Seven Hills School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed & agreed: November 2023

Copies of this policy are also available in other languages on request.

Seven Hills School Attendance Policy

Rationale

"All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school." DfE May 2022

The Government expects that schools, colleges and local authorities will work together to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence

Sheffield Local Authority

Seven Hills supports our Local Authority's expectation that "every child will be supported to access a formal and full-time education where they attend on time, every day. We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils." and their commitment to "work together to ensure that all children and young people get the right support at the right time so that they can live a happy and fulfilled life". Sheffield Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025.

Seven Hills school is committed to maximising the achievement of all students irrespective of race, gender or disability. Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to educational achievement and social integration at school. Success at school can help the student gain access to appropriate post 16 opportunities and equip them with the skills needed for a fulfilling adult life. In supporting good attendance the school will work in partnership with the student, parents / carers and wider professionals the Local Authority, Social Care and Health professionals. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in school and students will be recognised and celebrated as such. Attendance will be continuously monitored and intervention / support developed where problems are identified.

Seven Hills adheres to Education Regulations 2006 (Pupil Registrations) which came into force on 1st September 2013. These regulations state that schools may not grant leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All leave taken during term time will therefore be deemed as unauthorised absences unless considered to be special or exceptional. All requests for leave during school time will be considered individually by the headteachers in line with the recommendations by the National Association of Head Teachers. Each application received will be reviewed as to whether circumstances are deemed to be special / exceptional. Individual student attendance data will also be carefully considered alongside the request. In general,

requests will be declined where the student's attendance is below 90% and where there is insufficient evidence of exceptional need. However, this statement will be approached with caution regarding students' individual circumstances.

Purposes

- To promote a whole school ethos and collective responsibility that good attendance is expected and is the norm.
- To promote, support and celebrate good attendance and punctuality.
- To have effective systems of recording, monitoring and reporting student attendance.
- To work closely and effectively with MAST to support students and families to improve their attendance.
- To support and encourage parents/carers to enable their children to reach good attendance levels.
- To be sensitive to the particular circumstances of students and their families and how these can effect attendance.
- To inform all staff of the key roles and responsibility within the school.
- To monitor and provide effective information on levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure a safe, secure school environment and curriculum which meets students' individual needs is in place to promote and enable good attendance.

Responsibilities of the Head Teacher and Governors

- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance matters.
- To oversee and monitor the work of the Attendance team in school
- To assign a school attendance champion from their Senior Leadership Team (Currently named as: Melanie Turner, Deputy Head Teacher) and Governing Body (Currently named as: *Hannah Dulieu)*
- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Ensure the attendance team is supported by a named member of the admin team who is familiar with the school's attendance processes (Currently: Sharanah Saeed-Kiani).

Responsibilities of the Attendance Team

- The named Attendance Champion will meet twice termly with our linked Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Specialist to work together to improve attendance by setting KPIs that form part of the School Development Plan and Attendance Targets (see Appendix 2)
- To have agenda led weekly meetings supported by attendance data.

- Have a clear, robust attendance policy that is shared with staff, parents, and pupils, and displayed on the school website
- To have strategic oversight of attendance matters in school including weekly review of attendance data, discussion and challenge trends and patterns
- To support Sheffield Local Authority's focus on supporting families to increase annual attendance percentage by a minimum of 0.5%, including:
  -Raising 100 – increase the number of 100% attenders and encourage 95%-99% attenders to take steps towards 100% attendance.
  -Reduce Persistent Absence – reduce the number of pupils with attendance at 80-95% by analysing attendance data weekly and termly and identify appropriate interventions for all students who are persistent absentees.
  - Focus on students with less than 50% attendance to understand the causes of poor attendance and identify appropriate multi-agency support to make sure they can re-engage in education full time
- To monitor, review and ensure appropriate implementation of attendance and punctuality policies across all school settings.
  To Ensure barriers to attendance are heard, understood and support provided
- To ensure attendance is promoted and -celebrated in school
- To ensure that all absences are recorded appropriately and in line with DFE guidelines
- To make decisions regarding absence requests for special occasions / holidays in line with DfE guidelines and school procedures.
- To produce attendance information to the governors as required and in the termly Head Teacher's report.
- Requests for support may be made to the LA for further support or requests may be made to the LA for family support or attendance & inclusion support.
- Make referrals to the police / social care for any student with unexplained absence on the third day (for a safe and well check) and on the first day of unexplained absence for a child on a child protection plan.
- To identify / support reintegration packages for students previously missing from education
- To ensure the Local Authority is informed if a student is to be removed from the attendance register.
- To provide attendance information to the Local Authority as required.
- To liaise with medical professions for advice around attendance issues as needed.
- Notify the Local Authority of any pupil who is:
  -Missing from Education (CME)
  -Receiving support via a reduced timetable
  -At risk of permanent exclusion
  -Requiring 6th day provision - following a permanent exclusion
  -On an unauthorised term time leave that will last 5 day or more
  -Persistently absent from school
  -Persistently late for school

What children, families and partners should expect from the school

- A named School Attendance Champion who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Governors who recognise the importance of school attendance
- A clear attendance policy that is reviewed regularly and available on the school website
- A broad and balanced curriculum that engages pupils in education delivered through quality first teaching
- A register that is maintained and taken twice a day (minimum)
- Closure of the register after registration, with persistent lateness challenged and addressed
- 'First day calls' to parents where a child is absent, and no contact has been made by parents
- Monitoring and challenge when attendance levels are not in line with expectations
- Meetings with school staff to assess why the child is not attending and plan for supporting the re-engagement with education
- Requesting support for families at the earliest opportunity
- Formalising the support offered when the voluntary support is not bringing around change
- Escalation to the Local Authority when attendance is not improving
- For term time leave requests to only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- For the school to liaise with other schools where children from the same family attend
- Request proof of medical appointments and work with parents to minimise lessons missed

Responsibilities of the class Tutor

- To keep an accurate, timely and up-to-date register of attendance following the agreed procedures and codes using SIMS
- To ensure that information provided by parents regarding absence and attendance is communicated immediately to the office.
- To promote an ethos of good attendance and punctuality with parents and students
- To liaise with Pastoral team/ phase leaders where concerns are held/ raised about a child's attendance in school
- To be involved in multi-agency meetings, as needed, to support students and their families in improving attendance issues
- To liaise with other professionals as needed to support student attendance in school
- To provide a safe, secure school environment and an engaging curriculum which meets individual needs
- To discuss attendance at Annual Review meetings and parent/carer consultation meetings
- To ensure that action identified in student's intervention plans are implemented fully
- To participate in student progress meetings working with SLT and Leaders of Learning to identify appropriate action for individual students and their families to improve attendance

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring that children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly
- To contact school if their child is absent to inform us of the reason for the absence
- To inform school in advance, by telephone or letter, of any medical appointments which need to be taken in school time. Parents should also provide school with a copy of any appointment letters (text, email or paper copies
- To make every effort to take holidays during school holiday periods
- To request and complete a leave request form for any planned absences from school
- To try to arrange medical appointment out of school hours where this is possible. Where appointments during the school day are unavoidable ensure their child is present in school for as much of the school day as is possible before / after the appointment time
- To promote and encourage good attendance
- To notify school of any concerns or difficulties you have with getting your child to attend
- To support your child to attend school by working cooperatively with school and other agencies where needed; by attending meetings and following agreed actions
- To support their children to be ready punctually for collection by transport

Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure:

- Their child attends school, on time and ready to learn
- They contact school at the earliest opportunity if their child is too unwell to attend
- They are open and honest with school staff, providing the reason for the absence
- They work with the school to seek appropriate support
- They engage with the support offered

We expect parents and carers to:

- Take responsibility for ensuring their child attends school, on time and ready to learn
- Speak to school if their child is feeling slightly unwell, and be assured school will contact you if the child is feeling worse
- Ensure if one child is unwell, their siblings continue to attend school
- Book non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours
- Not book holidays in Term Time
- Not request term time leave unless for an exceptional circumstance (for example a funeral or music examination)
- Have good morning routines to ensure their child arrives at school on time
- Have good evening routines and promote good sleep hygiene for their children
- Ask for support at the earliest opportunity
- To talk to school about concerns they have about their child's needs and work with the school to address them
- Build resilience to allow their child to attend with headache, cold symptoms, stomach ache etc
- Bring the child's medicine into school to ensure the child can continue to attend
- Where a school move has been agreed, ensure their child continues to attend their current school until they start their new school.

- To work in partnership with the school to promote good attendance if their child is struggling to attend or wants a 'day off' rather than agree absence

Responsibility of Students/Young People

- To make every effort to be ready on time for school transport in a morning
- To come to school every day unless you are too ill to attend
- To talk to an adult in school if you have any concerns or worries about coming to school.
- Go to bed on time to ensure a good night's sleep
- Build your resilience, you can attend with a headache, period pains, stomach-ache
- Engage in your lessons
- Speak to school staff if something prevents you from attending regularly
- Ask for support at the earliest opportunity
- Let your parent/carer or school staff know if you are being bullied
- Let your parent/carer or school staff know if you are feeling anxious about something
- Not ask your parent/carer for a day off
- If you are moving schools, continue to attend your current school until you start at your new school

Responsibility of the Attendance Admin team

- Maintain an Admissions register
- Maintain an Attendance Register with marks recorded for each pupil at least twice a day (morning and afternoon minimum)
- To liaise with tutor teams to ensure information received from parents regarding absence is communicated
- To check that tutor teams have appropriately marked registers, that appropriate codes have been used and that unexplained absence is chased up with parents
- To contact parents on the first day of any unexplained absence
- To pass on concerns regarding student attendance to the safeguarding team / phase leaders as appropriate
- To ensure that on the third day of any unexplained absence the safeguarding team is informed in order to ensure that procedures are followed to ensure that the child is safe and well.
- To ensure that any unexplained absence is referred to the phase leader.
- To produce weekly attendance data for phase leaders; identifying any unexplained / unauthorised absences
- To provide attendance data each half term in preparation for the safeguarding attendance meeting (.
- To ensure information about attendance data is made available to parents on through displays and on the school website.

- To pass on information to parents regarding attendance / absence procedures as needed.

Reduced Timetables (RTTs)
All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. All RTTs must have a 'wet signature' from parent/carer to be valid.

Formal arrangements will be put in place to review a RTT with the family, student and involved professionals every 2 weeks over an 8-week cycle, in line with Local Authority RTT process guidance.

Attendance Procedures

- All registers should be completed by tutor teams before the closing of registers at 9.30am and 1.30pm respectively.
- Any known reasons for absence should be recorded on SIMS by the tutor team or pastoral team or office staff once the information is received and the explanation put into the comment box provided for each student when their attendance is recorded in SIMS. If class teams are unable to do this when information is received, they should notify the office immediately.
- The designated office staff will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence for any unexplained absences and the explanation recorded in the comment box.
- Staff must only use the official codes as listed above. If the reason is unknown N should be used until further information is received**.**
- Tutor teams should not use authorised codes such as H for holiday unless they have been informed by the office that the holiday absence has been approved by the headteacher.
- All staff should direct parents to fill in a request for leave form if they are made aware of parental plans for holidays / absences. Parents should be reminded of the importance of attendance and encouraged to take holidays during school holiday periods wherever possible.
- Students arriving in school after the close of registers must be registered on entry into the building. The receptionist must contact the relevant tutor team to notify them of the student's arrival.

- Any student leaving school premises during a school session must be signed out before leaving the building.
- For **students who attend school on a reduced timetable**, class team are notified by reception on their arrival/non-arrival to enable registration to be completed. Non-attendance procedures are followed as required.

Monitoring, review and Implementation of the Policy

Office staff are primarily responsible for the implementation of the attendance policy. Any concerns regarding attendance procedures will be highlighted to the attendance team in school. Training for staff will be developed as needed to ensure all staff in school are able to follow the given policies and procedures. The attendance policy will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if statutory changes necessitate updates) by the Attendance Champion in conjunction with the office manager, Local Authority Attendance link, Phase Leaders and governing body.

This policy takes account of the following legislation:

DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance (May 2022)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

School attendance parental responsibility measures; statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (January 2015)
Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)

DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (September 2016)
Children missing education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs (2013)
Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

School suspensions and permanent exclusions (September 2022)
School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

DFE Attendance Coding for schools Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk) Section 8 from page 55
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures
School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Code Meaning	Statistical meaning
/	Present (am)	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)	Present (pm)
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised absence
B	Educated off-site	Present
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	
E	Excluded	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday agreed	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday not agreed	Unauthorised absence
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Authorised absence
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical/dental	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
V	Educational visit	Present
Y	Exceptional circumstance out of parent/carers controls e.g. school closure, broken wheelchair.	Not counted
W	Work experience	Present
X	Covid-related (isolation or reduced timetable)	Authorised absence

Appendix 2: 2023/4 Attendance KPIs and Attendance Targets

1	**Improve total attendance by 0.5% as per LA target (Target = 86.5%)**
2	**Improve EAL total attendance 0.5% (Target = 79.3+0.5%)**
3	**Reduce total PA to 39.8%**
4	**Coding – reduce N codes**