



THE
SUTHERS
SCHOOL

Attendance Procedure

Suthers School



Approved by: N Watkin

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the 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 [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

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
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- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance is monitored by Senior Pastoral Leader and the Attendance Officer and reported to the governing body every half-term by Assistant Head for Pastoral.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The 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
- › 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 Kris Cochrane and can be contacted via phone 01636 957690 or via email kcochrane@suthersschool.co.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 headteacher
- › Working with local authority education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher/Senior Pastoral Leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Diane Barnes and can be contacted via phone 01636 957690 or via email dbarnes@suthersschool.co.uk

The Senior Pastoral Leader is Wendy Redmond and can be contacted via phone 01636 957690 or via email wredmond@suthersschool.co.uk

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

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

3.6 School administration staff

School administration staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer 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 every day and timetabled session on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence **before 8.30am** 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time
- › Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › For pupils of compulsory school age, 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school **by 8.25am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken **at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **13.15pm and will be kept open until 13.45pm**.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence **by 8.30am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

On the first day of unplanned absence parents/carers need to contact the school via telephone 01636 957690 or via email attendance@suthersschool.co.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school **in advance of the appointment**.

Please let us know in advance through by contacting the school via telephone 01636 957690 or via email attendance@suthersschool.co.uk

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments **out of school hours where possible**. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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 headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

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 at 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students arriving late for school or lessons without a valid reason will be issued with a pastoral detention and parents/carers will be informed. Repeated lateness will necessitate a meeting with the parents/carers to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police and other agencies as appropriate.
- › 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

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. We will:

- Issue three written reports each year stating the attendance figure
- Provide parents/carers with daily attendance updates via the My Child At School (MCAS) app.
- Contact parents/carers directly when there are concerns about punctuality and attendance

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event/s that is an emergency and exceptional in its entirety.

*Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is **no** entitlement to time off in school time to go on holiday.*

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Attendance Officer. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by either a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- › The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We celebrate good attendance at Suthers School and aspire for all students to achieve full attendance. We make it clear to all stakeholders that **97%** attendance is the benchmark for good attendance. High levels of attendance are celebrated through tutor set celebrations, school rewards and achievement assemblies.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Senior Pastoral Leader monitors whole school attendance weekly via a meeting with the Attendance Officer. Vulnerable students and pupils with high levels of persistent absence are then prioritised in need of action plans to raise attendance. The SENDCo, DSL or PP Coordinator may then support improving the attendance of SEND, vulnerable and PP pupils, respectively.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School 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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The School 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses **10% or more** of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses **50% or more** of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school together with the local authority if necessary and are considered to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Closely monitor students with high levels of absence and prioritise calls home in the morning, in the event of non-attendance, to support improved attendance
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Unauthorised absence is recorded on a child’s school records and will be requested by colleges or apprenticeship providers. Attendance percentages, absenteeism and unauthorised absence is closely monitored by Family Services (a branch of Social Care who are responsible for attendance at Nottinghamshire County Council) and, of course, OFSTED, and attendance statistics are returned to the DfE annually.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by Kris Cochrane, Assistant Head - Pastoral. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour 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

V	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
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day