

Attendance Policy



<i>Policy Ratified on</i>	17.04.2024
<i>Signed Chair of Governors</i>	<i>Angela M. Wighton</i>
<i>Signed Headteacher</i>	<i>JATC</i>

Attendance Policy



This policy applies to those pupils who are of statutory school age 7-16 years.

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1. Aims

1.1 Sidestrand Hall School is committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance by;

- Providing a full and efficient education to all pupils that embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.
- Endeavoring to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome
- Consistently promoting good attendance and reducing absence.
- Using every opportunity to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Supporting pupils with medical needs and their parents/carers with health professionals to support health outcomes to support attendance.

2. Legislation and Guidance

2.1 Sidestrand Hall School attendance 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

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- 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](#)

2.2 This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.3 This attendance policy also aims to reflect the guidance drawn out in the DfE's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance Sept 2023](#)

2.4 Sidestrand Hall School attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DfE, and the procedures used to meet its attendance targets:

- Each year the school will set attendance/absence targets.
- The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board is responsible for;

- The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- The governing body will allocate a Governor to be responsible for monitoring attendance. They will liaise with the schools Attendance Lead. Attending monitoring visits and receiving reports on a regular basis.
- This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years by the school Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for;

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governing Body
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

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3.3 The Attendance Lead

The school Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Governing Body via Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare Governing subcommittee.
- Works with Attendance and Entitlement Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Works with administration staff and phase leaders to ensure attendance is consistently monitored and agreed processes adhered to.

3.4 Class Tutors

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

Class tutors and their teams are responsible for completing Return to School Interviews with pupils when listed.

Class tutors and their teams are expected to complete second day calls and additional first day calls when regular patterns identified in pupils' attendance.

3.5 School Administration Staff

School administration staff are expected to take calls and monitor absence line messages from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school management information system.

School administration staff are expected to monitor the completion of Return to School Interviews, send attendance status letters and assist with the reward process.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school uses manual paper registers for keeping the school attendance records. Attendance information is then inputted daily onto the school management information system for monitoring and statistical purposes.

We will take our attendance register 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

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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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Any amendment made to the attendance register must include; the original entry, the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. Every entry in the attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school 8.50 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.25pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents/carers to call and leave a message on the school's absence line, or the via the attendance email address, stating child's name and reason for absence. Both absence line and email are managed by the attendance team in reception.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school 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.

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. Parents/carers can call and leave a message on the school's absence line, or via the attendance email address, stating child's name and type of medical appointment being attended. Alternatively, in advance parents/carers may call the school office to inform administration staff who will inform the Form Tutor.

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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. 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.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, through contact by the Form Tutor or Attendance Lead.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary including raising concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

4.6 Reporting to parents

School reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance record at Educational Health Care Plan annual reviews.

School will report to parents their child's attendance status if their current attendance drops below a certain percentage.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

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

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

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

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- 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

5.2 Persistent Absence

Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences. Pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will result in parents/carers being notified by letter of potential actions to be taken to support their child's return to full attendance. Actions that may be undertaken may include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance, such as Fast Track, Family Support Process or the School Nursing Team.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, 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
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

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6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

6.1 The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. At Sidestrand Hall School, we use a range of strategies to build the foundation including;

- The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.
- We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them including their attainment.
- We will use systems of reward, collectively and individually to promote and reiterate the importance of good attendance.
- Follow up on absence with pupils and their parents/carers, through Return to School Interviews and consistent contact home, to identify barriers and reasons for absence.

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1 The Attendance Lead at Sidestrand Hall School monitors pupil absence on a daily to weekly basis to monitor individual pupils where absence concerns are present and on a half term basis for the whole school.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call/email the school each day if their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence falls below 95%, or concerning patterns in absence are identified, parent/carer will be contacted to discuss reasons why.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an Attendance and Entitlement Officer.

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.

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.

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7,2 Sidestrand Hall School collects and stores attendance data for internal use purposes to:

- Track attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not a particular individual whose absence may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those pupils as being in need of intervention and support.

8. Sixth Form

Sixth Form students are not counted in attendance targets, as they are not of statutory school age. However, full time attendance is still expected and Sixth Form staff will follow up those students failing to attend. Persistent absence will trigger a meeting with parents/carers in the first instance and individual targets will be set at this point. If there is no improvement in attendance this could lead to the place being withdrawn.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years by the school Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Relevant Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Missing Education Policy

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Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

DfE's guidance on school attendance codes.

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

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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)

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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

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day