Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Owner: Julie Thomas  
Endorsed by: College of Management  
Senior Leadership Team  
Council of Trustees  

Date: July 2019  
Date: 11 July 2019  
Date: 10 July 2019  
Date: 18 July 2019

Date for next review: July 2020

1. Aims

Pupils need to have regular attendance at school to ensure they have access to education and learn the relevant skills for socialisation for the maximum number of days and hours. Missing school can leave gaps in knowledge and understanding and place the pupil at a disadvantage in both their educational and social development. This school has a short academic year of around 176 days and short days for children from Kindergarten to Class 4. This gives children plenty of time away from school and is a compelling reason to have high expectations on attendance and punctuality during term time.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
  - We will also support parents to ensure their children attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy applies to all children registered at the school and is available for all parents/carers to read on our website.

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 (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
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 A for the DfE attendance codes used in the school’s registers.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

All school doors will be open from 08.20. This gives the children 10 minutes to arrive and settle into their classrooms.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.30 (8.40 for Kindergarten) and will be kept open until 9.30. Children arriving after 8.30 (8.40 for Kindergarten) will be marked as late. Children arriving after 9.30 without reason will be marked as absent.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13.50 (13.10 for Afternoon Care) and will be kept open until 14.00.

3.2 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 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should notify the school by phoning the office on 01803 897377. If it is not possible to contact the school via phone, under exceptional circumstances you can email enquiries@steiner-south-devon.org with your child’s Name, Class, and detailed reason for absence.

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, or if the child is absent for more than 5 days, 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.

If the child has a long-term illness which prevents them from attending school, the school will do all it can to send work home.
3.3 Taking your child out of school in an emergency

If you need to take your child out of school in an emergency, this must be done in writing explaining why you need to remove your child and how long you expect them to be absent for.

The letter must be presented to the school office. The pupil must be signed out at reception and is subsequently entered into the Pupil on/off site book at reception.

Under no circumstances are parents to collect their children from the classrooms.

If the Kindergarten teacher, Class teacher or Class Guardian feel that the circumstances under which the child is being removed is concerning, they must inform the DSL or deputies.

3.4 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Please provide evidence of the appointment such as appointment card/letter. 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.

Parents should notify the school in advance, in writing to the Class teacher who will inform the office.

Parents/Students should provide evidence of their appointments to reception, this can be appointment card/letter/text message.

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.

3.5 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.

Lateness data is kept by the office and may be passed to the relevant teacher or safeguarding person if lateness exceeds 10% (three times in a 6-week half term).

If a child is late 20% (six times in a 6-week half term), a letter will be sent to the parents of the child, raising the school’s concern and giving the parent/carer(s) an opportunity to seek advice and support in resolving the issue. An example of this letter can be found in Appendix B. This will be followed up by a meeting between the parents, the child’s teacher and member of the safeguarding team.

3.6 Following up 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.

Where a child is absent from school but we have not been contacted by the parent/carer, we will try to contact them via phone. If we cannot contact the parent, we will phone the emergency contact, or initiate a ‘missing child protocol’.

When the school office has not received reasons for the child’s absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.
3.7 Reporting to parents

We will communicate your child’s attendance levels in the annual school report.

>95% Good  
90-95% requires improvement  
<90% poor.

If, during term time, a child’s attendance level falls below 95%, the school will notify the parents in writing (Appendix C). If it falls below 90% a meeting will be arranged between the parents, the child’s teacher and member of the safeguarding team (see letter Appendix D) at this meeting the child will be placed on an Attendance Plan for a minimum of 4 weeks and a maximum of 1 term (see Appendix F). If the attendance Plan is not successful, parents will be asked to attend another meeting with the Education Manager to agree a Parent Contract Attendance Plan (Appendix G), if this is not successful parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

• Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.4
  • 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.
• Compassionate reasons- i.e. grievances.
• Granted study leave
• Off-site education
• Exclusion

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

• Term-time family holidays

However, the school will allow holidays during term time if they have special importance or significance to the child, or if for compassionate reasons, to include weddings and funerals. This must not be a habitual occurrence.

In order for permission to be granted, the parent must apply to Education Manager, in advance, in writing.

The following will be considered:

• The child’s progress so far during that academic year.
  • The importance of being in school at that time of year.
• The child’s attendance so far during that academic year.

If the child’s attendance is already below 95%, the holiday absence will not be authorised.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

South Devon Steiner School aims to

• create a culture of good attendance and punctuality as the norm, as a sign of respect for the school’s aims and ethos, and the teacher’s work inside and out of the classroom.
• raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and regular punctuality at every stage of the child’s education
• promote a safe and secure mood within the school, where pupils feel welcome and encouraged to take ownership of their responsibility
• monitor attendance and lateness data to help recognise positive and negative patterns, for early intervention in any problems.
• Recognise the important role of staff, especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring
The Senior Business Administrator 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 (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day that a child is absent from illness.

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 continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer (EWO).
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.
The School collects attendance data via the school registers, and is used for internal purposes For example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify where absence patterns may give cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

6.1 Children Missing from Education
All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, fulltime education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. ‘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. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education, and the school follows local safeguarding procedures, including the notification of Children Missing Education and Services to Home Educators when pupils leave the school, and we notify the attendance and entitlement team if we think that a child is at risk of missing education.

7. Roles and responsibilities
7.1 The trustees
The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the SLT to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The School Leadership Team
The SLT is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.

7.3 The Senior Business Administrator
• Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
• Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT
• Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
• Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

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

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to monitor the message system for messages from parents about absence, and record it on the school system.

