



Attendance Policy

Our school is a place 'where learners grow.'

A kind community where the worth of everyone is nurtured and celebrated.

We are rooted in a love of learning and building the confidence and courage to be ourselves.

Together we flourish to be the best we that we can be.

Approved by:	Headteacher	Date: September 2021
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) which came into affect in September 2022 from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

NB: Following public consultation, and subject to parliament, the Secretary of State has committed to this guidance becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows. (This will be no sooner than September 2023).

The above 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 body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Providing information to the Local Authority to enable them to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Works with NYCC to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

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.

3.5 School admin Staff

School admin staff are expected to make and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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 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 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

In line with current DfE guidance, as a school we recognise that:

96% or above is a good attendance rate which will best support all aspects your child's progress and attainment at school and promote a positive work ethic
90% – 95% is an attendance rate which is considered a minimum level to support your child's progress and attainment at school
< 90% is considered persistent absence
< 50% is considered severe absence

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by phone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Our doors open at 8.50 am with the school day starting promptly at 9am when each class begins with basic skills such as spelling and times tables.

Lateness affects your child's attainment (test performance) and achievement (progress) for example if your child is 15 minutes late a day this is equivalent to

- 1 hour 15 minutes per week
- 47 ½ hours a year
- 57 lessons

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Repeated lateness and /or absences will be followed up by the school.

If your child is not in school by 9.30 and you have not notified school of a reason for absence we will contact you by telephone to establish the reason for absence. For this reason it is important that your up to date contact details are held in school.

We monitor lateness regularly and will contact parents where there is cause for concern. Educational Social workers also monitor lateness regularly as it is a form of absence and will contact parents if this is a persistent problem

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phone/email or letter.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports annually to parents in the written end of year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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 Gypsies, 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

- Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and parents have access to live Attendance data for their child/ren via the Parent Portal

- More in depth analysis of attendance, will be completed termly by the Headteacher and may result in a letter home to parents or a request for a meeting with a view to supporting families in improving attendance for their child/ren.

- The DfE documents [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) will be used by the school to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. This guidance is due to become law by September 2023.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school 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 of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 but 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

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Parentally-condoned absences including unacceptable reasons for absence (e.g. too tired after a late night, birthday treat)
- Leave of absence taken but not agreed as exceptional circumstances by the Head teacher when requested in advance e.g. for a family holiday
- Excessive delayed return from agreed leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school recorded as unauthorised absence (after the close of registration).

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance at Sutton CP School.

The school will:

- Build respectful relationships between staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure trust and engagement. We make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicate openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.
- Treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
- Take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
- Understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
- Communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

Parents and carers should:

- treat staff with respect
- actively support the work of the school
- call on staff for help when they need it
- communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

7. Attendance monitoring

The admin team at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school by 9.30am in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above three days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the local authority / external agencies to support the family.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

Our school collects and stores attendance data which may be used for internal purposes, for example to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences maybe a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum three years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school

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 at another school	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	Participating in a supervised 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	Leave of absence granted by the school	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	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	Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet 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	Absent without authorisation	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence
U	Arrival in school after registration closed	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	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Useful Information

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)