

Attendance policy

Approved by: SLT

Approved on: September 2022

STA Contact: Deputy Headteacher

Revision due: September 2024



1. Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all families understand the importance of 100% attendance. Attendance in school is vital for academic success. Studies have shown that pupils who attend less than 95% of the time fail to achieve 5 grade 4 and above at GCSE and therefore are denied the chance to a successful, fulfilling life.

For these reasons, we monitor attendance patterns with vigilance and hold parents to account where necessary. We expect all pupils to attend at all times, even if they are feeling unwell.

To enable this, the school works with partners in Area B and outside agencies such as the Pupil Entitlement Team and Early Help to ensure improved levels of attendance.

2. Practice

- a. Pupils must arrive before 8.35am; morning registers are taken soon after arrival. Afternoon registers are taken at 3.00pm.
- b. Pupils arriving after 8.40am will be marked as late and will receive a detention. Pupils late due to medical appointments must provide a letter showing proof of appointment, or have made prior contact with the school.
- c. Students who are repeatedly late within a fortnight are placed on punctuality report.
- d. In exceptional circumstances (such as severe weather or public transport disruptions) the closing of registration may be delayed at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- e. Parents are expected to notify the school office of pupil absence. In the case of illness, parents should report the pupil's absence via StudyBugs on the first day of absence and then each day thereafter. The school will continue to phone home every day for a period of extended absence, even if the reason for absence is known, should daily communication not be made with the school.
- f. The school will contact parents on a daily basis if they fail to inform the school of an absence. The school must be notified of the reason for a child's absence in order to safeguard the child and protect their educational well-being.
- g. Family holidays and doctor's appointments are not permitted or authorised during term time. Pupils have 13 weeks' school holiday per year and further time off on teacher training days. We kindly ask parents to make routine doctor and dental appointments during these dates in order to avoid unnecessary absence.
- h. Pupil absence will be recorded as 'Unauthorised' when the school is not satisfied with the reasons for the absence. Continued unauthorised absence may result in a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority (details below).
- i. For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance, pupils will be granted one day of authorised absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of three days per academic year. Time taken beyond this will not be authorised.
- j. The school takes seriously its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its pupils. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents may cause us concern and lead us to involve other agencies such as Children's Services. We will contact Children's Services within 2 days for any child with a Child Protection Plan.
- k. Pupils must have strong attendance in order to achieve the top 'Graduation' recognitions. The school also rewards excellent attendance with form time recognitions.
- l. The school carefully monitors attendance on a daily basis and attendance is discussed fortnightly by the school's Senior Leaders.
- m. Parental meetings are held to challenge and support our parents in raising the attendance of any child the school has concerns about.
- n. Where a child is failing to attend school, a plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family and, possibly, external agencies.
- o. Pupils who are off school for a long period due to severe illness will be issued with optional work to carry out at home to avoid falling behind.
- p. Attendance is recorded on MCAS and is visible to parents live.

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3. Absence Procedures

- a. In order to ensure the safety and educational well-being of all pupils, we have a rigorous monitoring system and follow up policy when absence occurs.
- b. Senior Leadership, in liaison with the Inclusion Manager, are responsible for monitoring that procedures are put into practice.
- c. Attendance data is reported and to the Governors regularly throughout the academic year.

4. Internal Stages

a. Attendance

- i. On the first day of absence each academic year, the school must be notified of the reason for the absence. If we are satisfied with the reason, we will authorise the absence. If we are not satisfied, the absence will not be authorised.
- ii. When a pupil's attendance falls below 95% (regardless of whether absences have been authorised or not), a letter is sent to parents highlighting the school's concern over the child's attendance. The child's tutor meets with the child.
- iii. If attendance does not improve, parents are invited in for an attendance meeting (Stage 0) with the child's Head of Year. During this meeting, factors impacting the pupil's attendance are discussed, support strategies will be explored and parents will be made aware of the next stages in the procedure should their child's attendance fail to improve.
- iv. After this meeting, the pupil's attendance is closely monitored for 8 weeks. If attendance improves during the 8-week monitoring period, we close the case and monitor in the usual way.
- v. If attendance does not improve during the 8-week monitoring period, we invite parents in for a further meeting where the attendance plan previously put in place is evaluated and updated with a member of the senior team. This is a Stage 1 attendance meeting.
- vi. After the Stage 1 meeting, attendance is monitored for a further 3-week period. If unauthorised absences continue after this point, the school and West Sussex County Council will begin proceedings to issue legal fixed penalty notices to parents.

b. Punctuality

- i. When a pupil is late 2 or more times within 1 week, the form tutor contacts home.
- ii. Should a pupil be late to school further times the following week, they are placed on a punctuality report with their form tutor and the Head of Year contacts home. This is monitored for 2 weeks.
- iii. Should punctuality not improve within the 2 week monitoring period, the child's Head of Year contacts home to arrange a meeting with parents to discuss the factors impacting the child's lateness and put strategies in place to improve their punctuality. Parents will be made aware of the next stages in the procedure should their child's punctuality fail to improve.
- iv. The action plan will be monitored for a further 4 weeks. If punctuality improves during the 4-week monitoring period, we close the case and monitor in the usual way.
- v. If punctuality does not improve, lateness is no longer authorised and therefore initiates the attendance cycle, which can lead to the issuance of a fixed penalty notice.

5. Children Missing from Education (CME)

The national definition of CME is:

“all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more)”.

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Children are at risk of becoming CME for many reasons, such as:

- They cease to attend due to exclusion or withdrawal: removal from roll with no destination.
- They fail to complete a transfer between providers.
- They are offered alternative provision but fail to access this provision.
- They have moved into the area and are not yet registered on a school roll (possibly including refugees/asylum seekers who have relocated from another authority from outside the area).

St Andrew's CofE High School has adopted West Sussex County Council's procedures for monitoring and reporting pupils who we believe are vulnerable and/or missing from education (CME).

Should the child be the subject of a Child Protection Plan, or should the school have child protection concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will immediately notify Children's Services.

We will not remove any child from our roll without consulting West Sussex County Council, and the Pupil Entitlement Team where appropriate. It is our policy to ensure that a place has been secured and the pupil has enrolled at a new school before removing a pupil from roll when transfers take place.