

Attendance Policy



SWANLEA SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Attendance policy

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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.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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](#)

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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 Kabir Miah and can be contacted via email at officeadmin@swanlea.co.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is Masum Ahmed:

- Monitoring and analyzing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.

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- 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 and school attendance team when to issue fixed penalty notices
- Issuing fixed penalty notices

The attendance officer is Masum Ahmed via officeadmin@swanlea.co.uk

3.5 Class teachers / form tutors

Class teachers / form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office within 10 minutes of the start of each lesson.

3.6 School admin / office staff

School admin / office] staff will:

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents / carers to the attendance and pastoral teams 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 and timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am 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.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session 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

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- 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 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open for the length of the form time or first lesson in which the registration takes place. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.35pm and will be kept open for the length of the form time or first lesson in which the registration takes place.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent / carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school admin / office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized 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/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorized, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorized if the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent / carers should request such leave with a signed note in the pupil planner or a phone call to the school attendance team. Appointment cards should be shown when collecting your child from reception. All such

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requests will need to be approved by the relevant LCO or member of SLT.

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 authorize.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- Students arriving late between 8.35-10.40am will receive a 25 minute lunchtime detention on the same day.
- If your child arrives at school after 10.40am, without a valid reason (supported by a note from you, with a contact number), this will be classified as an unauthorised absence. The school will decide if the reason is acceptable. Arrival after 10.40am will also incur a 25 minute lunchtime detention.
- If a child fails to attend their lunchtime detention, then they will receive an automatic afterschool detention for 60 minutes
- The school will endeavour to contact parents/carers if your child receives a same day, after school, detention. Therefore, please ensure we have up-to-date emergency contact details for you.
- If there are good reasons for your child coming late to school, such as illness, please inform the school before 8.30am.
- Any student that receives 2 lates or more in any one half term will receive an automatic whole lunchtime detention.
- Further sanctions as appropriate will be applied for repeated lateness including further detentions held after school.

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:

- Call the pupil'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 pupil's emergency contacts, the school may undertake a safeguarding referral to the relevant agency and / or conduct a home visit.
- 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/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.

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4.6 Reporting to parents / carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through regular reports to parents / carers.

The school will also arrange meetings with parents / carers as necessary to discuss attendance and / or punctuality concerns.

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 authorized 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 10 days before the absence, via our leave of absence form obtainable from the attendance officer of the school reception. 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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' / carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorized only when a traveler 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 unauthorized absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorized absences occurring within a rolling academic year

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- 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

To promote regular attendance, the school will reward students with outstanding attendance and punctuality in a number of ways including; Whole School Awards Evening recognition, regular achievement assemblies, individual, form group and year group rewards. The rewards will include trips, certificates, letters and postcards home and other awards.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data on weekly, 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 pastoral teams, 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 to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence.

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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.
- The school will also make use of meetings, letters, closer monitoring, target-setting etc. to reduce persistent and severe absence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the SLT lead for attendance. 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
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Off-site Approved educational activity
C	Authorized leave of absence - due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of Absence – regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Leave of Absence – part time timetable
D	Dual registered
E	Excluded - alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorized holiday - holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Authorized holiday - due to exceptional circumstances

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I	Illness - absent due to illness
J1	Interview - with a prospective employer/ educational establishment
K	Attending Alternative Provision arranged by the LEA
L	Late arrival - before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Sporting activity - approved by the school
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave - Year 11 pupil is on study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveler absence
U	Late after registers closed
V	Educational trip or visit - approved, by the school
W	Work experience
X	Not required to attend – non- compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – normal transport not available
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend -unavoidable partial closure
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – public health guidance/law
Y7	Unable to attend – unavoidable other than Y1-Y6
7	Illness due to Covid 19
8	Self-isolating due to Covid 19
9	Shielding due to Covid 19

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Late arrivals can erode the school day and learning missed each day equates to:

Minutes late each day

5	3.4 School days missed.
10	6.9 School days missed.
15	10.3 School days missed.
20	13.8 School days missed.
30	20.7 School days missed.

How much education is your child missing*?

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	85
	91%	173 days	17	
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious cause for concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

*Figures based on 190 (whole year) expected attendance

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Tracking Options

Tracking of Pupil's and CME (Children Missing Education)

In 'Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2024' (DfE, Sept 2024) it is recognised that Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (DfE, 2024) specify that schools are now legally required to seek to track and confirm the destination of any pupil taken off roll. Any child who stops attending school and about whom following enquiries by the school no formal confirmation is received about their destination, engagement in education or their safety must be referred to Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service (THESS). Such children should only be taken off roll with the formal agreement of THESS once the appropriate follow-up has been undertaken to seek to establish their whereabouts, engagement in education and wellbeing.

In seeking to track a missing child, a school and their Attendance and Welfare Advisor will have made the following checks before referring to the Children Missing Education Officer:

- The designated attendance officers will make enquiries about children who are not attending school and refer them to the Attendance and Welfare Advisor. The Attendance & Welfare Advisor (AWA) for the school will then seek to further investigate the reasons for the child's absence.
- Contact all the emergency contact numbers on the missing child's file.
- If the missing child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan, or is a Looked After Child (LAC), or Children's Social Care are known to be actively involved, refer the matter straight away to Children's Social Care.
- Write to the family at the last known address, including e-mail address.
- Check for rumours in the school of the possible whereabouts of the pupil. This will be most effective by asking known friends of the missing child.
- Check for rumours of the possible whereabouts of the child with friends of the child and family. (i.e. Is there anybody in contact by e-mail, Social Media Accounts, etc.).
- If the child has not been found after these checks, refer to the schools Attendance and Welfare Advisor. If the child turns up after the referral is made or information is received on the child's whereabouts, contact the Children Missing Education Team.

When a child is not attending and his / her whereabouts cannot be determined by the school, there are certain checks required on the part of their Attendance and Welfare Advisor to see if the child can be located. The AWA undertakes checks for children living in Tower Hamlets in the following order:

- Check what actions the school have undertaken and what contacts have already been attempted.
- Pupil Services check.
- Local Housing Office check.
- Local Housing Benefit Office check.
- Children's Social Care Duty Officer check.
- Home-visit to last known address.

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Evidence from a Department for Education study shows a strong correlation between school attendance and GCSE success. The chart below illustrates this:

