



Attendance Policy

2021/22

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Statement of Intent

2.0 Principles

3.0 Regulatory Framework

4.0 School Procedures

4.1 Attendance Register

4.2 Leave of Absence

4.3 Unplanned Absence

4.4 Medical or Dentist Appointments

4.5 Lateness and Punctuality

4.6 Following Up on Absence

4.7 Persistent Absence

5.0 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

6.0 Attendance and Monitoring

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governors

7.2 The Head Teacher

7.3 The Attendance Officer/Senior Pastoral Leader

7.4 Class Teachers/ Form Tutors

7.5 Admin Staff

8.0 Monitoring Arrangements

9.0 Links with Other Policies

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

1.0 Statement of Intent

The Suthers School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with and support students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. The school target for all students is 98% or above.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards acknowledging the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives The Suthers School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2.0 Principles

1. To improve the overall percentage of students at school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents, carers and students.
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Attendance and Enforcement Team and with other services and agencies.
9. To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

3.0 Regulatory Framework

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 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

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

4.0 School Procedures

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the year in which they reach the age of 16.

4.1 Attendance Register

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

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 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.

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 8:25 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken by 8:45 and the register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

The register will record whether the student was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

4.2 Leave of Absence

- The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance and Enforcement Team of Nottinghamshire County Council.

- The Attendance and Enforcement Team have the authority to consider issuing

Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Nottinghamshire County’s enforcement policy.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-discipline-and-exclusions/attendance-absence-truancy>

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised.
- Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.
- The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children’s regular attendance at school.
- The penalty is £60 for those who pay within 21 days and £120 for those who pay within 28 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 28 days may be prosecuted.
- The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority’s Penalty Notice Protocol.

4.3 Unplanned Absence

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

Parents can do this by contacting Reception at The Suthers School on 01636 957690

or by emailing the attendance mailbox at contact@suthersschool.co.uk.

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.

4.4 Medical or Dentist Appointments

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

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.

Please notify the school at least 24 hours in advance where appointments have been made. Please notify via telephoning Reception on 01636 957690, or by emailing contact@suthersschool.co.uk

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.

4.5 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.

A student who arrives late to school will receive a same day break time detention.

Students who arrive late to school or lessons 3 times or more in a week, will be placed in an after school detention for one hour for failing to follow basic expectations.

4.6 Following Up on 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.

If a child is absent from school, the following will be initiated by the Attendance Team:

- A text service will be activated for all students who are not in school after close of register at 9.30 am.
- This may be followed up with a phone call or letter from the Attendance team or Form Tutor to verify the reasons for absence and whether additional support is needed to support the students return to school.

4.7 Persistent Absence (Including truancy)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops below 90% for any reason. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. All students who are PA or are considered to be on track to becoming PA, will be referred to the school's EWO, and may also be referred to appropriate external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section (1) offence and a £2500 fine and up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section (1a) offence.

5.0 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments.

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.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed.
- The death of a student.
- A student has transferred between schools.
- A student is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failures to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
- A student has left the school, but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.

6.0 Attendance and Monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Trust and Governance

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Head Teacher

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

7.3 The Attendance Officer/Senior Pastoral Leader

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level. Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher and works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence. The attendance officer also arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

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 Admin Staff

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

8.0 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months by the governing board. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9.0 Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

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 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

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.

Covid 19 coding:

X codes

X01 - Non-compulsory school age

X02 - Self-isolating: COVID-19 symptoms

X05 - Quarantine

X06 - Shielding

X07 - Government restrictions / Local lockdown

X08 - Not attending in response to outbreak management

X09 - Self-isolating: close contact required to isolate by NHS Test and Trace

I codes

I01 - Illness

I02 - Confirmed case of COVID-19