



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Version	Date	Amended by	Comments	Approved	Review Date
V1.0	Sept 23	J. McLellan	Name of DfE guidance document change. Registration times changed. Additional reasons for possible penalty notice included – lateness, out in public during suspension. Added reporting 10+ days of unauthorised absence to GCC. References to OFSTED removed.		Sep 25
V2.0	July 24	MD	Adapted to meet new attendance expectations Numbering removed and contents page added. Add contact details Add new time scales on absences Add new routine if absences		

SOUTHROP C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2024

The name and contact details of the Attendance Leader – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Name Megan Davies (Head teacher)

Email address or contact details mdavies@southrop.gloucs.sch.uk 01367 850246

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name Caroline Simmons (Admin Assistant)

Please report absence on The Portal. If this cannot be accessed email

admin@southrop.gloucs.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance (Attendance Officer/Pastoral Support Worker/Head of Year etc):

Name Megan Davies (Headteacher)

Email address or contact details mdavies@southrop.gloucs.sch.uk 01367 850246

Statement of Intent

Southrop C of E Primary School aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually.

Introduction

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

In addition, Southrop C of E Primary School follows the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Southrop C of E Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for children to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life changes.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Roles and responsibilities

Below is a summary table of responsibilities for school attendance produced by the DfE and applies for 19th August 2024

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).	Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.	Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.	Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.	Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.	Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.	Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.	Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
	Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.		
	Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.		

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular

attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- Shopping trips;
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- Their own or family birthdays;
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- Day trips;
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before **8.45 am, when our register closes**; The school has The Portal available to report any absence;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before **8.45 am**;
- The Attendance Lead will decide whether or not the absence is authorised or not authorised.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 2nd day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance **is below 95% and is causing concern**, and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Attendance Lead;
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Southrop C of E Primary School are:

Gates open: **8.00am for Breakfast Club**

Registration starts: **8.30am and children come into class**

Registration closes: **8.45am**

End of the school day: 3.15pm

Gates close at: 5.15pm at the end of After School Club.

How we manage lateness:

We open the school gates at 8.00am for Breakfast Club. Children can arrive between 8.00am and 8.30 and they will be registered into Breakfast Club via The Portal.

We have a soft start to the day, with morning activities from 8.30am – 8.45am.

The register is closed at 8.45 am

Children arriving after **8.45am** are required to come into school via the school office with a parent/carers. If your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the school attendance lead but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Southrop C of E Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance in termly reports and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance, which is 95%.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, 10 days before, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Southrop C of E Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental

principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' it means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The headteacher may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Southrop C of E Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from Southrop C of E Primary School' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Dear Parent or Carer

Request for holiday leave of absence during term time

Please find the request for holiday leave absence below. Please be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Headteacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in "exceptional circumstances".

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

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form below, setting out the reasons. We also ask that you read our attendance policy (http://www.southrop.gloucs.sch.uk/school_info/policies/policies.html). If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this will be recorded as unauthorised leave. The school follows the Gloucestershire County Council policies which states that:

If your child is absent from school for 10 sessions* in a ten-week period, without authorisation from their school, we will issue a warning letter. (Unauthorised absence also includes sessions where your child has arrived after the school's registration period without an acceptable reason.) If there are no unauthorised absences in the next 15 school days, no further action will be taken. If there are further unauthorised absences there will be no further warning and a Penalty Notice will be issued.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2103163/gcc-attendance-guidance-for-schools-november-2020-final-formatted-by-ginny-201120-2.pdf>

*One days absence = 2 sessions

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school **at least fourteen days** before the start of the holiday

We hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.
Yours Sincerely

Miss M Davies
Head Teacher



Request for holiday leave of absence during term time

<u>Name of child 1</u>		<u>Year group</u>	
<u>Name of child 2</u>		<u>Year group</u>	
<u>Name of child 3</u>		<u>Year group</u>	
<u>Date of first day of absence</u>			
<u>Date of return to school</u>			
<u>Number of days absent</u>			

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

Please detail the exceptional circumstances (reasons) for which you are requesting leave of absence

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I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action. Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application: Forename.....Surname..... Signed Date

(please ensure that you are giving at least fourteen days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised)

For school use:

Attendance%:

Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:

Total unauthorised absence this year:

Request authorised / Request not authorised