



SEVERN VALLEY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE (PUPIL) POLICY

Date Approved: January 2022

Date of Review: January 2024

MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION
Headteacher

This policy should be read within the wider context of the Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all those affected understand the importance of Education and their roles and responsibilities. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable pupils to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all pupils is monitored weekly, with the school seeking to work actively with parents and carers to ensure regular attendance.

SCOPE

The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school: subsequently they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Severn Valley School (SVS) aim to support and encourage parents/carers to meet these responsibilities.

OVERVIEW

SVS expect all pupils on roll to attend their agreed provision whether it be in school, within the home or an alternative education provider organised by SVS. We do all we can to encourage regular attendance and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. This is explained to pupils and parents at their Induction Meeting.

We know that poor attendance can seriously affect each pupil:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with others and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Persistent absence affects life chances and SVS have a duty to protect education; we will challenge any unauthorised absence.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

At SVS we expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Absence will be classified by the school, not parents/carers. An absence is classed as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the

correct medical evidence is received the school will make the absence authorised and mark with an I code (illness). Other occasions where the school will mark a C code (authorised absence) include, attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement or to attend court (these examples are illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive).

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. to go shopping, to care for a sibling, a pupil's/parent's/sibling's/relative's birthday
- Truancy/refusal
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Illness without medical evidence
- Holidays in term-time

ABSENCE WITHOUT REASON

When a pupil is absent, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register. As part of our safeguarding procedures, the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts if information has not been received regarding the reason for the absence. This will happen every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing us of absence and reasons why.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

When a pupil is unwell, parents/carers should contact the school **before 8.45am** on the first day of absence. **Contact must be made for each subsequent day of absence.**

Parents/carers must provide a reason for absence.

When a pupil is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, evidence may be required. This can be an appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with child's name printed on them. Once received the mark will be changed to a M or I code (*medical appointment or Illness*). The school reserves the right not to authorise absence if insufficient evidence is available or if your child is part of the Attendance Improvement procedure.

When SVS are concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness we may share information with external agencies (this is not a definitive list but could include the School Nurse, Families First Plus, Social Care). In some cases, the school nurse may make an unannounced visit to check the health of your child. Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointment outside hours of provision.

HOLIDAYS

Pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt pupil's continuity of learning. Parents should not book a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have in law an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and have to apply for permission in advance. Holidays will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances.

ARRIVAL TIMES

All pupils **MUST** arrive for their provision on time; this is the time of arrival at school agreed with the Headteacher or staff at the pupil induction meeting. If pupils arrive 5-30 minutes after their provision start time they will be marked with an L code (*late*). If they arrive after 30 minutes of their provision start time they will be marked with a U code (*Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed*). In circumstances such as bad weather or transport difficulties, SVS may keep the register open for a longer period. Where late start times have been agreed there will be an on-going dialogue between the school and parent to work towards attending at the usual times. Persistent lateness may lead to a fixed penalty notice.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

SVS follows up unexplained absence on the first morning. This is a positive pro-active measure, which demonstrates vigilance, care and concern for our pupils and determination to build an effective partnership with parents/carers. Unauthorised absence is an indicator of disaffection and early intervention can prevent problems from becoming worse.

The Home/School Agreement is important in promoting regular attendance. The Agreement makes it clear that regular attendance is required and that parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school if their child cannot attend school.

Where measures taken are not successful a dedicated member of staff will contact you and work towards a solution.

The Headteacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the senior staff and attendance administration staff. Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module. It is a statutory duty for SVS to maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by a Court.

The Headteacher and senior staff authorise absence, not parents/carers. SVS adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and SVS acknowledges that not one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

If a child is persistently late or absent for more than 11 days over a 12 week period or SVS identify a concern regarding a pupil's absence, the school will report this to the Local Authority (via the EPI Team). We will start our process for non-attendance which includes issuing letters and/or arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss and achieve

a resolution. This is the beginning of the AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) pathway. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for more serious action.

If intervention strategies are unsuccessful SVS will involve the Education Inclusion Service (EIS Team.) They will make a decision about which legal action will follow and Penalty Notices will be issued or a Legal Prosecution made.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The Management Committee is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this Attendance Policy and will receive reports from the Headteacher on its implementation. The Headteacher has operational responsibility for attendance and will monitor arrangements for pupils throughout the year.

Appendix 1

Severn Valley School - Ladder of Intervention for Absence

Key principles

- All absence will be recorded appropriately according to the [DfE school attendance guide](#)
 - Parents will be kept informed about the school strategy for attendance
 - Data will be analysed by senior staff (with support from Admin and Attendance Governor). This data will be used to identify pupils and their families for intervention and support
 - Senior staff will make individual arrangements for students returning from periods of absence, including personalised reintegration packages, if appropriate (see attendance policy)
 - The Management Committee (through HT report), will be kept informed about attendance data and interventions, and will challenge the school re impact and strategies
 - Senior staff will be notified immediately of any pupils with potential long-term absence (e.g. illness)
 - The senior staff /designated safeguarding lead will be notified immediately of any absence relating to pupils for whom there are safeguarding concerns
 - The senior staff and admin will review individual pupil attendance at the start of every month and agree further actions, including whether to move a student from one stage to another
 - We expect students to have 95% attendance, those below this will be monitored and interventions put in place. Where appropriate, students will be referred to the local authority for attendance legal proceedings.
-