

Attendance Policy

September 2023



Approval and review dates

Policy	Date of last review	Date of next review
SVS Attendance Policy	September 2023	September 2024

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1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
- 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
- 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 [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

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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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

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. 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 Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The 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 senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

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- 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 senior leader responsible for attendance is Matilda Ros and can be contacted via 0121 5697522 and mros@svs.sandwell.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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 Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal/ when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Manjot Kaur and can be contacted via 0121 6797522 and mkaur@svs.sandwell.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes in school MIS Arbor.

3.6 Reception/Admin Office

Reception/Admin Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor
- Transfer calls from parents to the DSL/pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 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 8:40 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- 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

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3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

4 School procedures

4.1 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.

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

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 8:40 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.

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4.2 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 8:40am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

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.

4.3 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 5.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

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

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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).

4.5 Following up 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 the police.**
- 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 5 working days after the session
- 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 an education welfare officer

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:

	High-risk pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day one – phone call and on the second day of unauthorised absence, deputy DSL will immediately conduct a home visit • Five days of unauthorised absence, DSL will request external professionals including Local Authority for joint visit and action plan ensure that pupil return to school as soon as possible

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have to report this to Attendance Prosecution services after 10 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have to report this to Attendance Prosecution services after 10 days.
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4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance record will be included in the termly school report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 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:

- 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

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- 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

5.2 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.

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

SMBC Statutory Pathways

- EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICE
- PROSECUTION – ABSOLUTE / AGGRAVATED OFFENCE (Magistrates Court)
- SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ORDER (Magistrates Court if not resolved)
- EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDER (Family Court)

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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.

6. 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

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- 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.
- Our interventions are delivered in a targeted way, in response to data. We monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking). During our weekly meeting, we review and where interventions fail to address attendance issues, we will identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.
- Among the number of measures implemented, the partnership with local police and SMBC proved to be most effective. Our DSL together with PC Treasure regularly conduct home visits to our pupils who have missed school for more than five days.

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
- 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
- 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

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

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

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- 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

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

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The school uses Arbor as MIS to collect and stores attendance data to 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.

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Analysing attendance

We will:

- 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
- 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.

10. Analysing Attendance

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

11. Using data to improve attendance

We will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to 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

12. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

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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		

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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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

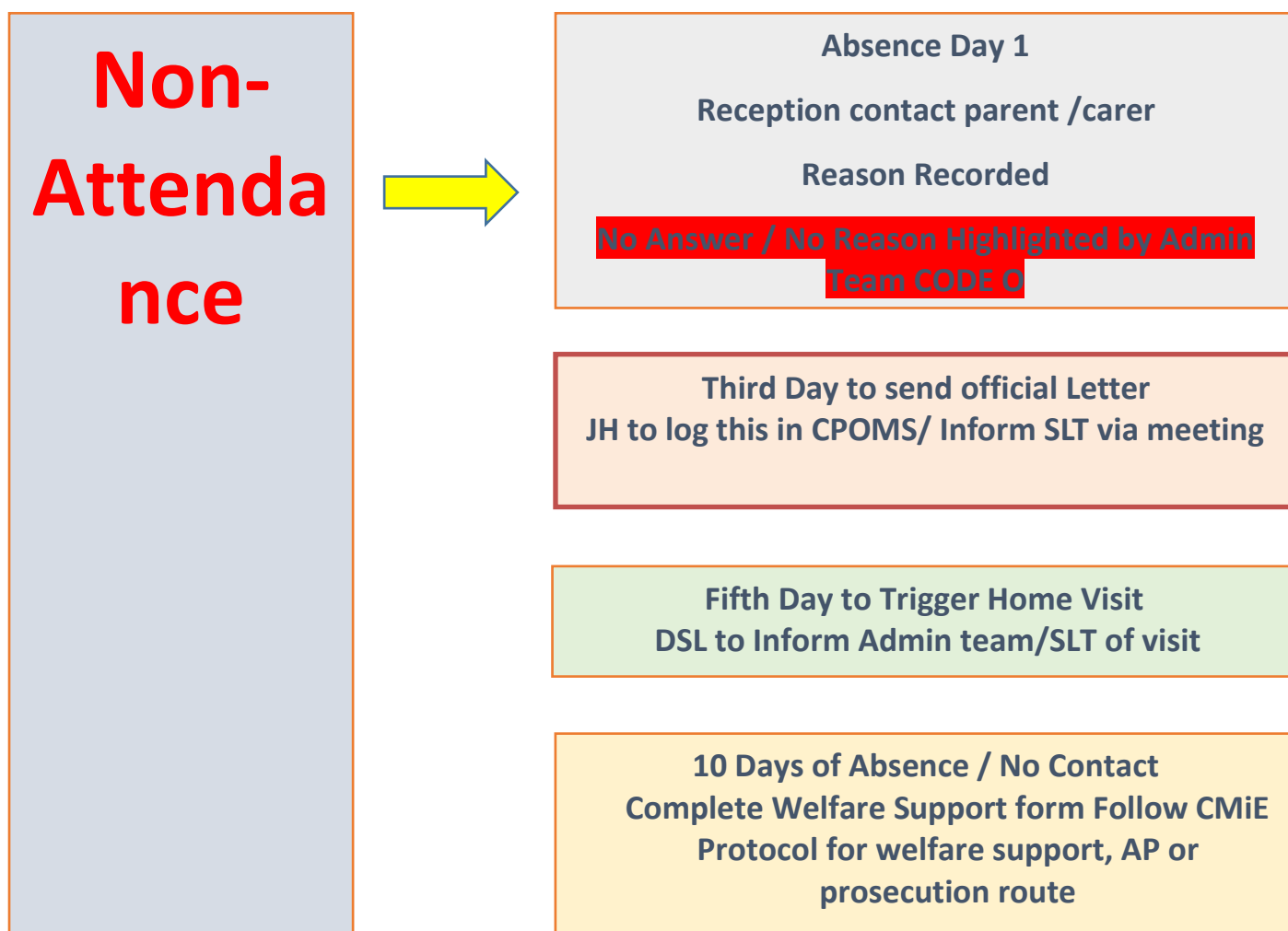
Appendix 2: Attendance/absences protocol:

