Empowering all to achieve

Severn Vale School
An Academy

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Policy	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2027
Staff Responsible	Headteacher
Reference	Staff shared area/school policies
School / Governor Policy	Governor (Statutory)

Aims and objectives

At Severn Vale School we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all students want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing regular attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents / carers, students, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is critical for all our students to be successful and benefit from the ambitious opportunities presented by the school. Educational research acknowledges that students with regular attendance are far more likely to realise their academic potential and to achieve key academic thresholds. It is why our staff will always strive to listen, understand, empathise, and support, but will not tolerate poor attendance and punctuality due to the devastating impact on student outcomes and life chances. At Severn Vale, school leaders and Governors expect all students to attend every session of every day that the school is open to them. Punctual attendance means that students are in school for 8:45am every day.

At Severn Vale School we are committed to ensuring that parents / carers, staff, and students understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents / carers have a vital role to play and are committed to the ongoing development of strong home-school links. We aim to work in partnership with parents / carers and students to identify and overcome possible barriers to attending school regularly. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

The staff and Governors of the school, in partnership with parents, have a duty to ensure students to attend every session of every day that the school is open to them. To do this we will apply the Attendance and Punctuality Policy consistently and fairly. We also recognise that students are individuals with their own needs and that, depending on needs and circumstances, this policy may be reasonably adjusted to best support students and families.

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)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

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

Safeguarding

Severn Vale School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of the school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities

for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents / carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. On time means a student is in school by 8:45am so that they can attend line up by 8:50am.
- Call the school's absence line (01452 725 475) or use the *Arbor App* to report their child's absence before 8:45am 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 one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help their child overcome any barriers to attendance.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time. On time means a student is in school by 8:45am so that they can attend line up by 8:50am.
- Attend all lessons punctually.
- Make every effort to engage with all support offered.

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that the link Governor for attendance works closely with the school's Attendance Improvement Manager to ensure that the school's work is delivering on its ambitions.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Senior Attendance Champion: Mr Johnson (rjohnson@severnvaleschool.com) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining regular attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

- Communicating messages to students and parents.
- Ensuring targeted intervention and support is delivered to students and their families.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school's Attendance Improvement Manager: Kelly Tucker (ktucker@severnvaleschool.com) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher.
- Working with school staff eg Heads of Year / SENDCo to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to request fixed-penalty notices.
- Using her delegated responsibility to decide on whether an absence may be authorised

The school will

- Expect students to attend every session of every day that the school is open to them on time, properly equipped and ready to learn. On time means a student is in school by 8:45am so that they can attend line up by 8:50am.
- Develop and promote a culture and climate whereby regular attendance and punctuality are expected.
- Keep accurate and timely registration documents.
- Monitor, track and analyse attendance and punctuality data.
- Monitor the impact of attendance and punctuality support strategies and intervention.
- Talk to students regularly regarding the value of regular attendance and being in school on time. Such activities will include: tutor sessions focused on attendance, attendance assemblies, attendance discussions as part of our Futures curriculum, linking the development of healthy attendance habits to life after school such as University and in the world of work.
- Regularly provide parents / carers with details about their child's attendance. Where there are causes for concern the school's attendance team will liaise with parents to support a child and their family to achieve regular attendance. The exact nature of support will be determined by the needs of the child and family. External agencies may be utilised to deliver the support.
- Celebrate regular attendance and improving attendance through letters home, certificates, etc.
- Arrange meetings and promotional events when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.
- Promptly investigate absenteeism and lateness.
- Work in partnership with parents / carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Include students' attendance in reports to parents / carers.
- Enforce the requirement to attend school punctually and reserve the right not to authorise absence for persistent offenders or where there is no reasonable explanation.
- Involve appropriate outside agencies to support students and their families.
- Report student and family safeguarding concerns in line with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Daily attendance routines at Severn Vale School

The school is open to students from 8:00am each morning. Students can attend *Getting Ready* sessions in the DT Block. The school's canteen is open from 8:00 – 8:35am. Free toast is available from the school canteen from where other food may also be purchased.

At 8:45am the school bell rings to signal the start of the school day. Students proceed to their year group line up. The start of line up is signalled by a second bell at 8:50am. Form tutors will welcome their tutees. Line ups ensure that every student can benefit from a calm and orderly start to their school day.

If a student arrives after line up has started, they will be marked with an L code. Where a student is regularly late to school and / or lessons, then they may be placed in the school's referral suite. Full details can be found in the school's Behaviour Policy. If a student is not in line up, they will be marked using the N code. All registers should be completed by 9:00 am.

At 9:20am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a U code. This is a mark that shows them to be on site, but will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents / carers could face the possibility of a Notice to Improve and/or a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child is absent, we will make every attempt to:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. Where a child is deemed vulnerable, linked staff in the school will be notified and where deemed appropriate they will aim to alert parents of their child's absence by 9:45am.
- Make a home visit by the third day of absence (if appropriate) and involve external agencies working with the family / student.
- Alert police and external agencies if we judge an absent student to be at risk of harm.
- Invite parents / carers in to discuss the situation with a member of our Attendance Team if absences persist and offer a range of bespoke support packages.

School processes for recording attendance and absence

The school will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students onto this register.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:45am and will be kept open until 1:15pm. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Absent

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on the entry was made.

Punctuality

As outlined in the daily attendance routines above, students must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

An email will be sent to parents when their child arrives to school and receives either a L or U code in the morning. This is to ensure that parents are aware of these issues.

When regular issues regarding punctuality arise, the school's Attendance Team will flag these with parents / carers. The school will work with the student and the parents / carers to ensure that any barriers to attending punctually are removed. If appropriate, support will be offered via the Attendance Team.

Where there are repeated incidents of lateness after the register has closed, then the school may request that a Notice to Improve and/or a Penalty Notice be issued under the GCC / National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. Each U Code is classified as an unauthorised absence. The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Absence

Parents / carers must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence. Parents / carers can either ring the school's absence line (01452 725 475) or use the *Arbor App* to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. They should also advise when they are expected to return to school.

The school 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 parents / carers 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.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)

- Exceptional circumstances (see definition below) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent / carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The school can be notified via the school's absence line (01452 725 475) or use the *Arbor App.*

Wherever possible, we encourage parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. When this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and should always attend school before and / or after the appointment when possible.

The school may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and / or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Minor ailments such as tummy ache or headache.
- Hot weather, cold weather or because it's the end of term.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed in advance as an exceptional circumstance.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Planned absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances". Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death or serious illness of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student 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, using the school's leave of absence request form available here on the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

NB the school supports the DfE view in not considering a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Procedures following unexplained absence

If a child is absent from school and no reason has been provided, the school will:

- Endeavour to call the student's parent / carer on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised 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 / carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Make a home visit by the third day of absence (if appropriate) and involve external agencies working with the family / student.
- Alert police and external agencies if we judge an absent student to be at risk of harm.

Part-time timetables (PTTTs)

All students are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary PTTT to meet a student's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending school full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the student access as much education as possible.

Any PTTT put in place will have:

- the signed agreement of both the school and the parent the student normally lives with.
- a clear ambition and be part of the student's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- regular review dates which include the student and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the student, after which the student is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a student with a long-term health condition may require a PTTT for a prolonged period.

Where a student has a social worker, they will be informed and involved in the process. If a student has an EHCP, the PTTT will be discussed with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

Details of all PTTT will be shared with the local authority so that they have a central record of all children not accessing full time education in the usual way.

As part of this process, a PTTT Agreement will be completed, detailing the support and provision that will be delivered by the school, alongside a section for parents/carers to outline the supervision, support, and activities that will be provided at home during periods of non-attendance. This shared approach reflects the partnership between home and school and is consistent with parents' duties under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which places responsibility on parents to ensure their child receives a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

PTTTs and Risk Assessments

Where a PTTT is considered necessary, the school will complete a risk assessment as part of its safeguarding responsibilities. This ensures that the student is appropriately supported during periods they are not attending school full-time, and that meaningful interventions, educational activities, and support are in place to promote the child's progress, wellbeing, and successful reintegration into full-time education wherever possible.

The risk assessment will ensure that the school has:

- Considered the child's health, safety, emotional wellbeing and educational needs.
- Assessed the risks associated with reduced attendance or education taking place at home.
- Identified reasonable adjustments and support required.
- Agreed arrangements with parents and, where appropriate, health professionals and other agencies.

The school will keep documentary evidence of this process to ensure that its decisions are evidence-based, centered on the child's best interests, and take account of educational provision, attendance, safeguarding, physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Students achieving regular attendance is central to Severn Vale School's culture and ethos. The school encourages all students to "Strive for Five" and displays referring to this can be found around the school. Each week every student who has *strived for five* will be placed into a prize draw to celebrate this achievement. Attendance is regularly referred to during line-up and in specific assemblies. Attendance levels are fed back to both students and parents and are the focus of conversations between tutors and students in attendance monitoring weeks. Regular attendance is rewarded via a variety of ways including:

- Verbal praise and recognition
- Attendance certificates
- The school's praise system
- At parent evenings

The school's Attendance Team use a range of communication strategies to encourage and promote attendance. They will text key students daily and offer a range of other support strategies including a morning pick up.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels. Each term parents / carers will receive a report providing full details of their child's attendance. In addition, all gradecard reports will also include attendance information. Where a student's absence is at risk of triggering the national threshold (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks), parents / carers will be informed and support offered to address the concerns.
- Monitor attendance and absence data at a whole school / year group / individual level. The school will also monitor the attendance of key sub-groups eg SEN students, students in receipt of FSM. Each week the Headteacher and the Attendance Improvement Manager will review key attendance data. The Attendance Improvement Manager will also meet Heads of Years on a weekly basis to identify key trends and students / groups of concern in each year group.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The school's 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. In addition, the school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and to Heads of Year to facilitate discussions with students 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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 students 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.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, requesting a Notice to Improve from the local authority, an Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Notices to Improve and Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. Full details are available here: Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council

If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3 year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or student.
- Any person who has care of a child or student ie lives with and looks after the child.

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

- Behaviour policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the school's Attendance Improvement Manager and the Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.