



# Attendance Policy

Written: February 2018

Review: February 2021

## **Rationale**

- Poor attendance disadvantages children.
- We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.
- Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.
- Children whose attendance is good will be rewarded regularly.
- Improved attendance and time keeping will be recognised.
- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) 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 may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.
- Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the school.
- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

## **Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence, and encouraging an attendance level of over 96%
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Making attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

## **Who is responsible for attendance issues in school?**

The School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues (Lorna Weatherby, Deputy Head teacher), who works closely with the designated safeguarding lead (Angela Crawley, Headteacher) where there are attendance concerns.

All members of school staff both teaching and non-teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school and keeping Mrs Weatherby informed of their concerns.

Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

## **School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been

treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns. (Appendix 2).

The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

## **Procedures**

### **Registers:**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Sutton Park School procedures for maintaining registers including the procedures for marking registers:

<b>Procedure:</b>	<b>Person responsible:</b>
<b>1.</b> Registers <b>must</b> be taken at the start of the morning session (8.45am) and once during the afternoon session (1.00pm)	Teacher
<b>2.</b> On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity.	Teacher
<b>3.</b> Pupils should only be marked present if they are in the room when the register is called.	Teacher
<b>3.</b> Spaces must not be left in the register	Teacher
<b>4.</b> Additional coding requirements	Office admin staff will complete a check of the registers at 9.15am and send first day absence texts and make relevant phone calls.
<b>5.</b> Ensuring pupils do not go missing from school during the school day and what to do if this happens	Supervision – teachers If child goes missing, call police, then parents.

Every half a day (or 'session') of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Headteacher. [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – Reg 7(1)].

Attendance registers are kept electronically.

School complies with and uses the DFE compulsory national attendance codes, (Appendix 1).

## **Working in partnership with parents**

### **Absence:**

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

### **Illness:**

- Parents should telephone the school on the first day of the child's absence before 9.15am to inform us of the reason for absence.
- The school office will then record this onto the class register.
- When the child returns to school the parents must either speak to the class teacher or hand a note into school explaining the reason for the absence if they have not previously phoned the school office to explain.
- The school will text parents of children who are unaccounted for by 9.30am. If the parents or guardians do not respond then a second text will be sent or for identified families a phone call will be made.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note or telephone call explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

However, schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

### **The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:**

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

### **Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the head teacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### **Procedure for requesting a planned absence**

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least six weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.

- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher / Attendance lead.
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a reply informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team at the Local Authority for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

### **Other reasons for absences**

- Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.
- The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.
- Examples of authorised absence may include, days of religious observance, illness, and medical appointments.
- Parents are advised to make appointments for the dentist/doctor or optician outside of school hours where possible.
- Parents should provide a copy of any consultant appointment letters.

### **Parents can support regular school attendance by:**

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents' evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

### **Punctuality & Lateness**

- If a child arrives after 8.45am they need to enter and sign in at the school office and the school administrator will mark them onto the school register. Parents and guardians of children who are persistently late will be contacted in order to discuss the situation and to see whether school can support the family in getting their child/children to school on time.
- Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.
- Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).
- Lateness is also recorded on a daily basis on the register. Lateness after 9.15am (without a valid reason) will be marked as 'U' and is unauthorised.

## Poor attendance

- Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance.
- All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.
- Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.
- School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance.
- After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents and if there is no improvement the case will be escalated to the Governing Body and ultimately Worcestershire County Council (through the Education Investigation Service at Babcock Prime).
- School has in place a system for enabling returning pupils to catch up on learning and reintegrate within the school.

## Persistent Absences

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level. If actions do not lead to improved attendance, a meeting will be arranged with the school leadership and this may result in escalation to the Governing Body and ultimately Worcestershire County Council.

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision is made following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## Rewards for Good or Improving Attendance

- Each week every child with 100% attendance for that week receives a gold sticker.
- Certificates are presented frequently, these include: individual 100% for a half term; individual 100% full term; individual 100% for ½ year; 100% for 2 terms; individual 100% for full year.
- Pupils who receive half termly and termly 100% certificates are named in the school newsletter.
- Each week the class with the highest attendance looks after the attendance bear which the children have named Toffee!
- The class with the greatest number of highest weekly attendances receive a further prize at the end of each term.
- Attendance percentages are displayed in the school hall and are updated weekly.
- Children may also receive attendance goody bags
- End of year attendance is usually celebrated by pupils receiving vouchers and a meal out!

## **Data Analysis**

Attendance data is submitted to the DFE, most schools use the management information systems via the school census. This data is published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. Analysis of data helps to identify the main causes of absence within the school and plan appropriate action to ensure all pupils attend school regularly.

Attendance data is analysed to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.

Attendance data is analysed attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help identify areas of concern and attendance patterns.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment



<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## **Appendix 2**

### **Children missing from education pathway**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing in their area.

All education providers should:-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to school and lessons
- Ensure they liaise with the named social worker where Children's Social Work are engaged with the child or family.

### **School Requirements**

The **law** requires schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools should use the national absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collection statistics through the School Census System. The codes are detailed in School Attendance

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/564599/school\\_attendance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf)

Please note the requirements around the use of the L and U code (page 9), and requirements for recording attendance of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils (page 12).

Schools should promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM, CSE, forced marriage.

### **Involving other agencies and signposting:**

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

**Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow child protection procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

## Families of members of the Armed Forces

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

## Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families

Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. Pupils are particularly vulnerable at transition from primary to secondary where a GRT pupil leaves school without identifying a new destination school. Schools should inform the CME team as soon as they become aware that a secondary school application will not be made for a GRT pupil. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Schools should work with families to minimise disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example if the family need to travel in order to work, they should be supported to dual register with other schools.

## Persistent Absence

The definition of persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half-term	10% (sessions missed)
Half-term 1	7 or more sessions
Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

A 'session' is either the morning **OR** afternoon period NOT a whole day.

## Deletion of pupil from the admission register

Schools must notify the local authority when they remove a pupil from roll in line with the Removing Pupils from Roll: Guidance for Schools.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, eg: elective home education (EHE). Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded.