

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



High  
Performance  
Learning

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## 1. Context

Attendance is at the heart of educational achievement and central to the well being of our students at Sydenham. It is essential that all students attend regularly and on time and that they access all of the opportunities that the school offers.

Students who do not have excellent attendance are at risk of a range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes including low attainment and social exclusion.

Excellent attendance is also a means by which vulnerable students are regularly monitored and tracked and as such forms a vital aspect of our Child Protection Procedures.

This policy reflects the Local Authority Attendance Guidance and Procedures for Schools Policy and the Statutory Framework.

### 1.2 Principles

- Every child has a fundamental right to be educated;
- Parents, carers, teachers and students have a duty and responsibility to ensure full attendance at school.

### 1.3 Aims

- To encourage that and support students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending school regularly;
- To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and work in partnership with parents, carers, the schools' Attendance and Welfare Officer, attendance staff and other agencies to address difficulties;



- To create a culture in which attendance is valued and celebrated and where students want to be punctual to school and to lessons, are keen to attend and know that they are missed when not attending school.

## 1.4 Objectives

- To identify patterns of non-attendance and poor punctuality at an early stage and work to resolve any individual difficulties.
- To provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring and reporting of attendance and punctuality.
- To devise strategies for tackling individual attendance and punctuality concerns.

## 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 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

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

## 3. School procedures

### 3.1 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 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.

### 3.2 The school day

8.50am – 3.20pm for Years 7 to 11

We encourage students to arrive to school by 8.40am each day. The morning register is taken at 8.50am so students are expected to be in their tutor rooms by 8.45am.

Additional sessions may be organised during the following times: 8.00 -8.50am and 3.30 – 5.00pm

### 3.3 Students should:

- Attend school every day
- Be punctual every day
- Arrive to all lessons on time.

### 3.4 Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence by telephone before 8.30am
- Inform the school in advance of any known absence and provide written evidence.
- Ensure that no holidays are taken during term time. Permission for a holiday must be sought in writing from the Headteacher using the Sydenham School request for leave form. This is only likely to be granted in exceptional circumstances.



- Check their child's attendance and punctuality record regularly using the school's Information Management System.
- Discuss with the tutor, Year Learning Co-ordinator or Attendance and Welfare Officer any concerns about attendance or punctuality;
- Inform the school of any personal changes which may interfere with a child's education.
- Provide school with accurate and up to date contact numbers, ensuring that any changes are quickly and accurately communicated to the school (info@sydenham.lewisham.sch.uk)
- Attend Parents' Evenings where academic progress and target setting are discussed fully, including any concerns about attendance and punctuality.

### 3.5 Absence from School

Notification must be provided by parents/carers for all absences from school on a daily basis. Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Parents / carers must contact the school on the first day of absence by 8.30am on 020 8699 6731.

If the school is not informed of an absence, the attendance team will phone, text or email the parent/carer for an explanation.

Planned absences, other than for medical reasons, should be applied for using the Student Planned Absence form and returned to the school for authorisation from the Headteacher. Parents/carers will be informed if the request for absence has been authorised.

### 3.6 Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are either a morning or an afternoon away from school for a valid reason. This includes serious illness and urgent medical/dental treatment. The school may or may not authorise an absence for illness even if an explanation has been given from a parent/carer. After 5 days or more, a letter will be required from a GP signed and dated with the reason for and the duration of the absence.

Letters regarding absences and, where applicable, medical certificates should be given to the school office.

### 3.7 Unauthorised Absence

Any absence where the school does not receive information from the parent/carer or when the reason for the absence is one that the school cannot authorise because it is not a valid reason for non-attendance will count as an unauthorised absence. For example:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason e.g. waiting for the gas board, shopping or caring for younger children
- Truancy from a whole session (a morning or an afternoon)



- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get marked in the register on time
- Taking unauthorised holidays in term time.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-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.

Parentally condoned unauthorised absence and persistent absence (below 90%) will be referred to the Lewisham Attendance Welfare and Inclusion Service and is likely to result in the parent/carer being served a Penalty Notice or summons to court. 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/carers 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 headteacher, 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.

Unauthorised absences could also result in a referral to Children's Social Care. This is because failing to ensure a child attends school on a regular basis might be considered a safeguarding matter which potentially puts the child at risk.

### 3.8 Medical appointments and illness

Parents/carers are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time. Only medical or dental treatment that is urgent and cannot be arranged outside school hours can be authorised. An appointment card/letter must be shown to the school.

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as 'M' which is an authorised absence. Students are expected to attend for some of the school day, rather than miss the whole day.



Students unable to attend school for extended periods for medical reasons (certified by a medical practitioner) may be referred to the Local Authority Hospital Outreach Programme (HOP). Additionally, the school may support students with health difficulties by drawing up an Individual Health Plan with the support of medical professionals.

### 3.9 Special Leave/Special Occasions / Family Emergencies or Bereavement

Schools can now only grant leave in 'exceptional' circumstances, which is at the discretion of the Headteacher. This should be applied for using the 'Student Planned Absence' form which can be found on the school website. Our policy is to refuse all applications for holidays during term time.

