Shadsworth Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by:	Jackie Gallagher	**Date:** November 2025
Last reviewed on:	Autumn 2025	
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1. AIMS

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at Shadsworth Junior School, they must be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. There is a strong link between absence and attainment. Any absence from school affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning. Good attendance and punctuality will increase the chances of a child achieving their full potential in school.

The Education Act 1996 states "If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence".

At Shadsworth Junior School we will:

- Work with pupils and their families to strive to achieve full attendance for all children.
- Acknowledge the efforts of pupils and parents who ensure good attendance and punctuality.
- Challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents, and appropriate agencies to assist in improving attendance and punctuality.
- Maintain an effective and efficient system of gathering, monitoring, analysing and acting on attendance-related data.
- Continue to ensure that good attendance and punctuality are a priority for pupils, parents, staff, and governors.

2. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Achieving good attendance and punctuality is everybody's responsibility.

Parent's responsibility

"Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education" (Education Act 1996, Section 7)

Parents must:

- Ensure their child attends school punctually and is prepared for learning each day, including having adequate rest and nutrition, to support their well-being and readiness to learn, for every day school is open.
- Ensure their child is ready to enter school at 8.45am every day that school is open.
- Ensure their child is collected from school promptly at 3.30pm by an appropriate person, and notify the school at the earliest opportunity if they are running late or if somebody is collecting their child who is not listed on the pupil contact form. Or, inform the office if their child can walk home alone.
- Not keep their child off school for minor ailments.
- Arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- Notify the school by 9.00am if their child is unwell and unable to attend school for any reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence.
- Request permission in advance for any planned leave of absence.
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for any absences and lateness.
- Ensure that school has up-to-date contact details and respond promptly to calls from the school.

"Attendance is not optional" There is an expectation that children are in school every day

School have a responsibility to:

- Act within the requirements of statutory and non-statutory guidance, local Codes of Conduct, and other relevant policies, particularly Safeguarding (including Prevent).
- Keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Work collaboratively with parents, pupils, governors, and other agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

INDIVIDUAL ROLES WITHIN SCHOOL

The Headteacher will:

- Decide whether any absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised in accordance with this policy, and take account of statutory and non-statutory guidance.

Teachers will:

- Record attendance in their Class Attendance Register onto SIMS using the appropriate codes.
- Remind and promote good attendance in their class.
- Discuss attendance at Parents Evening for those children where there are attendance concerns – termly.

The School Office Manager or Administrative Assistant will:

- Add to the Class Attendance Register onto SIMS updating codes.
- Record details of phone calls from parents about pupil absences on SIMS – daily.
- Contact parents/carers or other named contacts for all pupils who are absent without reason – daily.
- Provide the Headteacher with a list of pupils who are absent without contact – daily.

The Pupil Well-Being Coordinator will:

- Advise office staff on attendance codes to be used – ongoing.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality levels regularly, including reasons for absence, unexplained absence, and patterns of non-attendance, and work with parents and children to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Try to understand and support families if they are finding it difficult
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Service and School Nurse where appropriate – ongoing.

Governors will:

- Ensure compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Adopt the whole-school policy and review it regularly.
- Regularly review attendance data for pupil groups, including vulnerable groups, with Senior Leaders and the Attendance Lead
- Support the school by promoting key actions to improve attendance

PUNCTUALITY

Parents are expected to bring their children to school on time. Pupils who arrive after the doors close at 9:00 am will enter the school via the school office. Parents will be asked to provide a reason for late arrival. Children arriving between 9 am and 9.30 am will receive a late mark (Code L). Registers close at 9.30 am and children arriving after this time will receive a Code U late mark, which is counted as 1 half-day unauthorised absence.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents are expected to arrange non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is unavoidable, parents should provide medical appointment evidence at least 24 hours in advance to facilitate authorisation and minimise disruption and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. You must provide the school with proof of the appointment (card, letter, text) for the absence to be authorised. Where the pupil misses the morning or afternoon registration due to a medical or dental appointment, the session will be authorised using Code M.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Extended leave in term time is a significant issue for schools. Children may not be taken out of school to go on extended family holidays abroad or to visit family abroad. Children's absence from **school significantly disrupts** their learning and undermines educational attainment and achievement. There are substantial school holidays in which you can travel abroad without disruption to your child's education.

The Government's advice to parents is that **holidays should be taken when the school is closed**.

Changes in Government regulations mean that **from 19 August 2024, Headteachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are specific exceptional circumstances.**

Examples of exceptional circumstances which justify the Head teacher's approval could include:

- Members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties.
- Emergency service personnel (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue) who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year.
- The death of an **immediate family member**, e.g. parents or sibling

Holidays during term time will only be authorised in very specific and exceptional circumstances following Government guidelines, and only where permission for the absence has been requested in advance. Where a holiday is not authorised, it will be marked in the Attendance Register as an Unauthorised Holiday using Code G. A Penalty Notice application will be submitted to the Local Authority where the criteria set out in the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct are met.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Absences for religious observance will be authorised using Code R when the day has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. It may also take advice from the Local Authority.

CHILD PERFORMERS

Parents of a child performer may seek leave of absence from school for their child to participate in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work, and modeling. Parents must contact the Headteacher in advance to discuss the nature and frequency of the work and must have a valid performance licence, from the Local Authority. Any absences authorised for child performers will be recorded as Code C.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Pupils who are absent from school without a satisfactory reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence using Code O. Persistent unauthorised absences could lead to a referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Service and potential Penalty Notices being requested.

COLLECTION AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day ends at 3.30 pm and parents are expected to ensure their child is collected promptly by an appropriate person. Children will remain in class if they are not collected on time. The school may also act in accordance with the Local Authority's protocol for safeguarding children not collected from school at the end of the school day.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a "**persistent absentee**" when they miss **10%** or more of their schooling across the school year, for **any** reason. Absence at this level results in a considerable loss of learning and damage to any child's educational prospects. We need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to resolve this.

