



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Reviewed by the Community, Ethos and Mission Committee:	27th September 2022
Adopted by the Governing Body	17th October 2022
Signed: Chair of Governors: Julian Campbell	Date:
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'We promise to shine together'

Let the light of your face shine upon us - Psalm 4:6

Our ambition is to serve our community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive within the context of Christian belief and practice, upholding our values in the daily life of the Academy and in our relationships with others.

1. AIMS

- 1.1. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:
- Promoting good attendance
 - Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
 - Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Acting early to address patterns of absence
 - Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2. The Executive Principal

The Executive Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3. The Designated Attendance Lead Responsible For Attendance

The Designated Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Executive Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Executive Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Designated Attendance Lead responsible for attendance is our Education Social Worker, who can be contacted via email: familysupport@smpsac.org or telephone 01638 713317

3.4. Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 08:50 and 13:10 each day.

3.5. School Admin Staff

School Admin Staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Undertake First Day Calling to identify why children are absent, everyday before 09:30.
- Record on our MIS the contact made with parents, and the reason given for absence.

4. Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends everyday on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. Failure to provide information will result in an unauthorised absence being placed on their child's record.



- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day, or produce evidence of appointments when requesting an absence

4.1. Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Sign in at Reception if they come into school after 08:45

5. RECORDING ATTENDANCE

5.1. Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For all pupils whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 08:55.

The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:10

5.2. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school Office, or sending an email to Attendance@smpsac.org



We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3. Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (before 08:55) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (after 08:55) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Persistent lateness will be followed up by our Education Social Worker, who may liaise with the Suffolk County Council Team too.

5.4. Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police or Suffolk County Council if we have a Safeguarding concern around the absence of a child.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 1 working day after the session. If no reason is ascertained then the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving Suffolk County Council attendance officer

5.5. Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels when attendance falls below 95% without authorised reasons, via half-termly written reports.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for term-time absence

Leave of Absence: St Mary's Church of England Academy will consider every application individually. We will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. We will not authorise time off school during periods of national tests. It is not policy to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances, for example:

Any request must be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gipsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable leave of absence rota and evidence is provided to this effect. Please note that parents who are self-employed will be assessed on an individual basis according to the nature of the self-employment.
- A visit to family overseas may be important in terms of a child's identity and self-esteem as he/she grows up; or cases of illness.
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;

Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

6.1. Legal Sanctions

The Academy or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.



The Academy can request the support of the Suffolk County Council attendance team to work with families to improve poor attendance. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to prosecute families for failing to have their child attend school regularly.

7. Strategies For Promoting Attendance

- highlight to parents through our newsletter the importance of children attending school regularly
- celebrate successful year group attendance through our Academy newsletter
- highlighting attendance to parents on school reports

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1. Monitoring Attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly across the Academy at an individual pupil level
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

8.2. Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8.3. Analysing attendance

The Academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.4. Using Data To Improve Attendance

The Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.5. Reducing Persistent And Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:



- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Offer parents meetings with our Education Social Worker to offer early intervention to resolve attendance issues
- Hold regular meetings between the Executive Principal and the parents of children who the Academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Executive Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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
Authorised absence		
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
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

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O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed



Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day