



Background

It is universally recognised that regular attendance to school will result in a child achieving or exceeding their expected outcomes; Whilst we aspire to high standards of attendance, we recognise that for some of our children a 100% attendance figure will never be attainable for health reasons or other circumstances.

This policy has been written to support the children and families of Shepherds Down School and has taken on board the Guidance issued by the Department of Education in “Working together to improve school attendance” (September 2022)

The law on school attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age (reached on the 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday) to an efficient, full time education suitable for their age, aptitude or any special need that they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.

Where a parent decides to have their child registered at a school they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day the school is open except in a small number of circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Shepherds Down will:

- Have a clear attendance policy on the school’s website which all staff, children and parents understand.
- Develop a school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance records
- Have a robust daily process that follows up on absence
- Proactively use data that identifies pupils with poor attendance patterns and work with those families to understand and address the reasons for poor attendance.
- The Governing Body of Shepherds Down school will take an active role in monitoring attendance and ensure that the school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

We ask parents to:

- Ensure that their child attends every day that the school is open, except if a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and to do so in advance
- Where possible book medical appointments outside of a school day, or at a time that minimises any absence.
- If attendance is a cause for concern and school offer support to increase attendance, to proactively engage with school to understand the root cause of any issues or barriers that may be affecting attendance.

Absence Procedure

Illness

If your child is too ill to attend school or there is some other reason they will not be attending please call the School Office on 01962 713445 before 9.00am giving details of your child's name, their class and why they will not be in school. The school office is manned from 8.00am until 4.30pm each school day and you can always leave a voicemail outside of these hours. You may also email the school office on admin@shepherdsdown.hants.sch.uk

If your child is ill, we need to know what illness your child has, as there are some illnesses that have a period that you will need to keep your child away from school for e.g. sickness and diarrhoea when your child cannot return to school until 48 hours have passed after the last episode of vomit or diarrhoea. There are also other illnesses that are notifiable to public health such as Mumps or Measles.

Please do not rely on school transport to let us know that your child is not attending school. You must let school know directly that your child is not attending. Please copy the school office into any correspondence emailed to teachers about attendance; the admin@shepherdsdown.hants.sch.uk email is always monitored whereas individual teacher's may not be if they are not in school on that day or it is not a working day for them.

Non-Arrival at School

We aim to get school attendance registers completed by 9.30am each morning. If your child has not arrived in school and we have not had contact from you, the school office will contact you before 10.00am to establish why your child is not in school. If your child is ill, they will be recorded as so on the register.

If we cannot get hold of the first priority contact we will endeavour to contact other contacts that you have given as emergency contacts.

If we cannot contact you or an alternative contact, your child will be marked as an unapproved absence until we know why your child is not in school.

The school office will notify the Senior Leader of any children not in school who cannot be accounted for on a daily basis and instigate any appropriate escalations.

If your child or your family are registered as having a Social Worker, School have a statutory duty to inform Social Care of any child who is not in school for 5 consecutive school days.

Approved Absences

We recognise that each of our families have their own unique set of circumstances, and whilst approved absences will not automatically be granted, all requests for approved leave will be considered on an individual basis by the headteacher.

Forms to request an approved absence are available from the school office. All requests should be submitted in a timely manner and not retrospectively.

Additional Guidance

For further information from the Department for Education about school attendance can be found at this link.

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/external-document-template/)