



# Shakespeare

Primary School

**Shakespeare Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

2024-2025

## **Introduction**

Shakespeare Primary School is committed to providing a broad and balanced education for all pupils and strives to help each child attain his/her full potential. Attending school everyday is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life. It is also important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparations for adult life. The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Clarify the procedures followed by the school with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- Clarify the role of the Parents/Carers.

## **The School expects all Parents/Carers to:**

- Take responsibility for their child/ren attending every day and arriving on time (8.45am).
- Inform the school immediately and provide a reason if their child is going to be late.
- Accompany their child to the school office if they arrive late.
- Sign in the at the school office and provide the reason their child is late.
- Ensure their child has received their school mark and a late slip.
- Immediately inform school of any change of address or telephone number so that they can be contacted if necessary.
- Inform the school **on the first day of absence**; provide a reason for the absence by telephoning the school Attendance Team on 0113 5351000 before registration closes at 9am.
- To keep the school informed by contacting the Attendance Team if their child continues to be absent.
- Keep the school informed in cases of lengthy absence so that work can be sent home if appropriate, and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return.

- Ensure that all medical appointments are made outside of school hours apart from any emergency appointments for which an appointment card must be provided.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child/ren.

**School staff will:**

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality using letters, the school website and other communications to parents and carers.
- Monitor all children's attendance and work in partnership with the Inner East Cluster and Attendance Strategy Team where a child's attendance is causing concern.
- Encourage parents and carers to fully support the Attendance Policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly.
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and lateness by Class Teachers.
- Ensure information is available for Governors, Parents and Carers.
- Ensure effective liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Continue to develop new incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate effectively with other Agencies (Traveller Education, health professionals, Social Care etc).
- Reward whole classes and individual children for good attendance and punctuality.

- Introduce all new parents/carers to the Policy and include information on attendance in the school prospectus.

**Class teachers/support staff will support the Attendance Team by:**

- Requesting reasons for children's absences.
- Discussing children's attendance/punctuality at parent meetings and the impact this has on their learning.
- Highlighting the importance of attendance/punctuality to parents/children. □ Identifying at an early stage when children's attendance is causing concern.
- Liaising with the School Attendance Team.
- Complying with the Policy.

**Governors**

The Head Teacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

The Attendance Team will provide an annual report.

The Attendance Team will provide feedback to pupil welfare sub committee on a termly basis. The Head Teacher will meet with the Attendance Team each term to discuss concerns and review attendance data.

**Early Years Attendance**

Shakespeare Primary School view the attendance of Nursery and Reception children with equal importance to the attendance of children throughout the primary school. Full time education becomes statutory in the term after a child turns five years old. However, in accepting a place in Nursery or Reception, we expect all children to attend everyday, arrive on time and that parents and carers commit themselves fully to the education of their child/ren.

Good attendance and punctuality is an integral part of a child's educational development and progress.

In that respect, parents/carers and the school enter into an agreement to adhere to the school's Attendance Policy. School's expectations with regard to a child's attendance and punctuality are the same as for any child attending Shakespeare Primary School.

The School Attendance Team will monitor attendance in the Early Years in the same way as the rest of school. We will aim at all times to work positively with families to ensure regular and consistent attendance and to support families in developing a positive approach to attendance from the very beginning of a child's school life.

Any child's attendance causing concern will be monitored and addressed in line with the Nursery Attendance Procedures flowchart (**Appendix 6**).

### **Registers**

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMS Attendance Module. Class Teachers complete registers electronically twice daily by 08:55 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes (**Appendix 1**).

### **Authorised Absence**

Absences can be authorised in some circumstances, for example absence due to illness, religious observance for a maximum of 2 days per year or authorised Exceptional Leave.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **School will only authorise a child's absence for the following reasons:-**

- If the child is ill (and medical proof is provided if requested).
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (where school is informed in advance and appointment documents are provided).
- Religious Festivals (approved by school and for a maximum of 2 days per year).
- Exceptional Leave where a form has been completed and approved by the Head Teacher prior to the absence. Exceptional Leave forms are available from the school office or on the school website.

## **Unauthorised Absence**

**If a child is absent for any of the following reasons it will be recorded as unauthorised.**

- Staying at home because siblings are ill.
- Absence from school because a parent is ill.
- Visits to see family.
- Shopping trips in school hours.
- Exceptional Leave not authorised by the school.
- Absence where an Exceptional Leave form is not completed and authorised prior to the date of leave.
- A full day off for a minor medical/dental appointment.
- Waking up late and not coming to school.
- Any absence where school has not been contacted by a parent/ carer either by telephone, letter or in person at the school office to provide a reason.
- A child is absent due to a birthday/family occasion.
- A child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- Not attending school due to the weather when school is open.
- Additional days taken above the religious festival limit.
- Staying at home for deliveries, gas or electricity workers.

Each child's unauthorised absences will be noted and recorded on an Annual Report to parents. It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the Annual Governors' Report and to the DfES.

## **Whole School Monitoring Procedures**

**On the first day of a child's absence the Attendance Team:**

- Send a text message or make a telephone call to parents/carers requesting a reason for their child's absence.
- May make a home visit any parent/carers school is unable to contact regarding the absence.

- If school is unable to make contact with a parent/carer following messages, telephone calls or home visits, we may request the support of other agencies (e.g. Police, Social Care, Attendance Improvement Service, Children Missing Education Team) to determine the whereabouts of a child/family.

### **When No Reason Is Provided For Absence**

If a child returns to school with no reason provided for an absence, a letter will be sent requesting a reason for the absence. If a reason is still not provided then a home visit may be undertaken. Following this, if school has still not obtained a reason to authorise the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Ongoing Monitoring**

- Discuss/inform parents/carers of any concerns regarding a child's attendance or punctuality, through letters, telephone calls, home visits or meetings.
- Monitor attendance patterns of individuals, classes and the whole school through half termly focals.
- Send letters or visit any parents/carers of children identified through the school focal.

### **Frequent Absences**

Any parents/carers of child/ren who are frequently absent through illness or where no reason is provided, have a pattern of absent days, take unauthorised leave or their attendance has fallen below **97%** will be contacted by letter, telephone call, meeting or home visit.

All parents of children who have 5 or more days of absence due to any of the above reasons will be asked to provide medical proof for any further absences (medicines, prescriptions or appointment card).

If parents/ carers do not provide medical proof for their child's absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If after writing or speaking to a parent/carer a child continues to be absent a referral may be made to the Inner East Cluster Attendance Officers

### **Inner East Cluster Attendance Team**

Where a child's attendance falls below whole school expectations or is a cause for concern, a referral will be made to the Inner East Cluster Attendance Team. An Attendance Improvement Officer will then make contact with the family.

Following the referral to the Attendance Team, the Attendance Improvement Officer will closely monitor the child's attendance and support the family in raising attendance. If, after working with the family, there is no improvement in the child's attendance, formal procedures will be initiated following Local Authority guidelines.

### **Punctuality**

- Children should be in the playground by 08:40 a.m. ready for the school day to begin at 08:45 a.m. when the register will be taken.
- Parents/Carers should inform the school immediately and provide a reason if their child is going to be late.
- Any children who arrive after the school day begins must always go the school office **accompanied by an adult** before going to their lesson to ensure they have their mark in the register.
- Parents/carers of children who are persistently late, have a regular pattern of lateness or who have arrived late to school 10 times or more will be written to or visited by a member of the Attendance Team.
- If a child arrives at school after the register has closed for the morning, their mark will be recorded as unauthorised absence (U code, see Appendix 1).
- Any children who persistently arrive late may be referred to the Inner East Cluster Attendance Team.
- Parents/carers of children who are persistently late may be reported to the Local Authority and receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.



## **Medical Appointments**

We expect all parents/carers to make all medical appointments for before or after school or within holidays. In exceptional emergency cases the school may authorise medical appointments as long as school is notified and appointment proof can be provided.

Appointments for any children with long term medical needs will be authorised following consultation with the Attendance Team or Head Teacher.

- Parents/carers must sign their child/ren out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.
- If a child has an appointment during the morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Head Teacher.
- Any non-emergency medical appointments will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

## **Exceptional Leave**

**Due to changes in national legislation schools are not allowed by law to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances. Shakespeare Primary School will no longer authorise any holiday leave.**

We expect all parents to take their holidays during the approved school breaks. It should be noted that there are 175 days each year when your child does not attend school. No child is expected to be absent from school on leave or holiday during term time.

Parents/carers DO NOT have the right to take their children out of school during term time.

In very exceptional circumstances, if your child has an excellent attendance record and the request meets all other criteria, the Head Teacher may authorise leave.

## **Applying for Exceptional Leave**

If you wish to take your child/ren out of school due to exceptional circumstances then parents/carers must complete an Exceptional Leave Form (available from the school office, **Appendix 2**) prior to the date of absence and return it to the Head Teacher.

When considering any request for Exceptional Leave the school will look at each case individually, and the following will be taken in to account:

- The overall attendance of the pupil.

- All previous requests for leave.
- The reason for exceptional leave.

The Headteacher and the Governing body believe in treating each application for exceptional leave in a personal way by providing a 1-1 interview where requested. If the exceptional leave is granted by the Head Teacher, a letter outlining the dates agreed will be sent to parents/carers (**Appendix 3**).

**If the child does not return by the agreed date the following steps will be taken.**

1. The authorised leave will be changed to unauthorised leave.
2. School will try to contact the parent/carers through telephone calls, text messages, letters or home visits.
3. If there is no contact from the family, a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education team (CME).
4. Following investigation from the CME team, and if the child has not returned to school, they will be removed from the school roll.
5. If the child does return to school later than the agreed date, school will inform the Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per child, per parent. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 21 days the amount will double. Further legal action may be taken if the Penalty Notice remains unpaid.

