

Attendance policy

Smallwood CE Primary Academy



Approved by:	Headteacher	Date: December 2020
---------------------	-------------	----------------------------

Last reviewed on:	September 2023
--------------------------	----------------

Next review due by:	September 2024
----------------------------	----------------

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	8
7. Attendance monitoring	9
8. Monitoring arrangements	10
9. Links with other policies	10
Appendix 1: attendance codes	11

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
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board 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
- › 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
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher can be contacted via telephone on 01477 500362 or email which is head@smallwood.cheshire.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › 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 (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Aynsley and can be contacted via telephone on 01477 500362 or email which is admin@smallwood.cheshire.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class Teachers responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office every morning by 9.15am and every afternoon before 1.10pm.

- Electronic registers are printed out and kept in the same way as manual registers. These are legal documents
- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils formally receives children from home
- Emphasis is placed on the accurate twice daily completion of registers
- Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- The register will be marked using the symbols advised by DfE.

3.6 School Office/Admin Staff

School admin/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 Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15am 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
- › Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary

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 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

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.

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school, by telephone or email, of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

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. 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.

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.

Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for a holiday. In exceptional circumstances, the school may grant leave of absence. All such cases must be discussed with the Head teacher, as a child or young person who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date, can legally be removed from the school roll and the parents/carers may be liable to prosecution.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday/leave of absence, the School will consider each case individually, taking into account a child or young person's overall attendance and the reason for the absence. The school will not authorise leave of absence taken during any examination weeks.

A "LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM" is available from the School Office and on the School Website.

It must be completed in advance of the absence and returned to the school where it will need to be discussed with the head teacher. This discussion will contribute towards the final decision. An appointment for a face-to-face meeting must be made for this discussion.

- It must clearly state on the form why it is necessary that this absence must be taken in term time.
- Lower cost/Holiday is not a reason.
- On receipt of the "Leave of Absence Request Form", you will be sent a response indicating whether the school is able to authorise your request or not.

Reasons for not authorising it might include:-

- Unsatisfactory attendance
- Time of year, e.g. if pupils are sitting Public Examinations
- If leave of absence has already been authorised during the current academic year
- It is a holiday request in school term time
- There does not appear to be an exceptional circumstance surrounding the request

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 U - Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

School Monitoring of Lateness

The major principles of any late monitoring system are:

- it should ensure everyone in school is recorded in case of fire
- it should not allow children or young people to come into school undetected especially if some form of same day contact is being made with absentees.

The School's signing in system:

- enables the school office to keep a record and monitor punctuality
- makes it difficult for a student to enter a classroom late without staff acknowledgement
- ensures all teachers are consistently and correctly coding registers.

Lateness = Lost Learning (Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 minutes late each day	3 days lost!
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost!
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost!
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost!
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost!

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:

- **It is expected that** parent(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on the first day the absence occurs. If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parent(s)/carer(s), then the school will contact the home by telephone. If school fails to make contact calls will be made to other numbers on the contact list and to educational settings for any siblings. In the event of failure to make contact and no known explanation a member of staff will visit the child's home and if the school is still concerned they will contact the police or CHECS. This contact will be recorded in the register / attendance file / electronic records.
- 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 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carers 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 about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance certificates are shared with parents half termly and overall yearly attendance is shared in end-of-year reports.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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 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 parents, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school, then the absence will be coded as “**unauthorised**”. If a child has more than 10 sessions of leave of absence within a school year, or has more than 10 separate unauthorised sessions this will lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

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 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
- 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.

These measures are severe but we believe that regular and high attendance is in every pupil's best interests and helps to maximise their achievements and enjoyment of school.

This Policy reflects accurately the current legislation and as a school, we have a duty to point this out to parents/carers.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

7. Attendance monitoring

There are a range of processes to support Local Authority monitoring of attendance:

- All schools have a statutory obligation to provide information about attendance to the LA and the DfE via the school census returns. This enables national comparisons.
- The development of Electronic Registration means that the Local Authority is able to access attendance data centrally and can therefore monitor trends.
- The Education Welfare Service monitors attendance on behalf of the Local Authority through regular meetings with school staff and regular register checks. This focuses particularly on children or young people with long-term absences, regular patterns of absence, the school's monitoring of student attendance at alternative provision such as college placements, return of children or young people after fixed term exclusions, admissions of children or young people for whom a place at the school has been agreed, children or young people cared for by the Local Authority.
- Monitoring of agreed School/Education Welfare Service School Action Plans to ensure priority concerns are effectively addressed. The Education Welfare Officer and school must regularly review the Action Plans jointly.
- Monitoring the use and success of legal action to enforce attendance.
- The Admissions Team has a protocol for referral to the Education Welfare Service of children or young people who, for whatever reason, are without a school place.

7.1 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 governing board.