To contact parents, who haven not informed the school, to ascertain why their children are not in school.

To record information about when children leave school early.

7.6 Safeguarding Team

Receive concerns from Class teachers and add these to the child’s confidential safeguarding files.

Help and support the child, their family and the Class teacher to improve attendance and punctuality.

To report concerns to the relevant body if and when they arise (i.e. LA/MASH)

To provide reports and background information to any relevant body, and to record these interactions.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Business Administrator. At every review, the policy will be shared with the SLT and Trustees.

9. Links with other policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Flexi-Schooling Policy

10. Compliance

- Children missing in education, September 2016
- School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities September 2018
Appendix A: attendance codes

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Authorised leave of absence</td>
<td>Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Authorised holiday</td>
<td>Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medical/dental appointment</td>
<td>Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Religious observance</td>
<td>Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Study leave</td>
<td>Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence</td>
<td>Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unauthorised absence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Unauthorised holiday</td>
<td>Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Reason not provided</td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
<td>School is not satisfied with reason for pupil’s absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Arrival after registration</td>
<td>Pupil arrived at school after the register closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not required to be in school</td>
<td>Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</td>
<td>School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Pupil not on admission register</td>
<td>Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Planned school closure</td>
<td>Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
For use when a child has been late six times in a six-week half term.
(To be put onto School letter-headed paper)
[Name of Parent/Carer]
[Address]
[Address]
[Address]
[Post Code]
Date:

Dear [Parent/Carer]

[Child]’s punctuality has fallen below 80%.

In real terms, this means that they have been late six times in a half term. As such, we request that you join your child’s Class teacher and a member of the School’s Safeguarding Team for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss how the School can assist in helping to improve [child]’s punctuality.

Please could you attend a meeting on xx/xx/xx at 00.00 in your child’s classroom. If this is inconvenient for you, please contact [teacher, Senior Business Administrator or DSL].

We are obliged by law to meet the Child Protection regulations for schools, and our Attendance and Punctuality is important in helping us to meet some of these obligations.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

[Name]
[School Administrator or Designated Safeguarding Lead]
Dear [Parent/Carer]

[Child]'s attendance has fallen below 95%.

If it falls to 90% we will inform you again and request that you join your child’s Class teacher and a member of the School’s Safeguarding Team for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss how the School can assist in helping to raise [child]'s attendance levels.

We are obliged by law to meet the Child Protection regulations for schools, and our Attendance and Punctuality is important in helping us to meet some of these obligations. Please do speak to either myself or your child’s teacher if you are currently experiencing difficulties in getting your child to school, or if you would like to discuss this further.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

[Name]
[School Administrator or Designated Safeguarding Lead]
(To be put onto School letter-headed paper)

[Name of Parent/Carer]
[Address]
[Address]
[Address]
[Post Code]
Date:

Dear [Parent/Carer]

[Child]'s attendance has fallen below 90%.

We corresponded with yourself previously when [Child]'s attendance fell below 95%, indicating that if it fell to 90% we will request that you join your child’s Class teacher, Education Manager and a member of the School’s Safeguarding Team for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss how the School can assist in helping to raise [child]'s attendance levels.

Please could you attend a meeting on xx/xx/xx at 00.00 in your child’s classroom. If this is inconvenient for you, please contact [teacher, Senior Business Administrator or DSL].

We are obliged by law to meet the Child Protection regulations for schools, and our Attendance and Punctuality is important in helping us to meet some of these obligations.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Yours sincerely

[Name]
[School Administrator or Designated Safeguarding Lead]
Appendix E

Flowchart

Attendance per half-term

100%: outstanding

95%: school’s expectation

90%: if attendance below 95% school monitors attendance.

85%: if attendance below 90% school to actively support family and may consult EWO.

<85%: considered ‘persistent absence’ by DfE. School to actively support family in consultation with EWO. School to report to LEA.

<85% with Parental Acceptance: Level 3 Safeguarding Concern. School to make MASH referral.

Punctuality per half-term

100%: outstanding

90% (3 days): monitoring

80% (6 days): letter to parents, meeting with DSL.

85%: if attendance below 90% school to actively support family and may consult EWO.

<85%: considered ‘persistent absence’ by DfE. School to actively support family in consultation with EWO. School to report to LEA.

Unexplained absences: school has safeguarding duty to investigate

2 unauthorised absences (without explanation, i.e. no holiday application or notification):
letter will be sent to parents. If absent without authorisation again, second letter plus meeting.

2 consecutive unauthorised absences without the school being able to establish whereabouts of child and that child is safe: Safeguarding Team must consider a MASH referral.

Regular absence, irregular attendance, or 10 consecutive school days or more without permission: the school must regularly inform the local authority.
## South Devon Steiner School – Attendance Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil Name:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Attendance Year to Date:</td>
<td>Best/Worst day(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Attendance in the last 6 weeks:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents reason for Absence</td>
<td>Pupil reason for absence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will parents do to support improved attendance?</td>
<td>What will the pupil do to support improved attendance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can the School do to support improved attendance?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target for the next .................weeks is 95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date:</td>
<td>End Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of School Representative:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### South Devon Steiner School Parent Contract – Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil Name:</th>
<th>Date of Birth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Attendance YTD:</th>
<th>Attendance this term:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent/Carer Name:</th>
<th>Parent/Carer Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member of Staff Name:</th>
<th>Position:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Overview of Issues: 

### Agreed actions by parents: 

### Agreed actions by South Devon Steiner School: 

### Agreed Actions by Pupil: 

### Review Meeting date/time 

### Signed: Parent/Carer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
<th>Parent/Carer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed:</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed:</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>