



## **SHEERHATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

Good attendance is vital for pupils to attain their potential in school. We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. We believe that pupils will want to attend regularly if they are in an environment which is caring and supportive and which promotes respect for all. Learning opportunities are varied and focussed on individual needs of the pupil. Lessons are well planned, resourced and imaginative and are delivered with pace, providing opportunities for challenge and engagement and which meet pupil needs in terms of differentiation and learning styles.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised and a code to indicate the type of absence.

#### **Definitions**

##### **Authorised absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent/carer takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

##### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school at the period of registration without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Parents/Carers:**

- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- When their child cannot attend they should contact the school before 9am on the first day of absence to inform the school as to the reason for absence. The responsibility for authorising the absence lies with the school and not the parent/carer.
- Request in writing any leave of absence.

### **Pupils**

- Pupils should, with the support of their parents/carers attend school regularly.
- Behave appropriately.
- Be ready to start at lessons on time.

### **Class Teacher**

- Ensure daily register is taken at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and return to office promptly.
- Monitor attendance and make early interventions where necessary.
- Invite parents into school to discuss problems with attendance.
- Liaise with the Head teacher and Admin Assistant re: identified issues to ensure a collaborative approach.

### **Admin Assistants:**

- To check daily register.
- Contact parents/carers in the event of a pupil absence.
- Print off attendance reports half termly for the Head teacher.
- Liaise with the Head teacher in identifying any attendance issues.

### **Head Teacher:**

- The Head teacher has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and reviewing the Attendance Policy.
- Provide a termly attendance report for the Governors.
- Liaise with families where early issues have been identified.

### **Education Welfare Officer:**

- Work with schools in the monitoring and early identification of attendance issues and where necessary in agreeing appropriate targets.
- Liaise with external agencies as part of referral process (e.g. Social Services, CAMHS etc.).
- Liaise with Parents/carers as appropriate.
- In consultation with Head teacher, arrange a Professionals Meeting to discuss the concern.
- Arrange home visits to support parents/carers in improving attendance.
- Devise and implement a range of strategies to support pupil attendance.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

Term times are for education. There is a direct link between regular attendance and pupil's attainment and progress. In general, absences will not be granted during term time. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. The request must be put in writing on a form available from the school office (see Appendix A).

Parent/carers do not have the right to remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday.

Exceptional circumstances can be defined as 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short' and will be judged at the discretion of the Head teacher and the maximum number of days that will be authorised is 5 days.

Absence will not be authorised if the pupil's previous attendance is not good (95% or above), during assessment periods, or if such an absence has already been taken in the current or previous academic year. (See Appendix B)

### **Long-term absence**

When pupils have an illness or injury that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work, if this is appropriate.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, for advice and possible support for the pupil out of school.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or carer of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services.

The Governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

The school will also contact parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late or who have poor records of attendance (including where this is authorised).

### **Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this Policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Attendance reports will be monitored half termly.

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every 3 years or earlier if considered necessary. The Policy was approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on:

Signed by Head Teacher .....

Signed by Chair of Governors .....

**APPENDIX A**

**SHEERHATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR YOUR CHILD DURING TERM-TIME**

Please complete this form and return it to school before the date you are requesting the absence to start.

Child's Full Name:.....  
 Date of Birth.....Year Group.....Class .....

Address.....

Period of Absence: From..... To.....(inclusive)

Reason Requesting Absence (please note authorisation will only be given in exceptional circumstances)

Name:..... Relationship to child:.....

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

The school will consider these points before authorising leave:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Your child's previous attendance history</i></li> <li>• <i>Any previous requests</i></li> <li>• <i>The time of year e.g. Assessment periods</i></li> <li>• <i>The circumstances of the request</i></li> </ul>
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<b>SECTIONS BELOW TO BE COMPLETED BY SCHOOL STAFF ONLY</b>	
SCHOOL ACTION	Attendance .....
	Previous requests.....
	Timing.....
	Exceptional circumstances? .....

**Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time Return Slip**

To: Parent/Carer of .....

Your request for term time absence from ..... to.....  
 has been authorised/ has not been authorised

Reasons given .....

