



Sutton School

Attendance Policy

Version History	
Date of first issue:	January 2017
Dates of Updates:	January 2017, February 2020, December 2020, March 2021, February 2023, April 2024
Most recently approved by governors on:	June 2024
To be next reviewed on:	June 2026



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Attendance Policy

1 Aims

At Sutton School we strive to ensure that all our pupils are 'safe, happy and learning.' In order for our pupils to do this, and maximise their true potential, we recognise that good attendance is essential. Regular school attendance is the key to raising standards to ensure pupils progress, whilst working towards meeting their own unique learning needs and objectives outlined within their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP.) We are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance in order to enable our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, whilst working towards independence.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts have in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources (such as pupil premium) can have on improving pupil attendance.

As a specialist setting, we ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for our pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with their EHCP. Sutton school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate:

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled to.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended).
- [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.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

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 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.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.



3.3 The Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- 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.
- 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the head teacher to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The family Liaison Officer is Miss A McPherson and can be contacted via telephone 01384 817875 or email: amcpherson@sutton.dudley.sch.uk

3.4 Class Teachers and Learning Facilitators

Class teachers and learning facilitators are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Our school opening times are:

Arrival	08:20-08:40
Registration Close	09:15
Afternoon Registration	12:15-12:30
Registration closes	12:45
End of school day	15:00 (Monday – Thursday) 13:30 (Friday)

3.5 The School Administration Team

The school administration team will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the family liaison officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.



3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:20 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence.)
- 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.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

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 also record:

- 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.



4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents and/or Carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence of their child on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:20am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school administration office or leaving an automated message on absence line. If the child is due to be absent from school for more than one day the school needs to be contacted each day the child is due to attend.

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. This can be communicated via:

- Telephone.
- Email.
- Letter handed into school.

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

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.
- If their lateness and punctuality become persistent, a letter will be sent out to parents/carer.



4.5 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.
- On day one send a Parentmail asking for parents to contact the school.
- On day two, carry out a home visit alongside calls to parent/carers.
- On day three, another home visit will be conducted, alongside parent carer calls and subsequent calls to other sibling's schools and parents places of work.
- On day four, if parent /carer have made no contact; then another home visit will be conducted and the local police informed.
- On day five if no contact has been made the local authority will be informed.

5 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. Requests can be submitted via email or letter, and they must be addressed to the head teacher. 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 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 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 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.

6 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Sutton School recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, so we build it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, educational needs supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

The Family Liaison officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for the school cohort as a whole. Trends will be analysed in relation to:

- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence.

The Family Liaison Officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.



The Family Liaison officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Family Liaison officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future. The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data. The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice, which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

7 Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

In school the attendance and punctuality of each child on roll will be monitored on a daily basis and tracked every 4 weeks, 20 school days.

Parents of children with attendance below 96% will receive an automated letter informing them of their child's decline in attendance. Parents of children who have been late on more than one occasion in the four week period will also receive a letter. The number of minutes lost learning will also be included. Letters and texts will be sent out automatically to the parent of every child who meets that criteria unless it is clear that unavoidable. The Family liaison officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- 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.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

At Sutton School we:

- 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 pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

At Sutton School we:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, learning facilitators 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.



7.4 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.

Sutton School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Use a multi-agency approach to ensure all barriers are initially identified and then be removed.
- Use attendance initiatives as positive encouragement/incentives/rewards as required to maintain high levels of attendance.

8 Children Missing in Education

This information can be found in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: Ref pg. 28 & 29.

For further information: Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities 2016.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

9 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 12 months by the head teacher 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.



11 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
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



Code	Definition	Scenario
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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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