Everyone, Every Day</p>	<p>Downley Avenue, Bradwell Common MILTON KEYNES MK13 8PG</p> <p>01908 662585 office@summerfieldschool.org www.summerfieldschool.org</p> <p>Headteacher: Ian Fraser</p>
<p>6<sup>th</sup> February 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Leave of absence</b></p> <p>Dear</p> <p><b>Re: Attendance – Leave of Absence</b></p> <p>I refer to your request for leave of absence for.....for .....school days from September inclusive. However, the school's policy, as directed by Central Government, is that absence due to holidays in term time is <b>not authorised</b>.</p> <p>Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, for the benefit of the student's education or to represent a team locally or nationally.</p> <p>Statistically, whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, it is still recorded as an absence and as such can have a negative impact on learning.</p> <p>Although we, as a school, cannot prevent you taking unauthorised leave of absence, in cases of this nature the matter is referred to the Senior Attendance Officer (Legal Interventions) and can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent per child.</p> <p>Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p><b>Mr Ian Fraser</b> Headteacher</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"></div>	

## APPENDIX C

	<b>Summerfield School</b> <i>The Best You Can Be – Everyone, Every Day</i>	Downley Avenue, Bradwell Common MILTON KEYNES MK13 8PG  01908 662585 office@summerfieldschool.org www.summerfieldschool.org  Headteacher: Ian Fraser
<p>7 February 2020 6<sup>th</sup> February 20207 February 20207 February 2020</p>		
<h3>Medical Absence</h3>		
Dear		
<b>Re: Attendance – Medical Absence</b>		
I am writing regarding .... attendance which is currently at %		
I realise that there may be genuine reasons for <u>....</u> absences and note that the reasons recorded include illness.		
This level of absence however is likely to affect learning. I therefore would request that all further absence on the grounds of illness and medical appointments are verified by the medical profession. This is in order for it to be recorded as an authorised absence. I enclose a medical card for this purpose.		
..... attendance level will be reviewed regularly and if it has not improved, it may be necessary to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.		
Yours sincerely		
<b>Mr Ian Fraser</b> Headteacher		
		

## APPENDIX D

	<b>Summerfield School</b> <u>The Best You Can Be</u> – Everyone, Every Day	Downley Avenue, Bradwell Common MILTON KEYNES MK13 8PG  01908 662585 office@summerfieldschool.org www.summerfieldschool.org  Headteacher: Ian Fraser
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2020		
<b>Lateness</b>		
Dear		
<b>Re: Attendance – Lateness</b>		
I am writing to draw your attention due to the unacceptable and ongoing level of lateness in respect of..... who has been late on ..... occasions amounting to ..... minutes late.		
The school day starts at 8.45am and it is vital for your child's education that he/she arrives on time.		
I would therefore ask that you make whatever arrangements you consider necessary to resolve this situation. If you wish to discuss this matter <u>further</u> then please contact me on 01908 662585 and I will get back to you as soon as possible.		
I look forward to seeing an improvement in ..... punctuality.		
Yours sincerely		
  <b>Mrs</b> Kate Stuart <b>Attendance Lead</b>		
		



# Attendance Matters!

A guide for parents & carers of children at Summerfield School

At Summerfield School, we believe that encouraging good attendance is the best way parents & guardians can support the school to ensure their child becomes the best they can be whilst they are with us.

### Did you know?

Percentage attendance	Days absent	Impact on child's success at school	Future potential
100% excellent	None	Pupils with these levels of attendance should achieve their full potential and have a really good start in life.	Very good chance of 5 or more 1-5 grades at GCSE
96% good	6 days – 12 sessions		
95% satisfactory	10 days – 20 sessions	Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their targets but will have to work harder to get there.	75% chance of 5 x 1 – 5 grades at GCSE
90% unsatisfactory	19 days absent – 38 sessions	Pupils at 90% have missed almost a whole month of school and are in real danger of falling behind in Maths and English. They will have a lot to catch up on and it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.	50% chance of 5 x 1-5 grades at GCSE.
Below 90% poor	Between 4 and 6 weeks missed.	Deemed 'persistent absence' and must be reported to the authority.	
85% serious concern	29 days – 58 sessions – equivalent to 6 weeks or a whole half term.	This time cannot be made up and pupils will find it very difficult to achieve the best that they could.	Less than 30% chance of 1 – 5 grades at GCSE

The equivalent of 1 week a term for a child's school life equates to 1 whole year of schooling missed – this can never be regained and limits a child's potential for success

At Summerfield School, to encourage good attendance we:

- Present trophies weekly to the class with the best attendance in each of the three Key Stages
- Celebrate the winning classes of the trophies with a display in the hall and in the entrance area
- Report attendance regularly in the Headteacher's newsletter
- Present certificates termly to individual children for excellent attendance
- Closely monitor attendance of groups and all individual children
- Inform parents termly of their child's attendance
- Make sure that all stakeholders know that holidays can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and that authorisation should be requested in writing prior to the absence.
- Encourage all parents/ guardians to read the school's attendance policy so they are aware of support available as well as possible sanctions.

