



SHS

Attendance & Children Absent from Education Policy

2023 - 2024

Ownership & Consultation	
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ATTENDANCE & CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION POLICY

Policy statement

The school maintains its Attendance Registers in accordance with Statutory Regulations, as amended from time to time. The school adheres to Statutory Guidance when dealing with Children Missing from Education. The school will work in a collaborative way with external agencies, in accordance with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach taken to:

- Recording information at the point a pupil is admitted to the school;
- Recording attendance information on a daily basis;
- Recording information at the point a pupil leaves the school; and
- Managing a situation when a pupil is deemed missing from education.

1.0 Attendance

1.1 Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with this policy. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

1.2 The legal framework

Legislation specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs; either by regular school attendance or education otherwise such as home education.

The same law requires the school to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) requires a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

1.3 Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between truancy and antisocial behaviour.

1.4 Parent/carer(s) responsibilities

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctual and is prepared for learning - with any resources needed to participate in the online lessons prepared and at hand.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

1.5 School responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (deemed as attendance below 90%).
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so s/he can access the education s/he is entitled to;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Encourage parents to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.

We achieve this in the following ways:

- Teachers must take a register for every lesson taught on the Athena Platform;
- Mark all children not present, taking account of absence notes;
- Reward attendance which is 96% or greater;
- Follow up un-notified first day absence contact to the parent/carer(s);
- Monitor attendance and lateness and implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home;
- Report on patterns of attendance Staff meetings with the Education Team to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- Specifically monitor any persistent absence (individual attendance below 90%);
- Proper use of the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of three years after it was made;
- Only the Director of Education, CAEO or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence;

- Close discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to identify children causing concern, including interviewing children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance;
- Close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where there are concerns of children being missing from education – see Section 3 of this document;
- Implementing any agreed improvement strategies such as referral to the local authority attendance services and/or children’s social care in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures; and
- Provide parent/carer(s) with the timings of the school day and the calendar via Google Classrooms and the school website and any other usual method such as the school newsletter, in advance.

1.6 Good attendance

Our school considers good attendance to be that of 96% or above.

1.7 Late arrival

If a student arrives late for his lessons, it is recorded on the register. At the end of the day an email is automatically sent to the parents informing them of their child being late for the lesson.

1.8 Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Chief Academic Excellence Officer. The CAEO is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible. An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the CAEO

1.9 Persistent absentees

Persistent absentees are those pupils with attendance below 90%. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) if their child’s attendance approaches that threshold. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.

1.10 Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

The school’s Attendance Register is electronic and the drives are constantly backed up and kept by means of a our Digital Education Platform, Athena, Server and Cloud Storage.

1.11 Monitoring and review arrangements

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Executive Officer. This covers pupil attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. The Board of Directors, Co-Leaders of Learning and DSL scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

2.0 Children Absent from education

2.1 Introduction

'Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.' Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

2.2 Statutory guidance

Compulsory School Age

<https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/school-starting-age#:~:text=Most%20children%20start%20school%20full,start%20school%20in%20September%202022>

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Department for Education regulations state that:

"Your child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If your child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date. For example, if your child reaches compulsory school age on 31 March, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the next term (summer term that year)."

As our youngest learners start in Reception, these dates are important for accurate attendance records as the child progresses through the school.

The school will follow the statutory guidance 'Children Missing from Education', as amended:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Whenever a new student arrives at Sophia High School, a copy of the Absent from Education Policy from the Department of education is emailed to them. The parents are advised if they left a school, that their previous school should be informed that they have left and the reasons why. It is the responsibility of this school to keep the council informed of their departure from their school. They should also inform their previous school that they have joined Sophia High, as well as their local council.

2.3 School requirements

Schools must enter pupils on the Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil

Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the Admissions Register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

When a child has left Sophia High School, the parent needs to inform the school where the child is going. Sophia High will advise the parent to inform the local council. Sophia High will also check with the local council that this has been done.

2.4 Safeguarding

The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained absences.

Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child, the school will always follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which includes reporting to the local authority.

Annex – Attendance Guidance for Parents

Introduction

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

The legal framework

Legislation in the UK specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school.

The same law requires the school to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence.

Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths;
- Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths; and
- Of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths.

Parent/carer(s) responsibilities

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually and is prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.

Attendance and Children Absent from Education Policy

- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day to provide a reason for absence
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

School responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence.
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so s/he can access the education s/he is entitled to.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Encourage parents to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.
- Ensure that recorded lessons and catch up resources are available on the Google Classroom for absent students each day and follow up with families to ensure work is completed.

Late arrival

If your child arrives late for any lesson it is marked as 'late' in our electronic register. Registers are automatically logged by Google Meet once a student has entered the online session. Students entering the lesson 2 minutes after the start are logged as late. At the end of the day an email is automatically sent to the parents informing them that their child was late for this lesson.

Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Chief Academic Excellence Officer. The CAEO only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the CAEO in advance.

Good attendance

Our school considers good attendance to be 96% or above. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) if there are attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.