



South Park Primary School

Absence or Sickness Policy

Our Aims and Rationale

In South Park our purpose is to

- (1) Raise achievement and attainment
- (2) Inspire learners
- (3) Transform learning
- (4) Work in partnership to strengthen our communities

One of our key priorities is to ensure that inclusion and equality are at the heart of what we do. Children and young people are more likely to be motivated to attend school when they feel fully included, engaged and involved in the wider life of the school. Promoting good attendance requires schools to promote positive relationships within an Inclusive ethos and culture. Absence from school, whatever the cause, disrupts learning, can have an adverse impact on participation, attainment, peer relationships, health and wellbeing and ultimately positive life outcomes for our young people. Therefore, at South Park, we endeavour to work closely with parents in encouraging all children to attend school.

Promoting good attendance extends to encouraging children and young people to arrive at school on time and proactively addresses habitual lateness.

What is School Attendance?

Attendance is defined as participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school, including:

- (1) Attendance at school
- (2) Learning out-with the school provided through Google Classroom or an alternative learning provider while still on the roll of the school
- (3) Interviews, visits and experiences (day and residential) relating to all aspects of the curriculum and taking place in a location out-with the school

Impact of attendance at school

The cumulative impact of missed days at school can have detrimental and long lasting consequences and can have significant impact on positive destinations and outcomes for children and young people.

The table below illustrates the cumulative effect and potential impact of school absence on pupil outcomes.

Table - Cumulative Effects of Missed Days at School

100 Attendance	%	0 Days missed	Gives a child and young person the best chance of success and ensures that their full potential is achieved
95% Attendance		9 Days of Absence 1 week and 4 days learning missed	Is likely to make it harder to achieve full potential and secure the best possible outcomes
90% Attendance		19 days of Absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	
85% Attendance		27 Days of Absence 5 weeks and 3 days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	Is likely to impact significantly on learning and progress which can lead to poorer outcomes in achievement, wellbeing and social and emotional development
80% Attendance		36 days of Absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed Half of a term missed	
75% Attendance		45 Days of Absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed Almost 1 whole term missed	
If a pupil by the end of S5 has 90% attendance, in aggregate over their school career, they will have the equivalent of <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ a day off per week• 18 days off per year• 247 days off over their school career of 12 academic years, equivalent to over 1 year of lost education			

Recording Absence

All absences from school are required by law to be recorded.

Absences will normally fall under two categories – authorised and unauthorised absence. (See **Appendix 1** for more detailed breakdown and classification of absence and lateness)

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised when no valid reason for the absence is perceived or provided. Such absence may be:

- (1) Family holidays during term time
- (2) Occasional absence without parent/carer awareness
- (3) Longer term absence (home, community and school related issues)
- (4) Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse

Family holidays during term time should be recorded as unauthorised, other than in exceptional circumstances, which may include where a parent/carer's employment is of a nature where school holiday leave cannot be accommodated. If an employer's letter advising of annual leave outwith the school holidays is produced, then the absence will be recorded as 'Parental Holiday – Authorised'.

Assessment of Long Term or Frequent Absence – Staged Intervention

At South Park, absences are closely monitored. Where a child or young person's absence is long term or frequent and therefore causing concern, a staged intervention process will commence beginning with school-based intervention, leading to multi-agency intervention where necessary.

Stage 1 - Parent or guardian will be contacted by phone or an informal meeting arranged to discuss cause for concern, assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them.

Stage 2 – *An appropriate attendance letter will then be issued to the parent or guardian expressing cause for concern. A further meeting with senior management will be arranged to discuss cause for concern, assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them.*

Stage 3 - If attendance continues to be a concern, the school will contact the parent or guardian again to discuss cause for concern, assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them. In addition, the school will also request assistance from other education personnel as appropriate; Youth, Family and Community Learning Service; Education Psychological Services; Specialist Support Team; KEAR; Pathfinders Project etc.

Stage 4 – The school will continue to assess and monitor attendance. Senior management will arrange another meeting with parent or guardian to discuss cause for concern, assess possible barriers to attendance and wellbeing and identify supports to overcome them. Furthermore, the school will request assistance from other agencies: social work; health; police; housing as appropriate and possibly move to refer to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

*(See **Appendix 2** for more detailed breakdown of steps and **Appendix 3** for staged intervention letters)*

Procedures for Reporting Absence or Sickness

Parental Responsibilities

- If you know in advance of any reason why your child is likely to be absent from school, please inform the school by phone or email.
- Notify the school first thing in the morning when your child is going to be absent **stating the reason** for absence. Let the school know the **likely date of return** and keep them informed if the date changes.
- Ensure that your child gets to school on time.
- Keep the school informed of any changes to contact details (home phone number/address, mobile number, emergency contact details, medical information)
- Requests for your child to be absent from school, including extended visits to relatives must be made in writing to the Head Teacher, detailing the reason, destination and duration of absence and arrangements for their continuing education. On these occasions, the pupil will be marked as an authorised absentee in the register.

The safety and well-being of our pupils is paramount and we ask parents to closely follow our Absence Reporting Procedures.

Staff Responsibilities

- Each school has a designated member of staff with responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children and young people. This involves liaison with the child/young person and their parent/carer, members of staff
- Recording of attendance should take place twice a day to enable the school to note attendance and absence for each morning and afternoon session.
- Class teachers should contact the office by 9.15 or 1.15 to inform of any children absent from class.
- Teachers should keep an attendance log about pupil absence including details of date, time, reason and anticipated date of return.

Office Responsibilities

- The use of text messaging can be an effective way of trying to establish the reason for an absence quickly. Schools should endeavour to send a text notification to the key contact within **one hour** of the beginning of the morning and/or afternoon sessions and this should be logged.
- If the text message isn't replied to, then the office should attempt to phone to ascertain reason for absence.
- A log should be kept containing details of all communications about the absence - date, time of call or text, letter, school staff involved, anticipated date of return.
- Registers are issued at the beginning and end of the week and attendance recorded on Seemis.

At South Park we aspire to reach excellence in all that we do...