**Unauthorised Leave**

If a parent chooses to take their child out of school, without permission being requested and subsequently granted by the Head Teacher, the following steps will be taken:

- A letter will be sent home saying the leave has not been authorised if an application for leave was made (**Appendix 4**).
- If a request for leave was not made, a letter will be sent to parents/carers on their return stating that the absence has been recorded as unauthorised leave. (**Appendix 5**) □ The child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised leave.

- The school will inform the Local Authority who will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per child, per parent. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 21 days the amount will double. Further legal action may be taken if the Penalty Notice remains unpaid.

### **School attendance, safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter.

Children missing education and those who are frequently absent from school may be at greater risk of harm. These risks include

- Child sexual/criminal exploitation
- Neglect
- Domestic violence
- Radicalisation

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of safeguarding, community, family or individual circumstances. It may be necessary in some cases for school to request support from outside agencies such as Children's Social Work Services, the police and the Education Safeguarding team. If there is no contact between school and the family, and the child's whereabouts are unknown, a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education Team who will investigate further. In some circumstances they may instruct school to remove pupils from the school roll.

**Appendix 1****Register Codes**

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
I	Illness
M	Sickness; medical or dental appointments
L	Late - Children arriving after 8.45am
U	Late after registers closed
C	Other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
G	Unauthorised leave
N	No reason provided to school for absence
V	Educational visit or trip
R	Religious observance
E	Exclusion
B	Educated of site (not dual reg)
D	Dual registration (attends other establishment)
P	Sporting activity
O	Unauthorised absence
Y	School closed due to exceptional circumstances

**Appendix 2**

---



Name of Children:	First Name	Surname	Class
Leaving date:		Date due back in school:	
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):			days
Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend	First Name	Surname	School
Contact Details			
Parents: (eg. Mother, Father, Grandparent, Carer):	First name:	First name:	
	Surname:	Surname:	
	Address:	Address:	
	Postcode:	Postcode:	
	Email:	Email:	
	Home phone number:	Home phone number:	
	Mobile:	Mobile:	
	Alternative number while away:	Alternative number while away:	
Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper is necessary)			
The exceptional circumstances are...			
Point of departure (eg. Airport, Coach, Train Station etc.):		Destination:	
Time of departure:		Flight numbers and name of airline:	

### **Appendix 3**

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your recent request for leave of absence (dates). Amendments to the Education Regulations (2013) make it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. A leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances applied for prior to the absence.

Your application to school **does meet criteria** in our policy for exceptional leave and as such (number) days will be marked on the register as an authorised absence. If you exceed the agreed (number) days it is likely that you will be issued with a penalty notice.

We will request Leeds City Council to issue a Penalty Notice(s) on our behalf. This will be **£60 per parent per child**. Once the penalty notice is issued, you will have **21 days in which to pay the fine**. If you fail to pay in that time period, the fine **will double** and you then have **another seven days in which to pay**, taking the total time in which to make payment to 28 days.

**I must advise you that if you fail to make payment after 28 days** then Leeds City Council has the power to prosecute you in the magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court **can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities**.

This is in line with current government legislation and Leeds City Council Code of Conduct.

If you would like to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely





## **Appendix 4**

Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your recent request for leave of absence. Amendments to the Education Regulations (2013) make it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. A leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances applied for prior to the absence.

Your application to school does not meet criteria in our policy for exceptional leave and as such I am unable to grant your request.

If you choose to take your child out of school without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We will request Leeds City Council to issue a Penalty Notice(s) on our behalf. This will be **£60 per parent per child**. Once the penalty notice is issued, you will have **21 days in which to pay the fine**. If you fail to pay in that time period, the fine **will double** and you then have **another seven days in which to pay**, taking the total time in which to make payment to 28 days.

**I must advise you that if you fail to make payment after 28 days** then Leeds City Council has the power to prosecute you in the magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court **can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities**.

This is in line with current government legislation and Leeds City Council Code of Conduct.

If you would like to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

## **Appendix 5**

Dear Parent/Carer

Amendments to the Education Regulations (2013) make it clear that schools are no longer allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. A leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances applied for prior to the absence.

You have taken your child away without making an application to school and as such this will be marked on the register as an unauthorised absence. It is likely that you will be issued with a penalty notice.

We will request Leeds City Council to issue a Penalty Notice(s) on our behalf. This will be **£60 per parent per child**. Once the penalty notice is issued, you will have **21 days in which to pay the fine**. If you fail to pay in that time period, the fine **will double** and you then have **another seven days in which to pay**, taking the total time in which to make payment to 28 days.

**I must advise you that if you fail to make payment after 28 days** then Leeds City Council has the power to prosecute you in the magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court **can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities**.

This is in line with current government legislation and Leeds City Council Code of Conduct.

If you would like to discuss this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Appendix 6**

