SV

Severn Vale School
An Academy

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy	September 2023
Date of Next Review	September 2024
Policy Approved by	SLT Attendance Lead: R Johnson
School/Governor policy	School

Ofsted
Good rating

Contents

1 Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

> Making attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Severn Vale School's link governor for attendance is Vania Seymour

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Richard Johnson (Head Teacher) and can be contacted via rjohnson@severnvaleschool.com

3.4 The attendance improvement manager

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

> Working the Heads of Year to tackle persistent absence students

> Implement the AIM process and liaising with Gloucestershire County Council regarding submitting requests to Prosecute for non-attendance

The attendance improvement manager is Virginia Martin and can be contacted via vmartin@severnvaleschool.com

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible:

> Recording attendance on a daily basis on SIMS, using the correct codes, and submitting any additional information regarding a student's attendance information to the Attendance Administrator in a timely manner.

> Welcoming students back into school after a period of absence.

> Discussing attendance with students on a termly basis, with special emphasis on student who they have been specifically allocated.

> Completing a Barriers to Attendance Questionnaire with allocated students and devising an action plan with the student and parent / carer to improve attendance.

3.6 Attendance administrator

The school attendance administrator, Ryan Jordan-Steel, will:
> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on SIMS

> Transfer calls from parents to the correct pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

> Be responsible for sending out the N text and recording parental responses on SIMS

> Provide tutors and pastoral leads with daily lists showing students who were absent and need welcoming back to school the following day.

3.7 Attendance improvement mentor

The school attendance improvement mentor, Rachel Lutman, will:
> Conduct home visits for non-attenders

> Oversee 1st day phone calls for students on designated list

> Assist the Attendance Improvement Manger to tackle persistent absent students

> Oversee CME (Children Missing Education) visits and checks.

3.8 Heads of year and extended pastoral team

The school's Heads of Year and key member of the pastoral team, will:
> Provide form tutors with regular attendance updates for each student in their form

> Initiate attendance letters for students whose attendance is below 95%

> Were appropriate conduct SAM (School Attendance Meeting) interviews for all students under 90% with the aim to work with families to understand any in or out of school barriers to attendance

> Meet weekly with the attendance improvement manger regarding persistently absent and severely persistently absent students

3.9 Inclusion team

The school's inclusion team, led by Michelle Littlegray, will:
> Assess referrals from the SAM and AIM meetings, devising relevant intervention plans

> Deliver targeted support to students and families

> Attend, where appropriate, SAM and AIM meetings with students and families

> Contribute to AIM witness statements where appropriate

3.10 Parents/carers

For the purpose of the Attendance Policy, the definition of 'parent' includes:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil or pupil;
- Any person who has day to day care of a pupil or pupil i.e., lives with and looks after the pupil.

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school's absent number 01452 725475 to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

> Parents should be aware of the legal consequences of non-attendance and be familiar with the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

3.11 Students

Students are expected to:

> Attend school every day

> Attend every timetabled session on time

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day and at the start of each period. It will mark whether every student is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The reason for the amendment

> The initials 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 student is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a student 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.

Students must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken during line up.

The register for the second session will be taken at the start of period 4.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school's dedicated absence line 01452 725475 (see also section 7).

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

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 student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by calling the school's dedicated absence line 01452 725475.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student'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 student who arrives late:
> After the 8.50am line-up bell has gone will be marked as late, using the appropriate 'L' code

> After the end of transition bell has gone will be marked as late, using the appropriate 'L' code

Please find more details regarding lateness and punctuality in the school's Behaviour Policy

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call / N text the student'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 student's emergency contacts, the school may request the attendance improvement mentor conducts a home visit to help establish the location of the student.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call / N text 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 or the police.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via the six termly written reports. In addition, Heads of Years will write to the parents of any student whose attendance falls below expected levels to highlight concern.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement..

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 14 days] before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or from school reception / student support office or attendance team. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

> Going to other schools for visits, interviews or examinations.

> Participating in sporting competitions.

Invalid reasons leading to **unauthorised absence** include:

> Looking after brothers, sisters, and others

> Shopping / having a hair cut

> Celebrating a birthday

> Sleeping in

> One child is ill, so all are kept off

> Minor ailments such as tummy ache or headache

> Hot weather, cold weather or because it's the last day of term.

5.2 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.

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

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

Students achieving good attendance is central to Severn Vale schools' culture and ethos. Attendance is regularly referred to during line-up and celebrated during praise assemblies. Good attendance levels are fed back to both students and parents and are the focus of conversations between tutors and students in attendance monitoring weeks. Good attendance is rewarded via Attendance Reward Events. During the school year, students in KS3 are set a series of attendance challenges. The reward for meeting these challenges is for all successful students to be invited to the SVS Attendance Reward events taking place in December, March and July. Good attendance for KS4 is rewarded via an end of Year event for Y10 and the Y11 prom.

7 Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year, form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 students 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 via SVS's inclusion team

- Follow the Attendance Flow Chart process, implementing attendance monitoring letters, conducting school attendance meetings (SAM) and following the Gloucestershire County Councils Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIM) process that could lead to prosecution for non-attendance at school.

- Parents/carers of students with severe absence may be referred into the inclusion team to offer support from the school's Family Support Worker.

- For students with under 50% absence, parental neglect will be considered.

8 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Virginia Martin, Attendance Improvement Manager. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy

- Teaching and Learning Policy

- Health and Safety Policy

- Equal Opportunities Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student 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 flow chart

Attendance Process Flow Chart

First Day of Absence
Phone call home, either by mentor, Rachel Lutman, Virginia Martin, Inclusion Lead or HofY
(If absence concerns anxiety, Ryan to email name to HofY by 11.00 each day)

On Student Return (Tutor)
To be welcomed back during line-up by tutor (Ryan to give tutors daily list)

Students Attendance Falls Below 95%
HofY decides if student stays under their remit or is allocated to their tutor to monitor their attendance. For all students NOT allocated to tutors, HofY to use Barriers to Attendance Questionnaire to discuss reasons for absence. Followed by a phone call home to parents / carers – logged on MyConcern

If student is allocated to tutor (Tutors)
Meeting with allocated students using Barriers to Attendance Questionnaire to discuss reasons for absence. Followed by a phone call home to parents / carers (Completed questionnaire sent to HofY to log on MyConcern)

Student's Attendance Falls Below 90% (HofY or Mentor)
Letters to be sent to Parent / Carer by HofY (or Mentor if applicable)
ILLNESS – medical letter then monitor & challenge
ERRATIC / UNAUTHORISED – unauthorised letter then monitor & challenge
Copy of letter filed (if in my concern do more that HofY have access)

Improved attendance within 2-4 weeks (HofY or Mentor)
Student praised and email sent home

Improved attendance within 2-4 weeks (HofY or Mentor)
Student praised and email sent home

Tutor to monitor allocated student's attendance for 2 Terms

NO Attendance Improvement
Student returns to HofY
Tutors to provide handover summary to HofY

Attendance Improvement
Student stays with tutor

No improvement after 2-4 weeks – SAM Meeting (HofY)
Parent / Carer invited by HofY, in writing (invite letter) to School Attendance Meeting (SAM); minutes taken using SAM template; action plan to be agreed, consider if student needs referral to inclusion team or Attendance Improvement Mentor. SAM signed by parent / carer & Severn Vale. Date set for review meeting in 2-4 weeks
Copy on MyConcern

IF Improvement shown
Praise can be given either via Phone Call or SAM review meeting. Action plan / MyPlan reviewed and continue to monitor outside of the SAM process.

If NO Improvement after 2 – 4 weeks SAM REVIEW MEETING (HofY and Virginia Martin)
School Attendance Review Meeting (SAM); minutes taken using SAM template; action plan / MyPlan reviewed or started if a MyPlan not in place and signed by parent / carer & Severn Vale. Date set for either SAM Review or AIM meeting
Copy on MyConcern

IF Improvement shown
Praise can be given either via Phone Call or SAM review meeting. Action plan / MyPlan reviewed and continue to monitor outside of the SAM process.

No improvement after 2-4 weeks – AIM Process starts (run by Virginia Martin and HofY)
Part 1: Parent / Carer invited in writing to an AIM, following GCC procedure SV provision is reviewed and additional referrals made; minutes taken and copies provided to parents.

Part 2: 2-4 weeks later, parent / carer invited to Final AIM Review Meeting – Decision made whether to refer to GCC for Prosecution. Minutes taken and copies provided to parents.
Copy to MyConcern

Appendix 3: Request for leave of absence form

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Parents should 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 on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. 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.**

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the head teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to <u>each</u> parent for <u>each</u> child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

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. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

Mr Richard Johnson
Head Teacher

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Student's Name .... Class/Tutor Group ....

Student's address ....

Date of first day of absence .... Date of return to school ....

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school ....

If a student 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 circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence ....
....
....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to <u>each</u> parent for <u>each</u> 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:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
Forename .... Surname ....

Address ....

Signed .... Dated ....

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
Forename..Surname..

Address: ....

Signed .... Dated ....

(Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorized – **Forms to be returned to Mrs Virginia Martin, Attendance Improvement Manager – <u>vmartin@severnvaleschool.com</u>** or via school office)
_____

For school to complete and copy retained: AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED (please circle)