



Shefford Lower School Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Written by	Reviewed and Ratified by Governors	Shared with Staff	Last Updated	Next Review due
Lorraine Freeman, Deputy Headteacher	November 2023	November 2023	November 2023	November 2025

1.0 Statement of Intent

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.

2.0 Legal Framework

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

It also refers to:

School census guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

2.1 Links with Other Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body 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
- 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 and supporting the vulnerable pupil team with improving attendance for individual pupils
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis and meeting with the school's data manager termly
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues alongside the Family Support Worker (FSW)
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families alongside the Family Support Worker (FSW) and Vulnerable Pupil Team
- Support the use of a range of strategies including TAC (Team Around the Child) meetings and home visits for persistent absentees
- Manage the Vulnerable Pupil Team and support high standards of attendance through this team

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 when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Attending the school at least termly

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. They are also responsible for working with parents to improve attendance and highlighting patterns in attendance to the Vulnerable Pupil Team.

3.6 School Office Staff

School 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 leadership team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Monitoring ParentMail and absence reporting through ParentMail

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 9am on the first 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
- Request any leave of absence at least 4 weeks in advance by emailing the school office
- Engage with any support strategies put in place to improve attendance

4.0 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 morning and afternoon session of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The reason for the amendment
- The date and time on which the amendment was made

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 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.45pm/1pm/1.10pm according to the child's year group and Key Stage.

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 9am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 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 and provides evidence of the appointment.

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 absent, using the appropriate code
- Targeted intervention and support will be offered to families who are persistently late

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
- 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
- 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 and support of the FSW or Vulnerable Pupil team

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Parents will be given this information with their child's report and at each parents evening.

5.0 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, considering 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 4 weeks in advance. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness with medical evidence to support this) 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'/carers' 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
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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 exceeds 5 days (10 sessions) within a 12 week period
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where a suspended or 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.

6.0 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Attendance levels are promoted and celebrated through assemblies in school, through our newsletters, website, welcome mornings at the start of the year, home school communication books, parents' evenings, through interactions between staff and parents / carers and through our social media channels.

7.0 Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half termly, termly and annually 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
- Provide a daily attendance report with all vulnerable pupils highlighted

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 Body. Attendance will be a standing item on Headteacher reports to the Governing Body. There will be a regular link governor visit for attendance.

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 through the vulnerable pupil team
- Report on attendance for different groups of pupils on a daily basis which will be shared with teaching staff
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Data on attendance will be analysed by the vulnerable pupil team

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 – a report will be sent out daily highlighting vulnerable pupils
- 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 data manager tracks a target group of pupils before they become persistent absentees from 94% and below. This group is supported by the Vulnerable Pupil Team.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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
- Letters will be sent out when a child's attendance falls below 94% (first letter), if the attendance does not improve further letters will be sent. The letters are colour coded
- Reception children will receive a letter when their attendance falls below 90% from January
- Parents will receive at parents evening a report on their child's attendance and teachers will discuss this with them
- TAC meetings will be considered for pupils in danger of becoming persistent absentees by the Vulnerable Pupil Team
- The vulnerable pupil team offer targeted intervention and support to families where there is an attendance issue

8.0 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

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

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: Attendance Parent Report

“Good pupil outcomes are linked to good pupil attendance”

Our duty to you is to ensure you are kept informed about your child's attendance. This is a feature of our annual report. We aim to ensure this is more meaningful to you with a termly attendance information. Please feel free to ask us anything as always.

Child:

Class:

Attendance to

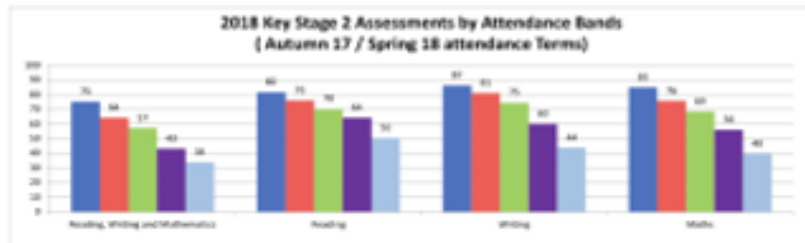
Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4

Current attendance

90% or below Chronically poor attendance Local authority Attendance officer involvement	90% - 93% Poor attendance Discussed with attendance officer and senior leadership	93% - 96% Weak attendance is reported to senior leadership and records discussed with local authority attendance officer	96% + Good attendance	97% – 100% Required attendance Linked to better pupil outcomes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Attendance matters

Pupils attendance record	2018 Provisional Key Stage 2 by Autumn 17/Spring 18 attendance			
	5. Reading Expected Standard			
	Reading, Writing and Mathematics	Reading	Writing	Maths
100% Attendance Record	75	82	87	85
95% to 100% Attendance Record	64	76	81	76
90% to 95% Attendance Record	52	73	75	69
85% to 90% Attendance Record	45	64	65	56
Low than 85% Attendance Record	34	53	44	48
Overall Effectiveness Total	62	74	78	73



Appendix 3: Parent Letter



Date

For the Parents of XXX
XXX Child's Class

Dear

I am writing to you with reference to XXX's school attendance. The attendance register (copy enclosed) shows that his/her attendance to date is %. Whilst I am aware that absences are due to XXX being unwell, we have been advised by the school's Attendance Officer to inform you that this percentage is below the school's minimum target of 97%.

If there is anything we can do to support you to help improve XXX's school attendance or if you would like to discuss this matter please do contact me.

The Local Authority requests that schools ensure that parents are made aware of both the definition of who is a parent and also what the law says parents must do with regards to their child's education. Please see our attendance policy at <http://www.sheffordlowschool.co.uk/Policies>

Yours sincerely

Polly Ross
Headteacher

Headteacher : Mrs P Ross
Telephone : 01462 629123
Facsimile : 01462 628844
Email: schooloffice@shefford.xbeds.co.uk