Due to the serious nature of persistent absence, the school will always consider requesting support from the Inclusion Officer and the School Nurse to address the matter. School may also consider requesting that the Local Authority issue penalty notices or use other sanctions as a means of improving attendance.

No absences will be authorised whilst a pupil is PA (Below 90%) without medical evidence. A referral to the School Nurse will be considered.

Why attendance matters: Over a whole school year, each day represents 2 attendance marks. We have a morning and afternoon register therefore each day at school represents 2 possible attendance marks.

- Less than 5 days' absence = 98%+ attendance (10 sessions = 25 lessons missed)
- 14 days' absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance (28 sessions = 70 lessons missed)
- 20 days' absence (approx.) = 90% attendance (40 sessions = 100 lessons missed)
- 30 days' absence (approx.) = 88% attendance (60 sessions = 150 lessons missed)

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days, (80 sessions/200 lessons), of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

WARNING OF A PENALTY NOTICE

A parent/carer may sometimes receive a written warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued. This will give you a period of time to improve his/ her attendance. During this period, the child must have no further unauthorised absences from school. If he/she is ill during that time, medical evidence must be provided.

Shadsworth Junior School will follow Blackburn with Darwen Local Authority's Code of Conduct regarding the issuing of Fixed Penalty/Warning letter.

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but if you receive a formal written warning, you can write or speak to the Local Authority about your situation should you wish.

Penalty notices are issued by post to your home. You **must pay in full** within 21 days of receiving a penalty notice and the fine is **£80**. The fine doubles to **£160** if you pay after 21 days but within 28 days.
If the Penalty is not paid by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority can Prosecute the parents.

The legal definition of a parent is contained in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and refers to any adult who is a natural parent, someone with parental responsibility, or someone who cares for the child.

There is no requirement to seek parental consent to share 15-day alert information.
However, we will ensure parents are aware that the information is being shared as part of a statutory duty to do so, either directly or by way of their attendance policy, notices, etc. in accordance with Working Together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

As such, information will be shared with the panel which will meet, to ensure the child receives a suitable education during their period of illness as appropriate

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Where a pupil has been absent for ten consecutive school days or more without contact, or where the school has good reason to believe the family has moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen area, a CME referral will be made to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will advise when the child should be removed from the school's roll.

In these circumstances the Local Authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

A. Contact the parent, relatives, and neighbours using known contact details;
B. Check local databases within the local authority;
C. Check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
D. Follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
E. Check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
F. Check with agencies known to be involved with family;
G. Check with the local authority and school from which the child moved originally if known;
H. Check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
I. Check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
j. In the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
K. Home visit(s) made by an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.

As the parent of a child on a school roll you will be expected to provide school, in advance of your leaving the area/country with the following information:

- New home address.
- Name and address of the school your child will be attending or where a place has been agreed.
- Confirmation from the new school that your child is attending or that a place has been agreed.
- Flight details.

HOME VISITS

Sometimes it is necessary to conduct a home visit or collect children from their home. This may be children who are vulnerable and we haven't heard from after Day 1 absence phone call. The office staff will notify the Head Teacher or Pupil Wellbeing who may carry out the home visit or assign to SLT or Family Support workers. If visiting alone, the lone working policy is adhered to. If necessary staff may visit in pairs.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The Pupil Well-Being Coordinator will monitor attendance and punctuality for all pupils on a weekly basis. Attendance data will be analysed with consideration of pupil groups, including SEND, EAL, and disadvantaged pupils, to identify and address any disparities in attendance rates

All children with attendance below 96% will be monitored closely – contact will be made with parents and support will be offered to improve attendance. Where attendance does not improve and absences are due to illness, medical evidence will be requested in order for any further absences to be authorised. Referrals may also be made to the School Nurse where regular illness or medical problems are having an adverse effect on a child's attendance. Pupils with attendance below 90% are classified as "Persistent Absentees" and if they have four days unauthorised absence or more can be referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Service.

Punctuality will be checked weekly and contact will be made with parents where lateness is a concern, either in terms of the regularity or pattern of lateness and the amount of school time missed. Support will be offered to reduce lateness. If a child is persistently late after the register closes, they will be referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Service.

PROMOTING AND REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Regular good attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded following the School Improvement Plan. As well as publicity on the website/social media and regular newsletter items:

- Each term pupils with 100% attendance and no late marks will be awarded a certificate and will be entered into a prize draw.
- Each term an Attendance Week will take place.
- Each term all 100% attendees are entered into a raffle for a prize
- Each term there is a prize for the most improved attendance
- Each year an individual prize may be awarded to any pupil finishing Year 6 who has 100% attendance for each of their four years at Shadsworth Junior School.

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Appendix 1.

Monitoring Attendance Flowchart

Expect Excellent Attendance (97%)

We aspire for all children to have high standards of attendance and to build a culture where all can, and want to be in shool and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor (below 97%)

We will use attendance data to rigorously monitor patterns of poor attendane (at an individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve any barrier before they become entrenched. We will send termly letters to all parents of children who are below 95%

Listen and Understand

When a pattern is spotted, we will meet with pupils and parents to understand the barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to overcome them, This will include providing medical evidence, home visits where we will ask to see the child and meetings with the PWC and SENCo. If unathorised absences reach 5 days, a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

Facilitate Support (below 90% - persistent absence)

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to acesess the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This will form an attendance action plan and may facilitate the support of early help or a family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues. Continued meetings with the PWC and Head teacher, including Governors.

Formalise Support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, we will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or educational supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance expectations will be enforced through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Appendix 2.

Penalty Notice Fines for Schools: