



A Specialist Technology College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Update July 2016

The Law states:

“The parent of every child of statutory school age is compelled by law to ensure such a child attends school unless there is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against you.”

Principles

Staff and Governors expect full and punctual attendance from all students.

Parents/carers of registered students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents/carers may be reported to the Education Access Service of the Local Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not parents/carers) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always requested.

Staff and Governors believe that:

- ✓ There is a link between regular attendance and academic achievement
- ✓ Regular attendance encourages students to benefit from the whole range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities on offer
- ✓ Full attendance is a duty, and a crucial factor in determining personal responsibility and a good work ethic.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (i.e. illness or other unavoidable cause).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy and absences which have not been properly explained.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, parents/carers and student. Students who are regularly absent will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Outside agencies may also be involved. Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with House Achievement Coordinators in resolving problems together. If all ways of trying to improve the student’s attendance have failed, the Education Welfare Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

If a student is unfit for school parents/carers are asked to contact the school on each day of absence by 9.10am. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on a case by case basis. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing a valid reason for absence. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdressers appointments, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.

When the student returns, he or she must bring a written note, signed by the parent/carer, for each period of absence (pre-printed Absence Notes are included in the Student Planner). These should be handed into the Attendance Officer who is located in the main Reception office. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a student's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested.

2. Absence Without Explanation

If a student is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by 9.10am the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer the same day by text, telephone or email.

3. Holidays

The school is proactive in discouraging parents/carers from taking students out of school for holidays during term time. We consider this action inappropriate and harmful to the education of the students.

With effect from 1st September 2013 there has been a change in the School Attendance Regulations. Where there used to be the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during the term time in "special circumstances" this has been removed.

Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; an annual family holiday is not deemed an exceptional circumstance, nor is cost or convenience.

Advice from Shropshire Council's Education Access Team is that "exceptional circumstances" include circumstances where:

- ✓ It is unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life
- ✓ It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event
- ✓ The event cannot be organised outside of the school term
- ✓ The event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child
- ✓ Taking part in the event will be of greater educational value to the child than attending school

All applications for leave in term time are considered by the Attendance Officer in consultation with the Head of School. However only in very exceptional circumstances will time off be authorised. Requests for leave which have not been authorised will be recorded as "unauthorised" on a student's registration certificate. This will then be followed up by the Education Welfare Officer who could issue a warning notice or fine.

Requests for leave in term time must be submitted on the Application for Leave of Absence Form (available from Reception or on the school's website) at least 28 days in advance of the requested date(s). Accommodation, flights or other arrangements should not be booked until authorisation has been confirmed. Where leave is not authorised, you may be able to appeal against the decision by writing to Mr J Parr, Head of School, within 5 working days of the refusal.

4. Lateness

Students must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable (e.g. late bus or medical appointment). Parents/carers are expected to ensure that students are on time for registration.

Students arriving after 8.50am will be marked as late.

Students arriving after registration has closed at 9.10am will be marked as absent/late after registration has closed.

5. Truancy

Truancy from school is treated as a serious issue and will always be communicated to parents/carers.

6. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors students' attendance on a regular basis and may contact parents/carers if attendance falls below 96%.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) monitors attendance weekly, meeting with House Achievement Coordinators and the Attendance Officer to identify any

particular causes for concern. Where a student's attendance drops below 90% the EWO will contact the parent/carer. If non-attendance continues the Local Authority may prosecute or issue a fixed penalty fine.

Parents/carers are required to inform the school of the reasons for their children's absence. Failure to provide a reason for absence will be followed up by the Attendance Officer who will write requesting the reason for absence.

Attendance Communication Procedure

The school will contact parents/carers as a pupils' attendance percentage declines to the following levels:

1. 96-94% Green school letter sent to parents/carers or Year 11 attendance letter
2. 94-90% Red school letter sent to parents/carers or Year 11 attendance letter
3. <90% EWO 11 – first letter noting concern if the school letters have not improved attendance
4. <90% EWO 19 – second letter noting there is no improvement/ongoing concern
5. First home visit by appointment by EWO
6. EWO 5 – prosecution trail, fast track, parents called in, given 6 weeks to improve. Final warning if there is no improvement. If a further 10 sessions of absence are accrued parents/carers are to attend a SAP meeting at Shirehall, which is a pre-court hearing. If there is no improvement over 3 weeks, this progresses to court or a fixed term penalty.

Appendix A: Application for Pupil Leave of Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances



SOUTH SHROPSHIRE ACADEMY TRUST

Church Stretton School
Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton,
Shropshire, SY6 6EX

Head of School: Mr J Parr BA. Hons

Telephone: 01694 722209
Fax: 01694 722417
Email: admin@csschool.co.uk

www.churchstretton.shropshire.sch.uk



APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Law states: "The parent of every child of statutory school age is compelled by law to ensure such a child attends school unless there is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against you."

NB: With effect from 1st September 2013 there has been a change in the School Attendance Regulations. Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; an annual holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance, nor is cost or convenience. Please refer to our Attendance Policy on the school's website: www.churchstretton.shropshire.sch.uk

Name of pupil..... Tutor Group.....

Address.....

Telephone number.....

Date(s) leave requested..... Total days.....

Exceptional Circumstances.....

Signed (parent/carer)..... Date.....

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Attendance certificate attached

Authorised