At Summerfield School, when attendance is a concern we may:

- Write to parents/ guardians to let them know that attendance has become a concern
- Invite parents/ guardians in to meet with the Learning Mentor to discuss how the school and home can work together to improve attendance
- Invite parents/ guardians in to meet with the Headteacher to review lack of improvement in attendance. This meeting will discuss further strategies that might be implemented to secure improvement as well as consequences that could be actioned should improvement not occur
- Issue fixed penalty notices for persistent poor attendance or for unauthorised holiday



**All requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on a leave of absence form obtained from the school office at least a week in advance with the exception of emergencies.**

Headteachers are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school in term time for holiday. If you take a holiday which is not authorised by the school then they may refer the matter to the Local Authority who will consider the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Summerfield follows the Local Authorities guidance.

The school cannot accept any of the following as a reason to authorise an absence:





- shopping during school hours;
- special occasions, e.g. birthdays;
- no uniform, shoes, etc.;
- overslept;
- haircut;
- false illnesses;
- at home due to family illness.
- Children arriving at school after the register has closed (Arriving after 9:20)
- Family Holidays
- Routine dental appointments

All requests for leave will be responded to using a leave of absence response form.

Thank you for your continuing support to get your child to school, on time, every day for them to make the most of their time at Summerfield.







## APPENDIX F

	<b>Summerfield School</b> <u>The Best You Can Be</u> – Everyone, Every Day	Downley Avenue, Bradwell Common MILTON KEYNES MK13 8PG  01908 662585 office@summerfieldschool.org www.summerfieldschool.org  Headteacher: Ian Fraser
<b>Lateness</b>		
Dear		
<b>Re: Attendance for «forename» «surname» «year» «reg»</b>		
I write to advise you that «forename»'s attendance level is at «percentage_attendance»%. I realise that there may be genuine reasons for «forename»'s absences, but I write to inform you in the hope that the attendance level will rise before it begins to affect learning.		
In two <u>weeks time</u> the attendance level will be reviewed and if it has not risen, I may write to you again.		
Should you wish to discuss this matter please contact me on 01908 662585		
Yours sincerely		
<b>Mrs Kate Stuart</b> <b>Attendance Lead</b>		
		



## APPENDIX G

 <p><b>Summerfield School</b> The Best You Can Be – Everyone, Every Day</p>	<p>Downley Avenue, Bradwell Common MILTON KEYNES MK13 8PG</p> <p>01908 662585 office@summerfieldschool.org www.summerfieldschool.org</p> <p>Headteacher: Ian Fraser</p>
<h3>School Attendance: <b>Warning Letter</b></h3> <p>Dear</p> <p><b>Re: School Attendance – Warning Letter</b></p> <p><b>NAME:</b>                      <b>DOB:</b>                      <b>YEAR:</b> 3                      <b>SCHOOL:</b> Summerfield Primary</p> <p>I write to advise you that you could face a legal sanction if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually.</p> <p>During the period of .....to ..... the school was open for sessions and ..... attended on .....occasions he/she was late on .....occasions and after the register closes on .....occasions. Your child's overall attendance is .....</p> <p>Section 7 of The Education Act, 1996 states that you have a legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school; therefore, if your child's attendance does not improve the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who will commence legal proceedings. This could mean, under the terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to you and a fine of £60 will become payable in 21 days or £120 will be payable after 21 days but within 28 days. A Notice could be issued three weeks after the date of this letter, if there is no improvement in your child's attendance or punctuality. This warning is in place for 12 (twelve) <u>schools</u> weeks as set out in the Milton Keynes Code of Conduct for their issue.</p> <p>Alternatively, you will be invited to an Attendance Panel Meeting at your child's school. If there is no improvement after the interview, legal sanctions will commence and you will be invited to a formal caution interview as required by the PACE Act* which will lead to a prosecution in the magistrates' court under Section 444 (1) or Section 444 (1a) Education Act, 1996: if convicted you will receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment for an "aggravated" offence or a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for a Level 3 offence.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p><b>Mrs Kate Stuart</b> <b>Attendance Lead</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"></div>	