



POLICY DOCUMENT

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Document Owner:	Trust Board
Responsible Trust Committee:	TLT
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APPROVED Signature (Trust Board):	DATE ()
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1. Other relevant policies and documents

- Behaviour Policy
- Educational Visits and Trips Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Procedures Manual

2. Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Education Trust

'School(s)' = schools within the Trust

EAS = Education Attendance Service

EWO = Education Welfare Officer

IC = Inclusion Co-ordinator

FPN = Fixed Penalty Notice

3. Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the policy on attendance and punctuality for the schools within the Trust. This policy covers the Trust and all its schools and as such there is no need for each school to have its own policy.

4. Policy statement

It is the aim of Trust staff is to work with students, their parents / carers and the most appropriate agencies to ensure students achieve the best possible attendance and punctuality at all times through the academic year. The Attendance and Punctuality Policy reflects this aim, recognising that regular attendance has a positive effect on learning, attainment and progress.

The mantra to be used by all is:

ATTENDANCE = LEARNING = PROGRESS =ACHIEVEMENT

The objectives of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy are as follows:

1. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality;
2. To make sure parents / carers understand their obligations with regard to ensuring attendance at school for their sons / daughters;
3. To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and work with parents / carers and the external agencies to address barriers to attendance and reduce persistent absence;
4. To ensure students understand the importance of attendance at school and punctuality to lessons in order for them to take full advantage of their educational opportunities;
5. To make clear the roles and responsibilities of staff, students, outside agencies and parents / carers with regard to Attendance and Punctuality.

This policy is underpinned by the following expectations:

- The ideal is for every student to attend school every day that school is open;
- Students need to understand the importance of attendance and punctuality as employability skills;
- Students will be made aware of their attendance levels and be expected to engage in regular dialogue with their tutors;
- Attendance monitoring is part of the Trust and School self-evaluation processes;
- Any student absence will be checked that morning and carefully monitored;
- There are clear consequences for students whose attendance falls below expectations;
- High attendance will be recognised and rewarded through the Student Reward Points system.

Students are expected to be in school by 8.30 am and be there for the whole day (except in specific circumstances, such as trips out or urgent health appointments). Students are expected to have lunch at their school in the school restaurant and are not expected to go home or leave site at lunchtime.

5. Complaints

Any complaints about this policy from outside the Trust should be made in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy. Any other complaints should be brought to the attention of the Head of School of the relevant School in the first instance. Serious issues could be raised through the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

6. Compliance and performance monitoring

The Trust Board will review this policy every two years and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy. Any review will take into account the most up-to-date legislation and guidance. The Trust has identified a range of Assurance Methodologies as tools by which compliance with policies can be tested. Those most relevant to this policy include:

- Internal Audit
- Random testing by line managers

7. Processes and procedures

7.1 Attendance

Attendance should be recorded at the following points during the normal school day:

- Teachers register students at 8:30 am tutor time and 13:55 pm tutor time;
- Teachers register students at the start of all teaching periods;
- Those delivering extra-curricular activities should register students at the start of their session.

Registering of attendance will be expected at different times on special days, such as Enrichment Days, Enrichment Weeks, school trips etc.

Attendance is registered through the MIS (Progresso). First day calling and truancy alerts will be undertaken via the Main Reception (the Attendance Officer). The 'phone system in each school should have a dedicated absence line.

It is expected that on the first day of absence, parents / carers are expected to telephone the school before 10am to explain any absence. Parents / carers will be contacted where have failed to arrive by 10am and notice of their absence has not been received.

Reasons for absence should be given in written form, signed by the parent / carer. The production of a note does not mean that absence is authorised. It is the school who authorises absence not the parent / carer.

Attendance below 96% target	First letter sent home Support from Tutor Possible FPN
Attendance below 93%	Second letter sent home Meeting with Assistant Head Internal attendance contract Medical evidence to authorise any further absences Possible FPN
Attendance below 91%	Third letter sent home Referral to Possible FPN

Notes:

- If the student's attendance does not improve parents/ carers will be contacted by the appropriate external agency who lead on attendance concerns on behalf of the Trust. They will send a letter home stating their involvement in the student's attendance case or issue a fixed penalty notice. If this is the case the Trust will follow the local authority's guidance that a FPN will be issued after 8 unauthorised absences. This will be over a 12 week period.
- Court warning letters will be sent if attendance does not improve and a further meeting will take place with the parents/ carers.
- In cases of serious and consistent unauthorised or persistent absences or lateness where all other methods have failed, then the School will support the appropriate external agency in taking the parents/ carers to court and/ or the use of FPNs.
- It is the role of the Attendance Officer to undertake First Day Calling and ensure parents / carers are notified of absence and truancy. The Attendance Officer also undertakes analysis duties for the Senior Team and works with external agencies where required. Other duties are made clear through the rest of this policy.
- Should a student have to leave the school premises during the school day to attend an appointment, Main Reception staff will issue the student with an authorised absence slip. The student or parent can show this should they be stopped due to a truancy sweep outside of school to evidence that the school is aware of the absence.

7.2 Punctuality

Procedures with regard to punctuality are as follows:

- If students arrive after the morning register has been taken they should sign in at Main Reception;
- Any children arriving after 09.00am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence which may result in the issuing of a FPN;
- All students are expected to be on time to all of their lessons. Subject teachers are to deal with lateness by setting appropriate sanctions and positively reinforcing punctual behaviour;
- Students who are persistently late will have their cases discussed with the EWO with regard to further action.

7.3 Illness

- We do appreciate that students feel unwell from time to time and wherever possible will look to support the student and the parent/carer in managing this in school rather than going/staying at home.
- We can administer pain relief in the form of paracetamol suspension liquid or tablets at the school office. A member of staff will telephone parents/carers to ask for verbal permission before giving paracetamol to a student.
- If a student requires regular medicine, medicine of a particular sort, or can be prone to headaches for example, we ask that parents/carers complete and sign Medicine Form 1 and supply a stock of the named medicine so that pain relief can be administered when required. If necessary we will telephone parents/carers to check if students may take a dose of medication.
- We cannot authorise long absence for illness without medical evidence or a medical certificate from the GP.
- Students in the 'Persistent Absence' category (attendance below 90%) will be asked to supply medical evidence to authorise absence for any illness (see section 7.5 for more information).

7.4 Long-term medical absence:

The process and expectations for students on long term medical absence is as follows:

- When students are absent, or likely to be absent, for more than one week on medical grounds, work will be set and marked by staff (most likely via Google Classroom).
- It is the Attendance Officer's responsibility to organise work from class teachers and to ensure the parents / carers are informed it is ready to pick up. Class teachers have a duty to prepare and mark work for absent students;
Two days' notice is needed for class teachers and the Attendance Officer to collate packages of work to be sent home or added to Google Classroom for access at home;
- If a student is absent for a longer period of time on medical grounds, the Pastoral Leader will liaise with outside agencies to access additional support outside of school.

7.5 Persistent absence:

- When attendance for individual students falls below 90%, the Trust and its Schools consider the absence level to be persistent;
- Persistent absence is dealt with in line with Stage 3 of the 'core actions' as outlined in section 7.1 Attendance Officer

7.6 Celebrating attendance:

We believe that through the 6Cs to Success, students' attendance at school will be celebrated in the following ways:

- The students with the best attendance and punctuality, and those that have hit their attendance targets will be celebrated in assemblies termly and are awarded a silver badge and a chance to attend a rewards trip;
- Students who achieve 100% attendance are also awarded a 100% attendance badge or a gold badge termly, and a chance to attend a rewards trip.

7.7 Absence recording:

Notes from parents / carers

- It is the school that authorises absence not the parent / carer;
- However, authorisation of absence cannot take place without a reason for absence. This should be provided in written form, signed by the parents / carer, or sent in the form of an email to the form tutor or Main Reception;
- Where parents / carers have difficulties with writing, it is acceptable that the student writes the note and the parent / carer signs;
- When tutors, or the Attendance Officer receives confirmation of absence by telephone or email, emails should be printed and that and / or any letters stored on the student's individual file (which is held in a locked cabinet in the Admin Office). If there is any doubt as to the genuine nature of the reason given for absence or source of any email or note or whether to authorise an absence this should be brought to the attention of the Assistant Head;
- Where a child is absent with no contact, and we have concerns for their welfare, we will make a home visit on the same day;
- During prolonged periods of absence, we may make announced or unannounced home visits at least weekly, and potentially more frequently, especially in cases where we have not seen the child. On these visits we will ask to see the child and check on their welfare. Where we do not see a child face to face at least weekly we will consider making a referral to the multiagency safeguarding hub or to the police for a welfare call.

Family holidays during term time

It is not Trust policy to authorise absences for family holidays in term time under any circumstances.

Offsite activities

See Educational Visits and Trips Policy for detailed information regarding the appropriate protocol for offsite activities. In brief, expectations with regard to attendance are:

- These are currently recorded as an authorised absence. The Attendance Officer must be informed by the member of staff supervising the activity at least one working day in advance. A register must be given to the Attendance Officer and another left with the reception staff, of all students who are taking part in offsite activities, including sporting fixtures. The register must include a contact telephone number for the staff member supervising the activity, travel details including estimated time of return to school;
- A list of students absent on offsite activities must be displayed in the staff room at least one working day in advance. This must be done by the member of staff organising the activity;
- Permission must be sought from all relevant teaching staff (including the Assistant Headteacher) by staff / students at least one week in advance (where possible) for students to be taken out of lessons for an offsite activity. Proper trip protocol must be followed.

Post-registration truancy

All subject teachers are required to keep a lesson register. If a student is absent from a lesson, but was present in previous lessons, a note must be sent to Main Reception to alert the Attendance Officer.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.5 Role of parents/ carers

1. It is the responsibility of parents / carers to ensure their sons / daughters attend school;
2. To telephone or email the school before 10am to explain any absence;
3. To provide a note concerning a reason for any absence on the day that a student returns to school;
4. To make routine health appointments out of school time as far as possible;
5. To complete a request for family holiday in term time form at least one month before the holiday is due to take place. The trip will not be authorised.

