



Attendance Policy

2017-2018



Our Ethos:

‘Everyone in our school community has a right to learn and grow, be treated with respect and feel safe. Each has a responsibility too to conduct themselves in a way that helps promote these rights helping us to ensure that we continue to develop a culture and ethos in which every person feels valued and knows how to value the contribution of others.’

1. Introduction

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that parents/carers make sure that every child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

South Somerset Partnership School comprises 6 sites providing education for pupils who are unable to attend mainstream schooling due to social, mental, emotional and health needs.

Westfield Bungalow - KS2 Pupils

Lower School - KS3 Pupils

Wyndham View - KS4 Pupils

Upper School – KS4 pupils with medical needs

Steps Centre- Outreach and Project Fusion

Yeovil District Hospital Classroom

2. The importance of attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

3. Parent/ Carer responsibilities

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, carers, students and all members of school staff.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent is guilty of an offence.

Section 7 of the Act states that:

'every parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient fulltime education suitable to his /her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he /she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

To support parents and carers help to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers regularly on how each child is performing in school
- Let parents/carers know their attendance and punctuality rate
- Celebrate and reward good or improving attendance

4. Absence Categories

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, emergencies or other cause that the school deems to be appropriate.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This type of absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays

Whilst students may be away from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. South Somerset Partnership School staff will support pupils and their families to achieve regular attendance.

5. Persistent absenteeism (PA)

We consider that good attendance is 95% or above.

100% Exceptional attendance.

95 - 99% Good attendance.

90 - 94% Attendance level is cause for concern.

Less than 90% Poor attendance and is classified by the Government as Persistent Absence.

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' and carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. It will also be normal practice for the school to require parents or carers to seek medical evidence from a doctor to validate any absence due to illness if there is a historical or ongoing pattern. PA cases may also be made known to the Education Welfare Service.

6. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by phoning the school and keeping us informed of further absences if the absence lasts longer than one day.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence
- Or, parents/ carers can call into school and report to reception

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.30am.
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation
- We will also refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service if the number of unauthorised absences exceeds 15 sessions in 26 weeks or 10 continuous sessions in 12-week period).

Following recent advice from a serious case review, if we do not verify the whereabouts and safety of any child, we will contact all other emergency contacts supplied to us. If we have no response, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a cause for concern and we will call 101 to request a welfare check.

7. The Education Welfare Service

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the student to the Education Welfare Service from the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the student's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can request sanctions from the Local Authority such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at the school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or students may wish to contact the EWS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. They can be contacted on 0300 123 2224.

8. Lateness

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons.

How we manage lateness

- The day starts for most students at 8.45am and we expect pupils to be present at that time. Some pupils may have different timetables (during induction or for other reasons, and these must be adhered to)
- At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

9. Holidays and unauthorised leave in term time

We expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. In line with Government Policy regulations the school will not grant any leave of absence during term time except for exceptional circumstances.

- Religious observance.

A maximum of 3 days absence is allowed for religious observance

- Medical, dental or hospital appointments.
- We encourage these appointments to take place out of school time. Where this is not possible we will require proof of the appointment in order to authorise the appointment.
- **From September 2013 the education attendance service and Local Authority made important changes to the code of conduct regarding unauthorised leave taken during term time. The details of these changes are included in Appendix 1 of this policy. We follow the Department for Education Statutory Guidance 'School Attendance and Parental Responsibility Measures' January 2015**

10. Staff responsibilities

Those people responsible for attendance matters in the school are:

Rebecca Bennett- Deputy Headteacher

Leaders of Learning

Child's Key Person

Date of issue/revision: September 2017

Chair of Management Committee:

Headteacher:

Date:

Appendix 1

UNAUTHORISED LEAVE

From September 2013 the education attendance service has made important changes to the code of conduct regarding unauthorised leave taken during term time.

If an unauthorised holiday/leave is taken during term time, the school can make a request to the education attendance service/Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued as a result:

- **each parent** may be issued with a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent from school as a result of unauthorised leave of 10 sessions or more (5days)
- a maximum of one Penalty Notices may be issued per parent, per child in a 12-month period
- the legal definition of a parent is contained in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and refers to any adult who is a natural parent, someone with parental responsibility or someone who cares for a child
- the penalty notice is a fine of **£60 payable within 21 days** of its date of issue. If this payment is not received in full the amount payable will double to £120 payable in full within a further 7 days
- if the Penalty Notice is paid, no further action will be taken for that offence period.
- However, if no payment is made or if there are further unauthorised absences, the education attendance service/LA may take further legal action, which may result in court proceedings.

Appendix 2.

With regards to children of compulsory school age found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion:

The Local Authority have powers to implement a Penalty Notice to those parents or carers whose children are seen in a public place without a justifiable reason. The amount is £60.00 as in appendix one. A police constable, local authority officer, Head teachers and those authorised by them are authorised to request Penalty Notices.



Leader of Learning:

Key Person:

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Attendance Policy Reply Slip

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the Attendance Policy for South Somerset Partnership School.

SIGNED:

DATE:

PRINT NAME:

CHILD'S NAME: