



SUTTON COLDFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to setting the highest expectations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence; and
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

It is the school's aim that students should enjoy learning, experience success, and develop their full potential. The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that good attendance contributes significantly to students' enjoyment of school and their achievement.

Whilst Post-16 education is non-compulsory, we maintain the school's high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality for all sixth form students.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

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 (where appropriate) attendance data;
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance; and
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Stephen Millman is the Link Governor for Safeguarding; this includes Attendance.

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 students;
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies; and
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for leading the implementation of the attendance policy and initiatives across the school, which includes:

- 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; and
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr N Eaton who can be contacted via enquiry@suttcold.bham.sch.uk

3.4 The Attendance Officer and Sixth Form Administrator

The Attendance Officer is responsible for managing student attendance for Years 7 to 11 and the Sixth Form Administrator manages attendance for the Sixth Form.

The 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;
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Working with education welfare officers & Local Authority to tackle persistent absence;
- Advising the Deputy Headteacher – Student and Staff Development when to issue fixed-penalty notices; and
- The Attendance Officer is Ms. Z Toft who can be contacted via attendance@suttcold.bham.sch.uk; the Sixth Form Administrator is Miss E Whittingham who can be contacted via attendance@suttcold.bham.sch.uk.

3.5 Class Teachers and Form Tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis at the start of form time; the class teacher is responsible for recording attendance at the beginning of period 5. They must apply the correct codes and submit this information to the school office via SIMS.

3.6 School Front Office staff

School Front Office staff will:

- Receive communication from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system; and
- As appropriate, transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer or the Sixth Form Administrator, when more detailed support on attendance is required.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time;
- Contact the school, preferably via email, to report their child's absence before 9.30 am 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 named contact number for their child; and
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Requests for authorised leave of absence must be submitted on the "Request for student absence" form with at least 24 hours' notice.

3.8 Students

Students are expected to attend every timetabled session on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The School will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of form time of each school day, and at the start of Period 5. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present;
- Late;
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- Absent; or
- 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; and
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the attendance codes, in line with DfE guidance.

The School will also record:

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

Every entry on the attendance register will be kept by the School in line with the student file retention procedures.

Students must arrive in their form room by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and kept open until 10.00am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and kept open until 2.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible by emailing attendance@suttcold.bham.sch.uk.

Absence due to illness will be marked 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. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily.

Where student attendance falls into the category of Persistent Absence (attendance below 90%, as defined by the Department for Education), the school will not routinely authorise absence reported as illness. Additional evidence may be requested to support the reasons for absence.

If the school is not satisfied with 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 student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Requests for authorised leave of absence should be submitted on the Request for Student Absence form with at least 24 hours' notice.

Parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please refer to section 5 for which term-time absences the school can authorise.

If a Year 7 – 11 student arrives after 9.10 am they must sign in at Reception. Sixth formers must sign in upon arrival on Inventory.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student 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 unexplained absence

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

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may insert measures, e.g. conducting a home visit or, where the student is year 7 – 11, contacting the CME team (Children Missing in Education);
- 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; and
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly emails.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 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 in accordance with the Request for Student Absence form, accessible via the school 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 (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail);
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart; and
- Traveller students 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 student 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 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 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; and 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school works to recognise and improve attendance by, for example, celebrating good attendance in end of year assemblies. Attendance data will be monitored to recognise positive changes in attendance patterns.

7. Attendance monitoring

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; and
- 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 students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families; and
- 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:

- Scrutinise attendance records to identify suitable interventions where school attendance is not in line with expectations; and
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place 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/carers 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; and
- Communicate with parents/carers to highlight when attendance is within, or approaching, the categories of persistent or severe absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Mr Neil Eaton (Deputy Headteacher – Student and Staff Development). At every review, the policy will be reviewed and 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student 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	Student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and traveller absence	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of policy/activity/project with policy / project lead:

Attendance Policy

Outline of main aims of this activity/policy/project:

To promote good attendance, support punctuality in attending lessons, and ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

Who will benefit/be affected by this policy/activity?

Students and staff at Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

If an existing policy/activity, do you have any data of use by or impact on different groups which may raise concerns over an equality impact?

No

Does the activity have the potential to impact differently on groups due to a protected characteristic (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, transgender, disability, religion & belief, age, sexual orientation, maternity/paternity) for:

(a) Students and members of the community? (E.g. The Governing Board, students, contractors, visitors, hirers of the premises, agency staff, suppliers etc.). Which groups are likely to be affected?

n/a

(b) Employees?

The provisions of the policy are equally applicable to all.

Does this activity make a positive contribution to the School's general or specific duties under the Equality Act 2010? If yes, please detail.

Yes – the Policy applies to all staff equally

Having reviewed the potential impact of the policy/activity listed above, **I believe a full impact assessment is required / NOT required** (delete as applicable with justification below)

Full impact assessment is not required

Justification: The provisions of the policy are equally applicable to all staff.

Name: Mr N Eaton

Date: September 2023