### 3.10 Days of Religious Observance

Such absences can be authorised in accordance with Local Authority Guidelines.

### 3.11 School procedures regarding Punctuality

A student arriving late may seriously disrupt not only their continuity of learning, but also that of others. The school has a legal duty to promote excellent punctuality. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend on time, every day.

All students must arrive by 8.50am. Any student arriving after this time will be coded as (L) for Late. The registers will close at 10.00am; students who arrive after the closing of the register will be marked as (U) Unauthorised Absence.

All students coded, as late (L) or (U) must attend a 30-minute late detention on the same day after school. If a student fails to attend the same day 30-minute detention, they will have to attend the next day for 30 minutes and a one-hour detention on Friday after school with a member of the senior leadership team. If patterns of persistent lateness are demonstrated, parents will be invited to a meeting at school or referred to the Local Authority

**Punctuality to Lessons:** Any students arriving late to lessons throughout the day must attend a 15 minute late detention after school.

**Detentions:** The School is able to keep students behind for after school detentions for a maximum of 20 minutes without notification to the parents/carers.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The tutor is at the forefront of addressing attendance in the tutor group. In support of this, all tutors should:

- Complete the register accurately using the appropriate symbols, during registration/tutor time.
- If a student is marked late (L) they are told to attend the Late Detention after school on the same day.



- Be aware of attendance and punctuality as a key feature of students' education and achievement and communicate this to students through the pastoral programme, individual meetings and via the academic reporting process.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality of those in the tutor group carefully on a daily basis and discuss any attendance concerns directly with the student in the first instance..
- Consult with the Year Learning Co-ordinator (YLC) about any student who is falling below 100% attendance and punctuality.
- Apply any agreed strategies to improve attendance and punctuality of any student with attendance concerns
- Review, with the YLC, any agreed interventions to assess any effectiveness improving attendance and punctuality.
- Direct records of communication concerning attendance and punctuality to the Year Learning Coordinator and Attendance and Welfare Co-ordinator.

#### The Year Learning Co-ordinator (YLC) should:

- Ensure a climate and culture that will lead to excellent attendance and punctuality for all students.
- Ensure that 100% attendance and punctuality targets are set for the year group and these are communicated to all concerned.
- Reinforce, whenever possible, the value of excellent attendance and punctuality with students (through assemblies and rewards).
- Monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year group and liaise with tutors, parents, the School Attendance and Welfare Officer, the Inclusion Faculty and external agencies attendance and punctuality concerns
- Agree with tutors the strategies to be employed in addressing attendance and punctuality and support tutors in the implementation and monitoring of these strategies.
- Ensure accurate documentation and records are kept on all aspects of attendance and punctuality.
- Be accountable to line managers for the attendance and punctuality trends in a year group.
- Work with the Schools' Attendance and Welfare Officer to share knowledge and information and to design support interventions for students whose attendance falls below 98%

#### The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), working as Line Managers should:

- Discuss with the Year Learning Co-ordinator the targets and strategies for their year group. The targets should be challenging and ambitious.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality trends for all year groups and assist in the evaluation of any interventions employed.
- Work with the Year Learning Co-ordinator on improving attendance and punctuality through any additional intervention, e.g. letters home, meetings etc.

#### The Governors will:

- Receive a termly report on the overall school attendance, which will indicate trends over a period.
- Receive information on strategies used and the effectiveness of measures undertaken.





### Subject teachers should:

- Complete all registers accurately at the start of the lesson using the appropriate symbols,
- Take appropriate action in relation to absent students who are unaccounted for or who are late for their lesson

### Curriculum Leaders should:

- Set a climate for and communicate the value of excellent attendance and punctuality to all lessons.
- Support subject teachers to establish why lesson absence and poor punctuality is occurring
- Liaise with YLC's about lesson absence and poor punctuality and develop support for students for re-integration in the case of persistent absence

### School Attendance Officer will support school attendance by:

- Working closely with staff in the Inclusion faculty.
- Undertaking primary/secondary transfer interviews and visit identified
- Year 6 students with poor attendance and punctuality
- Liaise closely with YLCs and the SLT to develop strategies for and monitor students whose attendance has fallen below 98%.
- Liaise closely with YLCs and the SLT to develop strategies for and monitor students whose punctuality becomes a concern
- Make home visits when required
- Liaise with the Inclusion Faculty to design individual support for students who are reintegrated following long term absence
- Prepare data required by the Local Authority for audit meetings
- Make referrals to the Local Authority and prepare papers to support court action. Attend court-warning meetings when required.
- Authorise students to be off rolled under the guidance of the Head teacher
- Make Child Protection referrals when required in liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Lead, manage, supervise and monitor the work of attendance and punctuality team to ensure that accurate data is available to all staff and families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Work alongside the SLT to provide a statistical breakdown of figures when required and develop whole school electronic registration.
- Provide meaningful data to all stakeholders including Governors.





## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be



		absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-



		term/bank holiday/INSET day
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