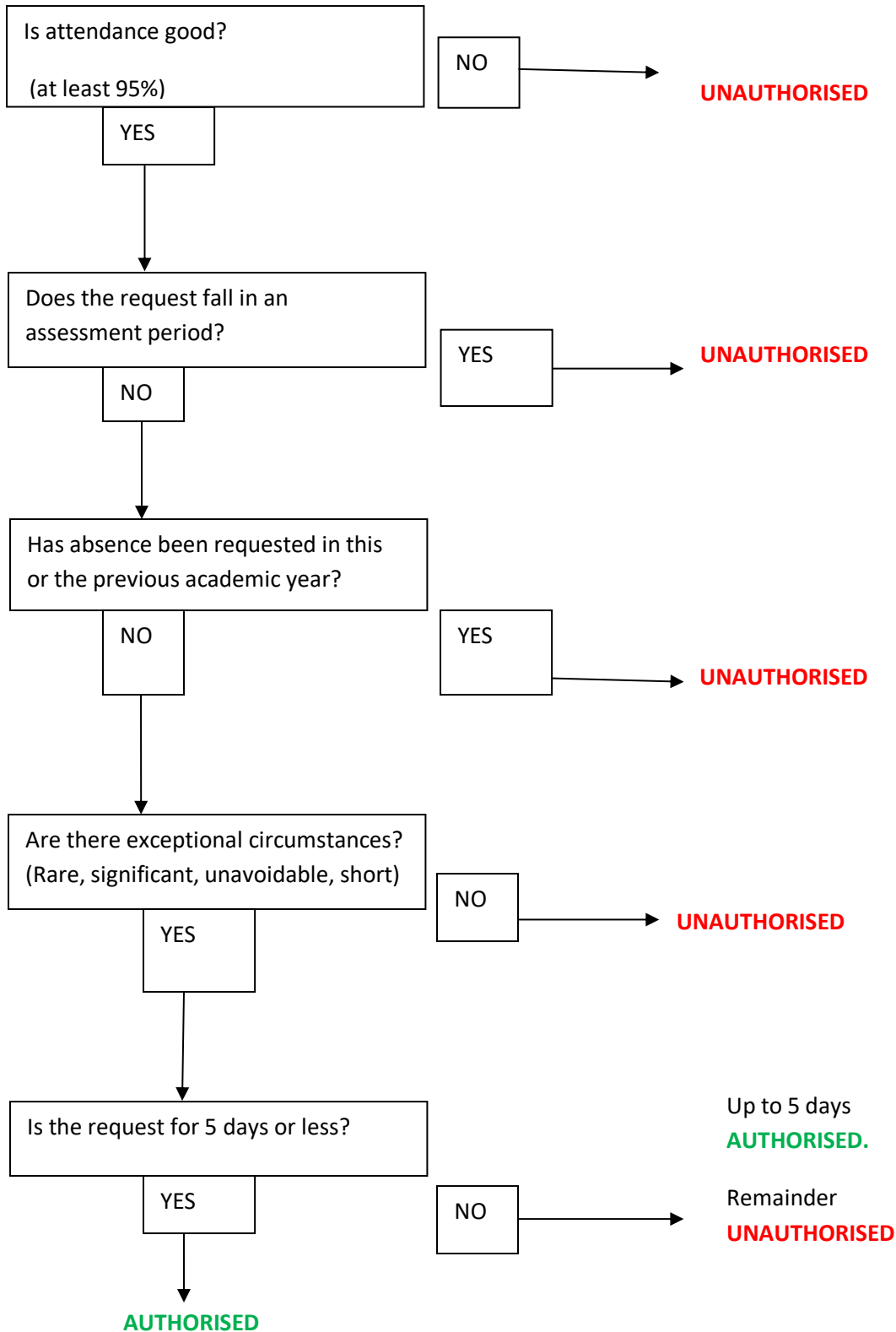
.....

Signed:..... Date:.....  
 Head teacher

**Please Note:** Absences which have not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised absences and may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

**APPENDIX B**

**TERM TIME ABSENCE REQUESTS**



## **APPENDIX C**

## **ADAPTATIONS RELATING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Attendance has been impacted hugely by the pandemic.

School attendance figures were measured differently in school years 2019-20 and 2020-21 due to periods of partial school closure and there was no requirement to report to parents/carers.

Daily attendance returns to the DfE begun during closures and continuing into school year 2021-22 capture whole school attendance as well as that of key groups such as pupils with an EHCP and those entitled to Free School Meals. These returns also capture the numbers of pupils and staff with confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 as well as those required to isolate for other reasons.

Attendance codes have been adjusted and widened to capture the range of different circumstances.

## **APPENDIX D**

## **CONSIDERATION OF FLEXI-SCHOOLING REQUESTS**

Any request by Parents/Carers for an attendance arrangement such as flexi-schooling is considered carefully by the school with advice taken from Education Welfare Officers and taking into account the individual circumstances of the pupil. This is not an arrangement that would be entered into lightly and is subject to a signed agreement between the school and Parents/Carers and regular review. The school is entitled to withdraw the offer if it is not felt to be in the best interests of the pupil. Any such arrangement is subject to the approval of the Governing Body.