High-risk pupils (in the register/with plan)

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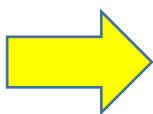
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For high-risk pupil flow-chart:

**Non-
Attendance**



Day 1 unauthorised absence
Reception contact parent / carer
Reason Recorded

Day 2 of unauthorised absence, deputy DSL will immediately conduct a home visit

Day 5 of unauthorised absence, DSL will request external professionals including police and Local Authority for joint visit and action plan to ensure that pupil return to school as soon as possible

JH to log this in CPOMS/ Inform SLT via meeting

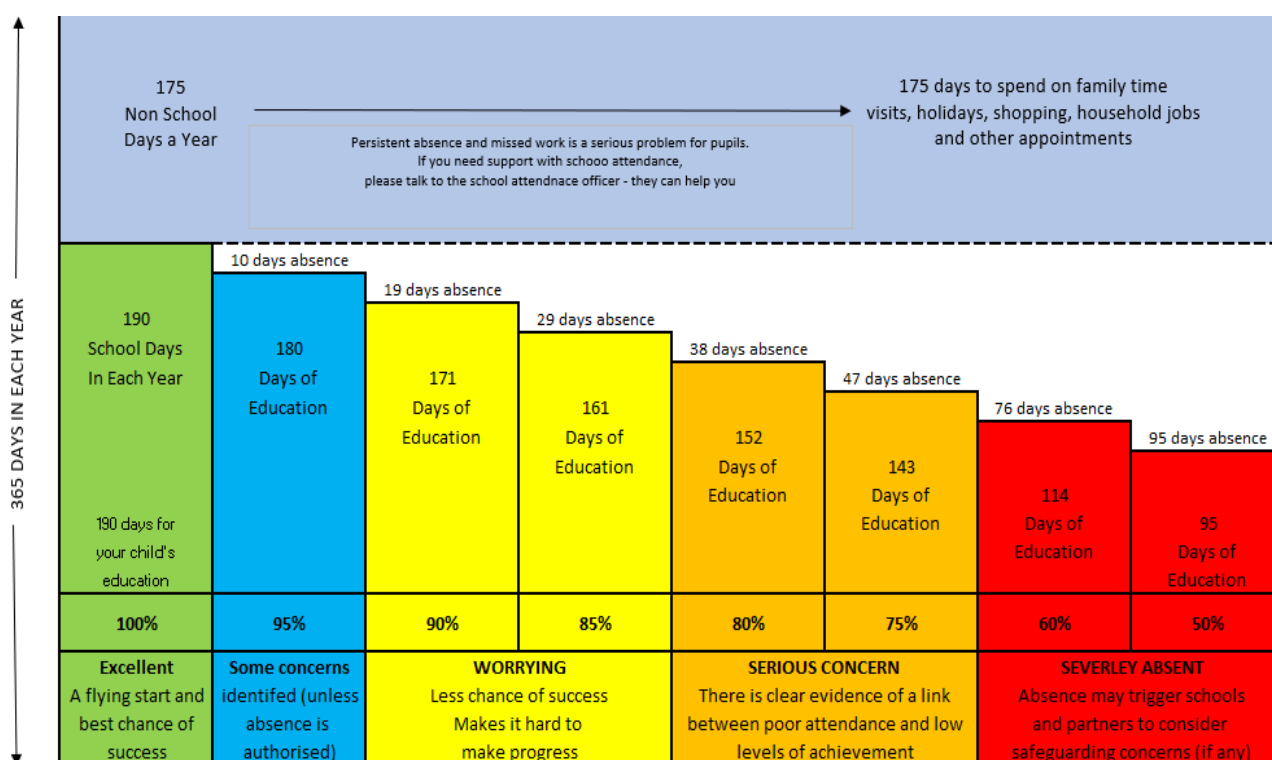
10 Days of Absence / No Contact
Complete Welfare Support form Follow CMiE Protocol for welfare support, AP or prosecution route



Attendance is Everyone's Business!

Read:

- Attendance Policy
- Record and report
- Follow SMBC protocol
- Read 'Working together to improve school attendance.'
- Check <https://www.sandwellcsp.org.uk/>



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