9 Support with Attendance

9.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make things worse. Contact your child's Form Tutor immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons, such as difficulties with school

work, bullying, friendship problems and family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

	Taking responsibility	Promoting good attendance	Taking steps to improve	Engaging in intervention
Head of School	<p>Takes overall responsibility for school attendance;</p> <p>Reports to TLT regarding attendance;</p> <p>Line manages Assistant Head.</p>	<p>Standing item at the weekly Senior Leadership Team meeting;</p> <p>Meets weekly with the Attendance Officer & COO.</p>	<p>Makes contact with parents & carers, on the request of the Assistant Head, where attendance is a concern.</p>	<p>Monitors and supports students on an attendance plan in the hardest to reach cases;</p> <p>Signs authorisation to fine and prosecute for attendance.</p>
Assistant Head	<p>Promotes regular school attendance;</p> <p>Analyses all aspects of attendance data for their Key Stage and provides feedback and direction to other staff.</p>	<p>Manages rewards system, attendance postcards.</p>	<p>Makes contact with parents, on the request of the Attendance Officer, where attendance is a concern.</p>	<p>Monitors and supports students on an attendance plan where concerns continue to grow following support from tutor/pastoral team;</p> <p>Considers requests for phased returns, part time timetables and other supportive measures for reintegration such as catch up classes.</p>
Attendance Officer	<p>Checks on reasons given for absence;</p> <p>Liaises with parents/carers regarding non-attendance;</p> <p>Provides staff, students and parents with information about individual and collective attendance.</p>	<p>Writes the attendance postcards each half term. 100% and improving attendance postcards.</p> <p>Issues improving attendance postcards to students on a fortnightly basis,</p>	<p>Provides weekly information to staff regarding students whose attendance has become a concern;</p> <p>Sends letters and makes calls to parents/carers where attendance is becoming a concern.</p>	<p>Works with the Head of School to identify students for attendance plans with Assistant Head;</p> <p>Monitors and supports students on an attendance plan, including devising action plans which could include CAF, school nurse, phased returns, part time</p>

		especially those that are showing improvements on an intervention programme.		<p>timetables and other reintegration strategies;</p> <p>Carries out home visits where necessary;</p> <p>Refers students to the appropriate agency;</p> <p>Sends fixed penalty warning notices after three or more unauthorised sessions;</p> <p>Considers asking the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice fine after 8 sessions of unauthorised absence;</p> <p>Considers fast track and prosecution with the appropriate agency.</p>
Tutor	Records student absence each morning using the correct code, promptly and accurately and accurately records minutes late.	<p>Discusses attendance with parents and students.</p> <p>Sends Praise Postcards.</p>	<p>Investigates and informs about absence without reason on the previous day</p> <p>Completes level one tutor attendance discussion form.</p>	
Pastoral Support Assistant/ Officer	Promotes regular school attendance.		<p>Works with individual students who are having difficulties that might affect their school attendance.</p>	<p>May be best placed to monitor difficult to reach students on an attendance plan;</p> <p>Attends attendance meetings in a supportive capacity.</p>

What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/ she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/ her education. Your child will bring home a student handbook. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it weekly. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, talk to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch.

9.2 Leavers

If your child is transferring to another school, parents are asked to give the School Attendance Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and their new address and telephone numbers, their child's new education provider and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing (letter or email). If your child transfers and we do not have the above information, then he/she is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to carry out investigations to try to locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

9.3 Absence through child participation in public performances including theatre, film or TV work and modelling

For further advice and guidance on child employment and performance licenses visit Suffolk County Council guidance online at www.suffolk.gov.uk

Parents / carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Head of School to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

9.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, at the Head of School's discretion whether to authorise this and he/she will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head of School and is not likely to be given if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

9.5 Study Leave

We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. A bespoke timetable will be provided for the Year 11 students to ensure they get the most from this revision period for their June GCSE examinations. The school will work within the following legal requirements:

- Study leave should only be granted to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups;
- It should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e. not before the beginning of that period;
- It should always be granted sparingly, taking account of an individual student's/ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- Any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent / carer has the right to insist he/she does so
- Any sessions given to students as study leave are classified as authorised absence (coded S as it is not an 'approved educational activity') and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

9.6 Service Family

The Trust recognises the particular circumstances faced by service children and families. Although service children are expected to adhere to the attendance policy in line with their peers, there may be exceptions. At the discretion of the Head of School, limited time off may be approved in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances could include:

- Where a parent / carer has been/ will be deployed for an extended period;
- Where the family live away from their extended family and suffer bereavement or serious illness;
- Where the family is posted away and travel for transitional purposes (e.g. visiting new schools);

9.7 Menstruation

We cannot authorise absence for periods or pain during menstruation. We do appreciate that this can be an uncomfortable time for girls but we look to support them managing this, as adults would need to attend work. We can administer pain relief in the form of paracetamol / Ibuprofen suspension liquid or tablets at main reception and we have a supply of sanitary towels, a hot water bottle and spare underwear if needed. If a student is suffering with severe symptoms we encourage parents / carers to seek medical advice as doctors can often prescribe stronger pain relief.