

SHERSTON C OF E

PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

Date Approved	Review Date	Signed
July 2025	July 2026	

Year	Amendments (in Yellow)
2025	Evidence of medical appointments

Rationale

At Sherston Primary School, we recognize that regular school attendance is essential for children and young people to fully benefit from educational opportunities and to develop into emotionally resilient, confident adults capable of realizing their full potential and making a positive contribution to their community. School is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults.

We are committed to providing high-quality education for all our pupils and strive to create an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

This policy reflects our commitment to support pupils in achieving 100% attendance. It outlines the principles, procedures, and practices the school will undertake, strategies to improve attendance, rewards and benefits of good attendance, as well as the sanctions and potential legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary, and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Aims

We believe that the foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents, and the child. This includes clear communication with parents and pupils regarding our expectations to secure excellent attendance.

At Sherston Primary School, we will:

- Provide regular information about attendance through newsletters.
- Include attendance information in reports about your child's performance and how any absence may affect their attainment.
- Discuss attendance at Parent Consultation meetings.
- Work with you and your child to achieve maximum attendance.

At Sherston Primary School, we expect:

- Pupils to arrive at school every day on time.
- Parents to work with the school to ensure their child attends regularly.

Legal Framework

Ensuring a child receives education is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents, this means registering their child at a school. Permitting unauthorized absence from school creates an offense in law, and parents/carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance may be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for prosecution.

To avoid this, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance and ensure full-time attendance.

Authorised absences are those agreed by the headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided or the headteacher has not agreed.

Partnership Working - Roles and Responsibilities

Research suggests that a pupil who misses 9% (17 days) of school a year will drop one GCSE grade in attainment (DfE).

- 95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year.

- 90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year.
- 85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year.
- 80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week in a school year.

A secondary-age pupil with 80% attendance will have missed one whole year of education by the time they leave school.

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” (National Audit Office)

At Sherston Primary School, attendance is the responsibility of everyone in our school community. The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

We expect parents and carers to work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed, and ready to learn.
- Working in partnership with us to help their child appreciate the importance of regular school attendance.
- Taking an active interest in their child’s education.
- Collaborating with us and other agencies to resolve problems related to non-attendance.

Procedures

Our school attendance target is 96%. This means we expect each pupil to have 100% attendance. Pupils who miss just three days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving the attendance target set by the governing board.

Legally, the school register must be taken twice a day. At Sherston Primary School, the register is taken at 9:00 am (morning registration) and once during the afternoon session at 1:00 pm. The registers will remain open for 10 minutes. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close), which counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where a pupil has a regular pattern of absence.

Parents are asked to:

- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Contact the school before the start of the school day at 01666 840237.
- Keep the school informed in cases of ongoing absence. A note from home does not mean an absence becomes authorised; the decision to authorise an absence remains with the school.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside school hours unless urgently needed. **Please note the school reserves the right to request evidence of any term time appointments.**

- Inform the school if their child will be late, providing the reason and expected time of arrival.
- Only request leave of absence/holiday during term time for exceptional circumstances. The process for requesting leave of absence is detailed further in this policy.

We will contact the parent/carer if a child is absent without prior notification. Parents can expect contact on every occasion of an un-notified absence. The attendance manager will phone parents within 30 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents/carers, we will contact nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence, in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If, after three days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made, a home visit will be made by school staff to ascertain your child's safety and well-being.

After ten days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME), and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of the child.

Collecting Your Child from School

We ask that all parents/carers ensure they can collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3:10 pm. If parents cannot collect their child as usual, they must inform the school of the alternative arrangements. We will not release children to anyone not previously advised to us. If children remain uncollected, we will contact all the contacts on the parents' contact form. If the child is still not picked up, the police will be contacted.

Requesting Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education guidance, leave of absence for holidays during term time will not be authorised, even in exceptional circumstances.

Parents must complete a leave of absence request form outlining the exceptional circumstances. Forms must be submitted in advance of the requested dates, with at least two weeks' notice unless in an emergency.

We do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence. Any absence not advised in advance will be unauthorised.

Requests will be considered by the headteacher, and parents will be informed of the decision. Evidence may be required if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday due to travel delays or sickness.

Any illness three days leading up to or after the school holidays may be subject to a requirement for a doctor's note to avoid the absence being marked as unauthorised.

Where unauthorised leave of absence totals ten or more sessions (a school day is made up of one morning and one afternoon session) within ten weeks, parents will be issued a penalty notice of £160 per parent/carer per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued within three years is charged at £160.

Consequences of Persistent and Severe Absence

At Sherston Primary School, we will work with you to address any attendance concerns, possibly through an attendance contract between school and family. If unresolved, we may refer you to the local authority. The Education Welfare Service can:

Issue a penalty notice carrying a fine of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice within three years will be charged at £180. Court action will be initiated if unpaid.

Initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines up to £2,500, orders such as Parenting Orders, or imprisonment.

Take action under the Children Act 1989 to protect the child's welfare and development.

Strategies for Improving and Maintaining Good Attendance

Sherston Primary School promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and valued. If specific issues impact your child's attendance, talk to us for support. We may involve other agencies to understand and encourage regular attendance. We welcome feedback from children and parents to shape how we address attendance issues and reward excellent attendance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed annually by governors and school staff to ensure it meets the needs of the school community. We will ensure the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance to assure parents of our standards.