

Attendance Policy September 2021



Approval and review dates

| Policy | Date of last review | Date of next review |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SVS Attendance Policy | January 2022 | September 2022 |

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Aims | 1 |
| 2. Legislation and guidance..... | 1 |
| 3. School procedures | 2 |
| 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence | 4 |
| 5. Strategies for promoting attendance | 7 |
| 6. Attendance monitoring | 8 |
| 7. Roles and responsibilities..... | 9 |
| 8. Monitoring arrangements | 9 |
| 9. Links with other policies | 10 |
| Appendix 1: attendance codes | 10 |

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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 [school attendance guidance](#) 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

Attendance Policy

September 2021



following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of each session of each class for monitoring and safeguarding purposes. 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.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00 and will be kept open until 9:15.

Pupils will receive a late mark (code L) if they arrive after 9.20am.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school by phone call, text or email on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents can notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by phone call, letter, text message or email.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Below are a number of strategies in managing persistent lateness.

- Same-day consequences for lateness (detention)
- Understanding reasons for lateness
- Staff setting a good example

Three late arrivals in a week counts as persistent lateness, below are steps taken to improve punctuality:

- Warning letters to parents
- Inviting parents to a meeting with the school's attendance officer or other senior member of staff
- Working with the parent to find a solution if there are genuine difficulties

If the child continues to be late, parents will be invited to another meeting with the SMBC educational welfare officer (EWO).

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Below is the attendance/absences protocol:

- Daily follow-up phone calls (only for three consecutive days)
- After three days of unauthorised absence, JH will send a follow-up letter to guardian via post and email, pupil will be referred to DSL via CPOMS
- Five days of unauthorised absence, home visit by DSL
- We will have to report this to Attendance Prosecution services after **10 days**.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance record will be included in the termly school report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The following examples of such exceptional circumstances are:

Attendance Policy

September 2021



- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if the principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate.
- Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”. This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions.

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 – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school

4.2 Legal sanctions

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.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, 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.

SVS will adopt the SMBC Attendance and Prosecution regulations, see table below:

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under Section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:

"If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence."

- The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- "Parent" includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



5. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school that SVS instigating a culture of attendance in tackling unauthorised absence, we have:

- Set high expectations for attendance
- Communicate these expectations to pupils, parents, governors and all staff constantly and consistently by awarding every term 100% attendance
- Ensure governors and staff are communicating the same expectations around absence frequently to parents and pupils
- Take a 'zero tolerance' approach to unauthorised absence in all cases, ensuring that all absences are followed up rigorously through first-day calling
- Ensure staff absence and lateness is tackled, to set a good example to pupils and show that the same rules apply to everyone in school

Attendance is a standing item on weekly senior leadership team meetings to ensure that it is being monitored constantly. To tackle issues with specific groups of pupils, the senior leadership team could hold a separate meeting to discuss the particular issues involved and formulate an action plan.

School and parent partnership: We meet with the individual families concerned, making it clear that the problem can be solved and that we are there to help find a solution. If the family will not come to school to discuss the issue, our DSL will organise a home visit.

During the home visit, we will inform the parents that SMBC could take legal action against them if their child does not attend school.

Bespoke solution

Where a **lack of transport** is preventing attendance:

- See if you can help the family identify local public transport routes or organise a lift-share with another pupil
- If a bus is regularly arriving late or not at all, contact the local council about it
- If the pupil is missing the bus, talk to them about how to manage their time so that they don't miss it
- Look into whether the pupil may qualify for free transport, for example due to the distance they live from school or any special educational needs or disabilities they may have

Where absence is largely due to **parental disengagement**:

- Send a member of staff (DSL) to knock on the family's door every morning
- Organise an 'attendance panel meeting' to discuss the issue with the parents, the pupil, senior staff and governors

Attendance Policy September 2021



- Liaise with any other agencies involved with the family, such as social services, to come up with an action plan

Where a **particular lesson** is putting the pupil off school, we will talk to their teacher to see if the pupil needs extra help or encourage the teacher to make lessons more interactive

Where a pupil has **caring responsibilities** that are affecting attendance, we will look into whether they may be eligible for extra support from the LA and signpost this.

Further support strategies include:

- Allowing pupils to take planned breaks from learning
- Organising extra tuition
- Referring pupils to local child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for support
- Contacting parents of persistent absentees frequently, including through home visits
- Organising tailored support for pupils facing specific problems such as mental health issues
- Putting a pupil on a reduced timetable, focusing on exams in only core subjects

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

1. If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
2. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, the DSL will visit the family.
3. If after the home visit and after 10 days, we will refer the case to SMBC Attendance and Prosecution team or to the respective Local Authority of the pupil with persistent absence.

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 is 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.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school uses Arbor as MIS to collect and stores attendance data to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

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

7.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to SLT and principal
- Works with SMBC Attendance and Prosecution Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

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

7.5 Reception/Admin staff

Reception/Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

Attendance Policy

September 2021



This policy will be reviewed annually by the Registrar. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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 |

Attendance Policy

September 2021



| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | 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 |
| 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 i.e. Y12 |

Attendance Policy

September 2021



| | | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) |
|----------|---|--|
| 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 |

New category for non-attendance related to coronavirus effective 06 January 2022

Summary

This guidance sets out how schools should record where pupils are not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus in the 2021/22 academic year. This category should only be used to record where their attendance would be contrary to legislation or guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), or the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Attendance expectations

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19

This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

Attendance Policy September 2021



- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19’ could apply

In line with current legislation and guidance from the UKHSA and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms of COVID-19

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should follow the latest government guidance on whether they need to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

Where a pupil is required to take a PCR test, and they test negative and feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the PCR test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result. For symptomatic pupils, Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test.

After a pupil tests positive for COVID-19 (LFD or PCR), they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school. They should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance.

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

From 14 December 2021, adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months (pupils) identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a LFD test every day for 7

Attendance Policy September 2021



days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result.

Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:

- fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine
- all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months (pupils), regardless of their vaccination status
- people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons
- people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine

Although close contacts are strongly advised to get a test, they should continue to attend school unless they are symptomatic. Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

Children under 5 years are exempt from self-isolation and do not need to take part in daily testing of close contacts.

Pupils with SEND identified as close contacts should be supported by their school and their families to agree the most appropriate route for testing including, where appropriate, additional support to assist swabbing. For further information please see [SEND guidance](#).

Further information is available in [NHS Test and Trace: what to do if you are contacted](#) and in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

Attendance Policy

September 2021



Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a test

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance guidance for schools](#).

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Attendance Policy September 2021



Non-Attendance



Absence Day 1



Reception contact parent
/carer



Reason Recorded



No Answer / No Reason
Highlighted by Admin
Team CODE 0
Email to MR/DSL



Third Day to send
official
Letter
JH/MR to log this in
CPOMS
↓
Inform SLT



Fifth Day to
Trigger
Home Visit
↓
DSL to Inform
Admin team/SLT



10 Days of Absence / No
Contact
↓
Inform Missing Education Team
Follow CMiE Protocol for
welfare support, AP or
prosecution route

Attendance Policy September 2021



See also SMBC Attendance and Prosecution printed forms (Feb 2021 version)

- 1. Children Missing From Education**
- 2. CMfE Return**
- 3. Modified Timetable**
- 4. Removal from roll and removal from roll flowchart**
- 5. Vulnerable Child referral**