SUTTON OAK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

(September 2026)

Signed: C.Milow **(Chair of Governors)**

Believe, Achieve and Grow Together in Christ

Attendance Policy

Believe, achieve, and grow together in Christ.

Introduction

"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn." (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, Sep 2022).

Excellent attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Sutton Oak CE Primary School and establishes positive life habits necessary for future success. Regular attendance also encourages your child to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills, they will also inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance and enable each child to realise their full potential.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, pastoral support and wellbeing, support for young carers and children with a social worker, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos which values good attendance, including:

- The school attendance target is **96%**.
- Promoting good attendance - All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in each half term, will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last celebration worship of each half term. There are special certificates and prizes for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole term and whole year.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promote and support punctuality in attending school on time.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education, 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:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to:

DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5-16) receive a full-time education. They are responsible for making sure that this happens, either by registering a child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education. If your child is registered as a pupil at Sutton Oak, we must give permission for your child to be absent for it to be authorised.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure your child attends school every day and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for your child.
- Ensure that, where possible, medical appointments for your child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

  The importance of good attendance

  That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

  The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

  The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

  •Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

  •Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families such as Persistent Absence letters, punctuality letters and initial meetings to support families with attendance concerns.
- Referral to EWS following school procedure to improve attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sharon Green and can be contacted via school office: 01744678690 or sharon.green@sthelens.org.uk.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and 1:15pm each day.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance lead to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

4. Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

After the register has been taken at 9am, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).

After 9:30am, when the register has closed, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U).

If your child is late more than once in a week, you will be informed by letter of how many times they have been late and the total number of minutes late. The attendance lead monitors punctuality closely and may invite parents to a supportive meeting to discuss punctuality and how we can help to improve it.

Following up unexplained absence

The school has a first day response system in place and immediately will follow up any absences to:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home address, contact EWO to visit the home address or contact the police if safeguarding concern.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: [issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 7 below), as appropriate] Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels by sending a half termly written report home.

School will also report to parents if their child has attended late to sessions.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances include the funeral of a close family member, and family emergencies.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website and school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

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.

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The attendance lead will support parents and offer advice when necessary to help them improve their child's attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance daily.
- Analyse absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

8. Supporting Pupils with poor attendance.

School will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
School will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance for families and develop secure relationships with families to ensure the very best for their child.

Sutton Oak CE Primary work with St Helen's Education Welfare Service and strategies and sanctions are in place for failing to secure regular attendance. This may include:

- Phone calls or visits to ascertain the reason for nonattendance for safeguarding reasons.
- Letters from the Education Welfare Service to advise parents that their child is approaching persistent absentee status (has more than 10% absence) or has multiple late marks.
- Invitation to attendance support meetings where support can be put in place or referrals may be made to different services.
- Invitation to school meetings where parents may be asked to sign a Parent Contract to improve their child's attendance.
- Penalty Notices for unauthorised Leave of Absences where a request has not been made to school.
- Prosecution under Section 4441 and 444 (1A) of The Education Act 1996 where parents have failed to secure regular school attendance despite interventions and offers of support from school and/ or Education Welfare.

Failing to secure regular school attendance is an offence under Section 444 (1) of The Education Act 1996 and carries a maximum fine of £1000.

Knowingly failing to secure regular school attendance is an offence under Section 444 (1A) of The Education Act 1996 and carries a maximum fine of up to £2,500. Parents can also be made subject to a Parenting Order and repeated offenders could receive up to three months imprisonment,

9.Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Sutton Oak school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health conditions, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. The school will maintain the same high ambition for their attendance as for all other pupils, while providing additional support and reasonable adjustments where needed.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:
- Inform the LA where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil of compulsory school age will miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness, and work with the LA to support continuity of education.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.
To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:
- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Using a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, with parental agreement, regular review dates, a clear proposed end date and the aim of returning the pupil to full-time education as soon as possible. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Where a pupil subject to a part-time timetable has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the arrangement with the LA so that the pupil's support package can be reviewed as appropriate. Where

the pupil has a social worker; the school will keep them informed and involved in the process.
The school will not routinely request medical evidence to support illness-related absence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or where a pupil has prolonged or repeated illness and further information would help the school understand their needs, identify appropriate support or reasonable adjustments, or accurately record the absence. The school will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will consider other appropriate evidence provided by parents.

The Senior Attendance Lead will ensure that attendance data for pupils with SEND and/or long term physical or mental health conditions is regularly monitored so that emerging patterns are identified and additional support from the LA or other partners can be accessed where necessary.

10. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.
The school's attendance target is
96 percent
This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.
The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.
Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Signed: *C.Milow*

Date: September 2026

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed