

# Attendance Policy

<b>Date of Policy</b>	September 2021
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	September 2022
<b>Staff Responsible</b>	SLT Attendance Lead: R Spooner, L Brown
<b>School/Governor policy</b>	Governor

## **RATIONALE**

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer. We believe that high attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Our Attendance Policy is designed to promote outstanding attendance for all students in our school. There is a proven critical link between attendance and social outcomes for children and young people.

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. Parents have the responsibility for making sure their children attend school regularly and on time.

## **AIMS / OBJECTIVES**

At Severn Vale School we expect all students to attend school every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence. 100% attendance maximizes opportunities for each student to realise their true potential.

- To improve the overall percentage of students' attendance.
- To reduce the level of persistent absence, (PA).
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
  - including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of all those that contribute to good
  - attendance.
- To celebrate good attendance and work towards improve poor attendance
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- To use data to monitor attendance and inform future actions.
- To work in effective partnership with Local Authority and with other services and partner agencies.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER POLICIES**

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Behaviour

Teaching and Learning

Health and Safety

Equal Opportunities

## **PROCEDURES**

Student attendance will be recorded twice a day, once at the start of morning session and once during period 4. All other procedures are listed within the Roles and Responsibilities section.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Students

- Students must attend school every day that the school is in session.

- Students must arrive on time, appropriately dressed, equipped and prepared for learning.
- Students must remain in school for the duration of the school day unless they have specific permission to leave.
- Students must set individual attendance target and evaluate their progress.

### Parents/carers

- Parents/carers must ensure their children attend school every day it is in session. This is a legal responsibility under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Parents/carers must make all reasonable efforts to ensure their child attends every day and on time.
- Parents/carers must inform the school’s Attendance Officer on their child’s first day of absence using the dedicated absence number 01452 725475. If contact is not made absence procedures will be followed by the school. Medical evidence may be requested by the school if regular non-attendance is due to illness.
- Parents/carers are expected to know what absences are acceptable, (see appendix 1). Any absence will only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should be aware of the legal consequences of non-attendance, (see appendix 2).
- Parents/carers should be aware that poor punctuality may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded which could lead to intervention by the Attendance Improvement Manager or legal action by the local authority.
- Parents/carers are asked to inform the school of any barriers to their child attending school by contacting Head of Year (HoY) in the first instance.

### Staff

All staff are responsible for the accurate recording of attendance for their lesson. Any student absent from a lesson when previously present should be reported using the student alert system for investigation by pastoral staff.

### Tutors

- Monitor individual attendance, praise good attendance and support students at risk of persistent absence.
- Reinforce the need for punctuality to school and lessons and how it impacts learning.
- Maintain up to date and accurate records of the attendance of tutees using their student planners.
- Form tutors are responsible for raising attendance of students between 95-100%

### Key Stage Pastoral Leads

- Key Stage Pastoral Leads must ensure their tutors complete registers as laid out in this policy.
- Attendance should appear as an item on all Year Team meeting agendas. It is the responsibility of the Key Stage Pastoral Leads to promote and celebrate good attendance through the use of the school reward system.

- In addition to those listed above, Key Stage Pastoral Leads must adhere to the escalation of interventions as set out in appendix 3.

### Head of Year (HoY)

- HoYs will record the action and notes of conversations on the attendance monitoring log and communicate with attached members of SLT and HoKS.
- HoYs will complete attendance contracts with students and parents if appropriate.
- HoYs will be responsible for all students who attendance is below 95%.
- HoYs arrange meetings and communicate regularly with parents whose son/daughter have attendance below 90%.
- HoYs meet weekly with the Attendance Improvement Manager to discuss students with attendance below 90%.
- HoYs manage punctuality within their Year Group.

### Subject Teachers

- It is the responsibility of all subject teachers to formally take their class register accurately and within 15 minutes of the start of every lesson.
- Subject teachers should encourage punctuality through the appropriate meeting and greeting of groups.
- All lateness to lessons must be recorded on the electronic register and challenged appropriately.
- Subject teachers should support students who are returning to school following an absence by ensuring that adequate resources are provided for their positive re- integration.
- Subject teachers are expected to monitor their class attendance and identify patterns and report any concerns to their Subject Leader.
- The link between attendance and attainment should be actively promoted.

### Subject Leaders

- Attendance should appear as an item on department meeting agendas as and when this is necessary and the link between attendance and attainment should be promoted.
- It is the responsibility of the Subject Leader to have an overview of attendance within their department and act upon any concerns raised by subject teachers.

### Attendance Admin Officer

- It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to maintain the day to day running of attendance procedures.
- To ensure codes for absence are entered correctly and any missing marks are investigated. Ensure any student arriving late or leaving early is registered correctly and relevant staff informed.
- When no explanation for an absence has been received, the Attendance Admin Officer is responsible for contacting parents/carers to confirm the nature of the absence.

### Attendance Improvement Manager

- Liaises with the Attendance Leader; Local Authority and partner agencies on matters of attendance.
- Works with persistent absentees (under 90% attendance) and their parents. These will have been referred by the HoY but the HoY will still have day to day involvement.
- Hold fortnightly meetings with HoYs to discuss attendance.
- Hold Attendance Improvement meetings to plan with families to improve attendance
- Produce attendance data as requested
- Report to Governors and SLT regularly in respect of attendance concerns
- Raise the profile of attendance within school and across the local community in partnerships
- Visit the homes of students who are absent from school without appropriate reason
- Follow up requests for term time absence and respond to parents accordingly
- Refer cases of poor attendance to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action

#### SLT with responsibility for attendance

- It is the responsibility of the school's Key Stage Pastoral Leads to oversee the school's attendance policy and practice, (see appendix 5).
- In collaboration with the Attendance Team, the Key Stage Pastoral Leads will monitor, evaluate and review the policy and its impact annually.
- The Key Stage Pastoral Leads will meet with the Attendance Team (HoYs, AIM and Attendance Administrator) to discuss attendance issues, and monitor the progress made towards the meeting of agreed attendance targets.
- The Key Stage Pastoral Leads must ensure that new students and their parents are aware of the policy during their induction to the school.

#### Headteacher

- The Headteacher will monitor and maintain an overview of whole school attendance and will support and advise on attendance issues.

#### Governing Body

- Governors should monitor and evaluate attendance and ensure the policy is carried out. Attendance Governor will conduct regular monitoring visits to discuss attendance.

Progress and implementation of the Attendance Policy will be monitored on an annual basis to judge impact and inform future actions.

## Appendix 1

### **Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

It is the School's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A telephone call on the first day of absence followed by a letter on return from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence; only School's acceptance of the explanation authorises the absence. The following examples should make this clearer:

#### **Authorised Absences**

- Sickness.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointment, (½ day maximum).
- Days of religious observance such as main religious days of Eid (agreed with Headteacher beforehand).
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.
- Going to other schools for visits, interviews or examination.

#### **Unauthorised Absences**

Such as:

- Looking after brothers, sisters and others.
- Shopping.
- Celebrating a birthday.
- Sleeping in.
- One child is ill, so all are kept off.
- Minor ailments such as tummy ache or headache.
- Because it is the end of the week or the term.

Holidays in term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances are authorised at the discretion of the Head Teacher If students are taken out of school without permission their absence will be recorded as unauthorised (Code G) and parents will be liable for prosecution.

Students arriving after the close of registration without a valid reason risk that session being recorded as unauthorised.

## Appendix 2

### **The Law and School Attendance**

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full-time education;
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- Schools must report to the LA on (most) student absences that are not authorised. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice code of Practice allows for penalty notices to be issued by the LA under any of the following circumstances:
  - (a) Persistent lateness after registration
  - (b) Suspended students found in a public place
  - (c) Unauthorised holiday in term-time (A minimum of ten sessions of unauthorised absence from school during term-time in order to take a holiday (recorded as Code G on the school attendance register) within the immediately preceding ten-week period)

A warning letter will be sent by the school following which the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice without any further warning. Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

### **Legal Proceedings**

Legal proceedings will be considered after the school and Education Welfare Officer have tried to engage with, and offer support to, a family of a student who has attendance issues. If the poor/non-attendance of a student is not resolved the LA may decide to take legal action against the parents or responsible adult of the student.

There are two offences relating to parental responsibility for ensuring that a student attends school regularly.

1. Under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 a parent can be fined up to £1000 if the child is absent from school without authorisation.
2. Under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 a parent who knows their child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to cause him/her to do so can be fined up to £2500 or given a prison sentence.

### **Penalty Notices**

A school can request the Education Performance and Inclusion department of the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. At this point the Penalty Notice can be issued by the LA without further warning.

### **Cost of Notice**

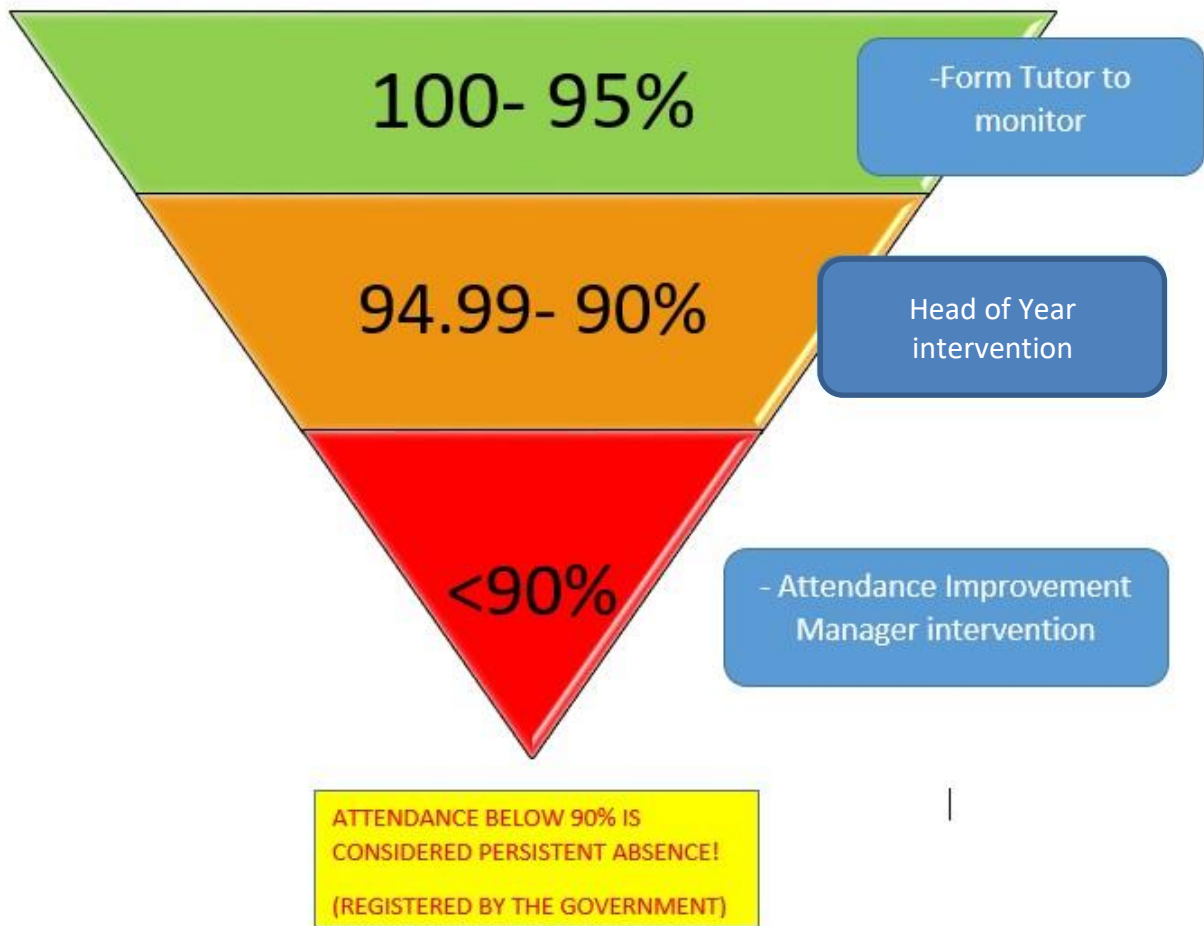
The penalty notice must be paid within 28 days of deemed service. The amount that will need to be paid will depend on when the payment is made. If full payment is made within the first 21 days the fine will be £60 per parent per child. If, however, payment is made between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> day, the fine will be £120 per parent per child. If a penalty notice remains unpaid more than 28 days after deemed service, the LA may proceed to prosecute the original offence in a magistrates' court.

### **Holiday in term time**

In line with Government and Local Authority guidance the school believe that, unless there are very special reasons, annual family holidays should not be taken in term time.

If parents/carers still wish to apply for permission from the school a holiday form should be completed by the parent/carer with day-to-day care, at least fourteen days in advance of the proposed dates. (appendix 4). This should be returned to school and the request will be carefully considered by the Headteacher and the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance. Previous attendance records, the student's age and stage of education will be looked at before notifying parents/carers whether the school is able to authorise the absence or not.

Appendix 3





## **Request for a leave of absence during term time**

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

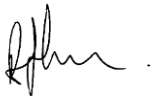
If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave.**

**In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the head teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates’ Court.**

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least fourteen days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely



Mr Richard Johnson  
Head Teacher

# Request for a leave of absence during term time

Student's Name ..... Class/Tutor Group .....

Student's address .....

Date of first day of absence ..... Date of return to school .....

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school .....

*If a student fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.*

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence  
.....  
.....  
.....

**I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.**

Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename ..... Surname .....

Address .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address: .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

(Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorized – **Forms to be returned to Mrs Virginia Martin, Attendance Improvement Manager – [vmartin@severnvaleschool.com](mailto:vmartin@severnvaleschool.com) or via school office)**)

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For school to complete and copy retained:                      AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED (please circle)