

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

SUNNYSIDE ACADEMY



|                            |                |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Developed by:</b>       | Julie Sutton   | <b>LAC approved Date:</b> 1.9.24 |
| <b>Last reviewed on:</b>   | September 2024 |                                  |
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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance and punctuality, including:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

### 2. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 2.1 The Local Academy Committee

The Local Academy Committee 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
- The link Local Academy Committee member responsible for attendance is Lauren Furness and can be contacted via 01429 267466

#### 2.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to LAC members
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Ensuring that welfare and attendance meetings are held with parents/carers
- The Headteacher is Mrs Julie Sutton and can be contacted via 01642 596422

## **2.3 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 Julie Sutton and can be contacted via 01642 596422

## **2.4 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 headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence and lateness.
- Working with the headteacher and LA to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Laura Jones and can be contacted on 01642 596422

## **2.5 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 each morning and each afternoon.

Class teachers are responsible for speaking to children on return from absence to check on reasons and well-being of the child

Class teachers are responsible for speaking to parents /carers on collection to determine reasons for absence if school are unable to make contact with parents/carers

## **2.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Make calls and take calls and messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance if necessary

## **2.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time and be ready to learn
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 and inform school of any changes
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Evidence of appointments must be presented

## **2.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **3. Recording attendance**

### **3.1 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
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Attending a medical appointment
- Late

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 at school between 8.40 to 8.50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.20am. This is 30 minutes after the session begins. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55 and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

### **3.2 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 calling the school office (see also section 7).

Parents who are unable to call the office can leave an email or message on Class Dojo.

We 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 the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

### **3.3 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.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, although we recognise that we have pupils who have complex medical needs and may need to attend appointments out of area.

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.

### **3.4 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
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session
- The school will monitor those pupils who are regularly late. Letters will be sent to those who have 4 late arrivals or more within a half term period.

### **3.5 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 decide to undertake a home visit, particularly if other agencies are supporting the family
- 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
- Welfare visits will be undertaken after 3 days of absence.
- 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

### 3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in their termly reports and annual report.

Letters will also be sent out to parents and carers if attendance is below 92%

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 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/principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We would define 'exceptional circumstances' as death of a family member

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, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office on request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Examples of valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- 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
- Counselling sessions
- Visits to other educational settings ie, tour of a new school

### 4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

### 4.3 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.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

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
- 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.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote good attendance of each class every each week in assembly. These points can be celebrated with extra playtime, movie and pop corn and class party.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

1. Information is shared with the SLT from the HT detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT or Attendance Officer.
3. Contact is made with parents/carers on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the attendance team daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents/carers of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the teacher or Parent Support Advisor may speak to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. (Letter 1)
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer or PSA contacts the parents/carers to discuss this. (Letter 2)
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the Attendance Team to set improvement targets. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO). (Attendance Action Plan)
9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Attendance Team to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the attendance team makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice is issued. (LA Led Attendance procedures)
11. If attendance continues not to improve then court proceedings will be invoked, and this could lead to a fine or custodial sentence.

### 6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- 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 levels 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.

## **6.2 Analysing attendance & punctuality**

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
- Analyse any patterns of persistent lates

## **6.3 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
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **6.4 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 of pupils whom 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
- Refer to Watchtower services

## **7. 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 Julie Sutton Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Local Academy Committee.

## **8. Support**

The school will:

- Build relationships with pupils and families to encourage regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Relationships & Behaviour policy

## 10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [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](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

## Appendix A: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 - '[Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024](#)'

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

| Code                      | Definition                  | Scenario   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| C                         | Authorised leave of absence | The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>C1</b> | Leave of absence                                    | The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad  |
| <b>C2</b> | Leave of absence – Part-time timetable              | For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable  |
| <b>E</b>  | Suspended or permanently excluded                   | The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made  |
| <b>H</b>  | Authorised holiday                                  | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>  | Illness   | The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness  |
| <b>J1</b> | Leave of absence                                    | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution   |
| <b>M</b>  | Medical/dental appointment                          | The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment  |
| <b>R</b>  | Religious observance                                | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance  |
| <b>S</b>  | Study leave   | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations   |
| <b>T</b>  | Parents travelling for occupational purposes        | The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade  |
| <b>Q</b>  | Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements | The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority   |
| <b>Y1</b> | Unable to attend due to lack of transport           | Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance |

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Y2</b>                   | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel            | The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency  |
| <b>Y3</b>                   | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed   | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use   |
| <b>Y4</b>                   | Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed | Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly  |
| <b>Y5</b>                   | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention         | If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing   |
| <b>Y6</b>                   | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law  | Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health  |
| <b>Y7</b>                   | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause            | The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent  |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |  |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday   | The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | 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) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence   | The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration   | The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session   |

| Code | Definition                      | Scenario  |
|------|---------------------------------|---|
| X    | Not required to be in school    | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend            |
| 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 B: Letter 1

Dear

**Pupil Name: \*\*\*\*\* Year Group: \*\*\*\*\***

Since returning to school in September, it has been noted that your child's attendance is below 96%, which is lower than school expectations.

**Attendance is \*\*\*\*\*%**

I have enclosed an up-to-date attendance printout for your information and would like to bring to your attention that \*\*\*\* has only attended \*\* out of a possible \*\* sessions, 1 session is equal to half a day, \*\* authorised absences and \*\* unauthorised absences.

If you would like to discuss the content of this letter or if you require support regarding your child's attendance, please contact Karen Foulger PSA and she will arrange an appointment for you to come into school.

Please be aware that Early Help support is available in school on request.

I look forward to an improvement in attendance.

Yours Sincerely

## Appendix C: Letter 2

Dear

I note that the attendance at Sunnyside Academy of \*\*\*\*\* has continued to be unsatisfactory. I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since September to date, out of a possible \*\* school weeks, \*\* has so far only put in \*\* unbroken weeks. As you will appreciate this is a situation which is far from satisfactory.

Attendance is currently \*\*\* %, \* authorised sessions of absence, \*\* unauthorised sessions of absence and \*\* sessions late after close of register.

If \*\*\*\*\* continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure \*\*\*\*\*'s regular attendance at school and therefore make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely



## Appendix D: attendance action plan

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Name:</b> | <b>DOB:</b> |
|              |             |

| Attendance Zone | Less than 90% | 91% - 96% | 97% - 100% |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Review 1        |               |           |            |
| Review 2        |               |           |            |
| Review 3        |               |           |            |

| What are the reasons for absence? (please tick) |  |                            |  |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| Genuine Medical                                 |  | Illness                    |  |
| Parent Mental Health                            |  | Truancy / lesson avoidance |  |
| No Reason Provided                              |  | Student Mental Health      |  |
| Behaviour / exclusions                          |  | Bullying                   |  |
| Historic Attendance Issues                      |  | Peer/Relationship Issues   |  |
| Poor Parenting                                  |  | Dislike of school          |  |
| Other:  |  | Reason:                    |  |

| What actions have been taken? (please tick) |  |                             |  |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Internal Monitoring                         |  | Part time hours             |  |
| Early Help/Family Partner                   |  | Referral to internal unit   |  |
| Telephone calls home                        |  | Attendance Report           |  |
| Meeting with parent/carer                   |  | Curriculum/class changes    |  |
| PSA/Attendance Officer Ref.                 |  | Peer mediation              |  |
| Parent Contract                             |  | Rewards & Recognition       |  |
| Legal Action                                |  |                             |  |
| Group work                                  |  | Referral to Outside Agency: |  |
| Other:                                      |  | Please state:               |  |

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Historic Attendance:</b> |
|-----------------------------|

| Year<br>1 | Year<br>2 | Year<br>3 | Year<br>4 | Year<br>5 | Year<br>6 | Year<br>7 | Year<br>8 | Year<br>9 | Year<br>10 | Year<br>11 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
|           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |            |            |

**Attendance Barriers (In/out of school)**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Background/Additional Information:**

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|--|
|  |
|--|

**Actions:**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Support Offered/Actioned:**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|