



September 2023

## Attendance Prize Draw

Dear Parents/Carers,

This month school attendance has been described as the “greatest challenge facing schools today.” That is because there are close to record numbers of children who are missing significant amounts of their education through absence.

An attendance of 90% is the equivalent to missing half a day of school, every single week. At Seaford Head School we strive to support our pupils in maintaining attendance of 97% and above. Pupils with an attendance below 90% are classified as ‘Persistently Absent’ by the Department for Education.

Research has shown that pupils who attend school more regularly do better than those who do not attend as well\*. Therefore, we have a duty to all our pupils to encourage good attendance wherever possible.

We know that there are many reasons why children may become ‘Persistently Absent’ and that these are not always easy to address. We also know that since the pandemic, many children and families have experienced increased anxiety and/or other health issues. In addition, we recognise that teachers’ strikes last year were not helpful in promoting good attendance.

Despite this, we want to work with all our parents and carers to achieve the best school attendance we can. Last academic year 23% of our children at Seaford Head School were classed as persistent absentees, which is roughly 325 children. We need to see this figure reduce.

There is much talk in the media about fining parents for their children’s absence. Whilst we do pursue fines in some cases (e.g. holidays taken during term time) we would also like to positively recognise all our children who attend school every day and their families who support them to do so.

For this reason, we will be running the following short ‘pilot’ strategy to run at Seaford Head School between now and Christmas:

- Any child who has been in school every day during each two-week period (Friday-Friday) will be entered into a randomised prize draw
- The draw will be performed and the winner will be announced in the pupil’s assembly the following week
- The prize will be an Amazon gift voucher for **£50**
- Parents/Carers of winning pupils will be informed and invited in to school to collect the prize for their family

## Seaford Learning Trust

Mr R Ellis, Headteacher

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Clearly, this is not the only way we seek to improve attendance at school. There are many other approaches we use, such as contacting parents during absences and working with parents to support their children coming in to school.

We want to trial using this prize draw to promote good attendance whilst also drawing attention to its wider benefits.

Once the trial is complete, we will compare our attendance data for the duration of the trial with the same period last year in order to see whether there is a significant impact of the prize draw.

Some of you may have mixed views about using a prize draw to promote school attendance. If anybody has views that they would like to share, please send your feedback to our office at [reception@seafordhead.org](mailto:reception@seafordhead.org), so that it can be considered once the trial has completed after Christmas.

If you would like further information, please consult the 'frequently asked questions' below, which were developed during our consideration of this trial.

\* <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/school-attendance-important-risks-missing-day/>

### **Attendance Prize Draw – Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***Is this trial part of school policy?***

No, it is a pilot strategy to be implemented over a fixed period of time to review its impact.

#### ***Is this an appropriate use of money?***

Schools and academies already spend a significant amount of money supporting families with attendance. This prize draw would be comparatively cost effective if it has an impact.

#### ***Do you think it is right for children to be winning a high value prize?***

The prize is provided to the parent by the school. The value of the prize is not shared with the children; it is called the 'Attendance Gift Voucher' for the purpose of the draw.

#### ***How many children will be eligible for the draw?***

All children who have 20 am & pm marks registered as 'present' during each two-week period (Friday-Friday) will be entered into the draw.

#### ***What if my child has an appointment?***

Any child who leaves school during the day but returns in time for their next attendance mark will be included (e.g. a child who leaves at 10:00am, but returns before 1:00pm). This is a result of the way that attendance is electronically calculated.

***What if my child is unwell or cannot attend due to a different reason?***

Unfortunately, children who miss any session during a two-week period will not be included in that fortnight's attendance draw. However, they will have every opportunity to be included in future draws.

***What if my child is late?***

There are two kinds of late category. One is 'late before the register closes'. These children are marked as 'present'. The other is 'late after the register closes'. These children are marked as absent and therefore cannot be included in the draw. The register closes at 9:30am.

***Does this discriminate against my child, who cannot attend for particular reasons?***

We have no wish to discriminate against any child with protected characteristics. If your child has protected characteristics, which also impact upon their ability to attend school, please inform us in writing of these issues and they can be included in each prize draw. A list of protected characteristics can be found here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

***I struggle to get my child into school – what support is available?***

Please contact the school to outline the difficulties and we will be pleased to provide whatever support we are able to.

***What if my child is unwell or cannot attend due to a different reason?***

Unfortunately, children who miss any session during a two-week period will not be included in that fortnight's attendance draw. However, they will have every opportunity to be included in future draws.

***How is the draw made and how do I know that it is fair?***

All children with 100% attendance for each fortnight starting from a Friday are automatically generated from our attendance monitoring system. These names are then imported into a separate system that generates a random name from that list.

***Can a child or family win twice during the trial period?***

Yes, if they have full attendance over multiple draws. Statistically it is unlikely though.

***I do not wish my child to take part in this draw – how do I make this happen?***

Please provide us with the name of your child(ren) and we will ensure that their name is removed prior to the draw.

Kind regards,

*James Pratt*

Mr J Pratt

Assistant Headteacher