



# EDUCATION SOUTH WEST

## Attendance Policy

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<b>Author Initials</b>	MS
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*(This policy supersedes all previous Attendance Policies)*

## Amendments

<b>Policy Date</b>	<b>New Version Number</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>	<b>Comments</b>
July 2019	V1.1	Formatting changes only	
July 2021	V1.2	Formatting changes only	

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## 1. Philosophy

- 1.1 Education South West is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all Pupils. We believe that if Pupils are to fully benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. Attendance is also a safeguarding issue. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all Pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.
- 1.2 It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. The school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our Pupils. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-academy links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

## 2. Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the school's rewards system
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

## 3. Statutory Duty of Academy's and Parents

- 3.1 The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, by regular attendance at school. Teachers are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At every school within Education South West an electronic registration system is in place. **Student attendance is recorded for every lesson at secondary and session at primary**

## 4. Principles

- 4.1 Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that Pupils arrive at school on time, properly attired, with correct equipment and in a condition to learn. The school will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

## **5. Attendance Officers – IF AT SECONDARY**

- 5.1 The attendance officers at school are responsible for:
- Collating attendance and punctuality data for each year group.
  - Overseeing the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time.
  - Ensuring that all reasons for absence are recorded in the register.
  - Following-up any unexplained non-attendance by contacting the parent/carer –first day call wherever possible.
  - Initiating contact with parents/carers in the case of prolonged and unexplained absence.
  - Liaising with the Assistant Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer on a weekly basis.
  - Providing attendance data for Heads of Year and year tutor teams
  - ESW schools have to submit half termly attendance data to DCC

## **6. The Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and Academy Attendance**

- 6.1 The EWS aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full-time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

## **7. What happens if a child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?**

- 7.1 The 1996 Education Act (s7) places a legal responsibility upon parents/carers to ensure that their child fully attends the school at which they are registered. This means that a child must attend school every day and on time (unless parents/carers can prove that the absence was with the authorisation of the school or that it was unavoidable).

- 7.2 If a child has unauthorised absences then the school can make a request to the Local Education Authority (through the Education Welfare Service) to instigate Parental Responsibility Measures. If you have Parental Responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice. Should a Penalty Notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £60 if paid within the first 21 days, this increases to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then a Magistrates Summons will be issued. *Also, if a Penalty Notice has already been issued within the previous 2 years then the Local Authority could proceed straight to Magistrates Summons.*

- A Magistrates Summons that could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

## 8. Statutory Attendance

- 8.1 There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.
- **AM:** Pupils will be registered at the beginning of each morning by their tutor.
  - Registers are closed at 09:15; any late arrivals before this time will be classified as LATE (Code **L**). Arrival after that time is recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (Code **U**). See Punctuality Section (below) for details of sanctions.
  - **PM:** Registration takes place at the beginning of period 5 by the class teacher. If at Primary this takes place after lunch
- 8.2 All registration is completed electronically; teachers may choose to keep a paper copy.
- 8.3 Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for attendance offences.

## 9. Poor Attendance escalation procedure

- In cases of poor attendance, the school will initially discuss concerns with the student or parents at primary level
- If absence continues the school will contact parents by email advising of attendance concerns – a copy of the email will be retained in the student's file. At primary level, a green, amber, red system of letters are issued.
- If attendance does not improve parents/carers may then be invited into the school to discuss these attendance concerns.
- In cases of excessive absence due to medical reasons, the school may contact parents by letter advising that because of the previous high levels of absence and the failure to provide the academy with satisfactory evidence (such as GP letters of prescriptions etc.) that future absences may be unauthorised.
- Continued poor attendance will then lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service who will investigate absence and if necessary consider legal escalation.
- If at secondary, in Keys Stage 4, Pupils with poor attendance may at the discretion of the school be refused entry to the Prom Celebrations.
- Pupils may, at the discretion of the school, be refused permission to participate in school trips and visits

## **10. Holidays during term time**

- 10.1 There is no legal right allowing a parent to take a child out of school during term time.
- 10.2 Parents may request holiday but the default position is for this to be refused. The Headteacher is only able to allow a holiday in exceptional circumstances.
- 10.3 If a parent/carer is refused a holiday request and the student is still taken out of school by the parent/carer, the school is expected to notify the Local Authority to consider a penalty notice or magistrates summons.

## **11. Reporting Absence**

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible. The school will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent student will be contacted by the Attendance Officer or the automated system.
- 11.2 Where over the course of an academic year, a student has more than 10 sessions of illness, the school may write to parents/carers to advise them that in the absence of evidence future absences may be unauthorised. It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to prove that their child's absence is legitimate and unavoidable.

## **12. Appointments**

- 12.1 Please avoid making non-urgent medical and dental appointments during the school day.

## **13. Exceptional Circumstances**

- 13.1 Exceptional circumstances will be considered at the Headteacher's/Head of School's discretion and include:
- long term illness.
  - religious observance
  - visiting relatives abroad if parents are not from the UK

## **14. Punctuality**

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time. Information of persistent lateness will be sent to the EWO who may send letters to parents.

## **15. Policy review**

- 15.1 This policy review will be reviewed every 2 years as stated in the Policy Review Schedule.