7.2 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

7.3 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

7.4 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 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

7.5 Identification of pupils giving cause for concern and referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher (cause for concern)
- Attendance is shared with parents half termly through parents meetings and reports, staff remind parents of good attendance and flag up children falling below 95%
- Concerns are passed to the person responsible for contacting parent(s)/carer(s)
- Person responsible will contact parent(s)/carer(s)
- There will be two weeks' monitoring of the child or young person's attendance
- If there is no improvement, at this point, an attendance letter 1 will be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited in for a meeting
- We will, after a further two weeks' monitoring, inform parent(s)/carer(s) that they will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, if there has been no improvement in attendance. The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.
- If attendance has improved over the last four weeks, school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure improvement is maintained
- All pupils are monitored for attendance issues termly and those pupils falling below 94% or 10 or more late sessions receive a letter reminding them of the importance of good attendance – Please note that where the school is aware of family circumstances that have led to the absences or late marks and is already working with the family this letter may not be sent out. If there has been significant ill health involving a hospital stay this letter will not be sent out.

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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

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
--	--	-----------------------------

APPENDIX 2

Dear Parents

ATTENDANCE – CHILD’S NAME

Your child’s attendance record over the last 2 weeks is a cause for concern.

Regular attendance at school is vital if children or young people are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that school offers.

Please arrange to discuss your child’s attendance with myself at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3

Child’s Name _____ **Class** _____

Dear Parent

Further to my recent letter, continued monitoring shows that there has not been sufficient improvement in your child’s attendance.

Unfortunately, due to this I will have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer.

It is important that your child attends school regularly in order to make progress. It is also your legal duty to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school and failure to this could result in legal action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 4

Dear Parent / Carer

At our last attendance review I noticed that XXXXXX's attendance had fallen below 95% and is currently XXX. Regular and punctual attendance of children at school is both a legal requirement and crucial to a pupil's success - there is a clear link between a high rate of attendance and high achievement. If pupils are not in lessons they cannot learn. Statistics show missing 8.5 days of school in any school year can reduce the success level of a pupil by 1 GCSE grade.

Where a pupil's attendance is below **90%**, it is the equivalent of missing **19 days** of school = nearly **4 weeks** !
Attendance below **80%** = **38 DAYS** absence, nearly **8 WEEKS**

There may be a very good reason for absence from school for example genuine illness and other medical issues, however there are many other reasons that cause pupils to have time off from school. I appreciate that all children can fall ill but I wanted to remind you that regular attendance is of great importance to both children's academic achievement and their social development.

We want to work with parents and carers and offer help and support so that we can resolve attendance concerns before they become a bigger issue. If there is any way in which we can help please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see Miss Mander. There are lots of strategies and support methods that we can suggest that may be of help in improving your child's attendance.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% our school Education Welfare Officer becomes involved and is obliged to use legal means to ensure that attendance improves.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 5

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/CARER

You have requested the school's permission for a LEAVE OF ABSENCE during term time. Before such authorisation is given please complete the form below and return to the School Office.

Completion of the form does not guarantee the holiday will be authorised.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class/Form: _____

Date of Proposed Leave of Absence: From: _____ To: _____

Number of days requested for absence is _____

Why is it necessary to take your child out of school in term time?

Signed: _____ (Parent/Carer) Date: _____

TAKING YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME WITHOUT THE SCHOOL'S AUTHORISATION MAY RESULT IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ISSUING A FIXED PENALTY NOTICE TO EACH PARENT/CARER FOR EACH CHILD FOR WHOM THE LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST HAS BEEN REFUSED.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS: Parents should not normally take pupils out of school during term time. School will only consider leave of absence in term time where both:

- The application is made to the Head Teacher in advance of the leave of absence by a parent the child normally lives with.
- There are exceptional reasons for needing to take the leave of absence.
- Where parents have shared parental responsibility, 2 signatures will be required on the 'Leave of Absence' application form.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave of absence as possible. Schools will only agree to more than 10 school days of authorised leave of absence in any academic year in very exceptional circumstances.

For Completion by School:-

<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorised	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unauthorised
<input type="checkbox"/>	REGISTER CODE H	<input type="checkbox"/>	REGISTER CODE G

Reason leave of absence declined:- _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Parent Pupil File

Appendix 6

Child's Name _____ **Class** _____

Dear Parent

Your child's punctuality is currently giving cause for concern.

Late arrivals at school result in children or young people missing the beginning of lessons and disturbing the rest of the class when they arrive. All children or young people are expected to arrive in school between (time) and (time) every day. Please make sure that your child arrives at the correct time.

We will continue to monitor punctuality, and hope to see an immediate and sustained improvement. If there are particular problems, which we might help with, please do not hesitate to contact either your child's teacher or myself.

Yours sincerely