

Attendance Policy

This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website and by request from the School Office. If you require a copy of this document in large print or audio format, please contact the School Office.

Policy Review Information:

Policy	SHPA Attendance Policy
Review schedule	Every 3 years
Statutory Policy	No
Policy owner	Principal
Lead Reviewer	Principal
Approver and date of last approval	Principal, 11/2023
Key review dates	Changes made
06/2016	Written by A Ashcroft
09/2020	Reviewed by B Gorsuch: updated in light of latest KCSiE guidance
02/2023	DPA policy aligned to Trust branding for SHPA ahead of Sep '23 opening
11/2023	S.Bellingham and A.Ashcroft: updated in line with latest statutory guidance and model policy from The Key for School Leaders
Next review due 11/2026	

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	4
4. Recording attendance	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
6. Attendance monitoring	8
7. Links with other policies	9
Appendix 1: Absence Form	10

1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
- 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board, via its Quality of Education and Safeguarding Committee, is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and directors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 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
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Alison Ashcroft and can be contacted via office@sirehillprimaryacademy.org and by phoning: 01235 250970.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Hayley Anderson and can be contacted via same contact details as above on page 4.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office through taking the online register twice a day. (8:50am and at the beginning of the afternoon session).

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- They may ask for more details around the reasons for absence.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register in the morning at 8:50am and at the start of the afternoon 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

- Illness

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Where the absence is longer than five days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

- Family emergency (where no leave has been requested)

There will be some occasions where it has not been possible for the parent/carer to make a request for exceptional term time leave. Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity and complete a form for exceptional term time leave. This written request can be made on behalf of the parent by someone nominated by the parent. The request must include a specific leave period including a return date.

Parents taking their children out of school due to a family emergency are encouraged to consider:

- that they have considered the impact and appropriateness for their child;
- whether or not alternative care arrangements could be made for the child to remain in school, e.g. stay with an extended family member;
- that they have looked at limiting the amount of time absent from school.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Please see Appendix 1 for the Absence Form to be used by parents/carers requesting planned leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time

absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day. Please ensure that your child is collected promptly at 3:30pm.

If you are going to be unavoidably late please inform the school office. We will ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child. If your child is not collected after one hour, as set out in our Missing and Uncollected Child Policy, we will contact Social Services. You may be charged for this supervision if this becomes a pattern, or we are unable to contact you.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer 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 contact the police or social services.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through written reports three times a year. Parents also have access to their child's attendance records through the Arbor portal.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for 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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account 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 20 school days before the absence, and using the school's Absence Form at Appendix 1 of this policy.

Any changes to dates agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorisation prior to the start of the leave period. The Principal will reach a decision and send a written response to the

parent/carer within 10 school days of the leave request being received and the Principal's decision is final. No work will be provided by the school during the period of leave.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Also, in the event of unauthorised absence or failing to keep the school informed of changes to leave arrangements, the pupil may lose his/her place at the school. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If parents/carers are issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days (as at August 2023). The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored weekly and if there is a cause for concern, the Family Support worker will be in touch in the first instance, to discuss the issues and to offer support. This will be followed by an attendance contract if attendance does not improve.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not 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 Trust Board.

6.2 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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Provide support through our Family Support Worker

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Equality Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Missing and Uncollected Child Policy

Appendix 1: Absence Form

This form must be completed to explain any planned absences **before** taking your child out of school.

Parent/Guardian Name and address		Guidance			
Name		<p>Following Government legislation we are unable to authorise request for holiday during term time. A referral may be made to OCC and you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted in a Magistrates Court if unauthorised holiday is taken.</p> <p>Please be advised that leave of absence in term time is not a right and will only be granted under very exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Each case is considered individually; however, leave will not usually be granted if your child has low attendance or the leave coincides near or during national assessments.</p>			
House number and street name					
Postcode					
How to use this form					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use for all absences other than sickness Return from in advance of requested absence otherwise the absence will automatically be unauthorised FILL ALL GREY BOXES 					
Parent/guardian to complete this section					
Name of child: (write the names of all children that will be absent)			Class:		
Is this the first request this academic year?	YES		NO		
Dates of absence requested	Start date		End date		Number of school days requested
Reason for Absence: please provide details					



Contact details while absent/abroad from school		
If your child/children is/are being taken out of school during the term time and the details of their location is not provided this could turn into a serious safeguarding issue. The school has a duty to keep children safe and this includes knowing where they are. If the parent/carer fails to provide required information then the school may make a referral to the International Police and International social services as a 'missing child.		
Address whilst away		
	Telephone number whilst away	
	Email address whilst away	
Please attach proof of where you will be whilst away. E.g. Booking reference, medical appointment, flight tickets (outward and return)		
I have read and understood the guidance on this form. Every parent who will be present during the absence needs to sign this form.		
Full name:	Telephone number	
Signature		
Full name	Telephone number	
Signature		
School office to complete this section		
Current attendance: % (name of child		Supporting documents requested:
		Date: By:
Days off sick:	Any other absence taken	Received
Code:		Date entered
Reply sent		Signed:
Principal to complete this section		
Absence authorised?	YES. NO.	Signed