

Attendance Policy

SUN HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL



Name of School	Sun Hill Junior School
Date of Policy Issue/Review	September 2023/September 2024
Name of Responsible Manager/Head teacher	Sue Griffiths (HT & DSL) & Marie-Louise Woods (Deputy HT and DDSL)
Chair of Trustees	Katy Toms
Date approved by Trust Board (if statutory)	

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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 pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 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 Trustee board

The Trustee 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
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- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Students and Standards Committee are provided with attendance information once every half term. Committee is run by our Chair of Trustees Katy Toms (ktoms@perins.hants.sch.uk)

3.2 The head teacher

The head teacher 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 pupils
- › 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 pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Amy Craig and can be contacted via the school office email (adminoffice@sunhill-jun.hants.sch.uk)

3.4 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the head teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Miss Amy Craig (working alongside the Senior Administration Assistant, Mrs Emma Barstow) and can be contacted via the school office email (adminoffice@sunhill-jun.hants.sch.uk)

3.5 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. During the morning registration all registers must be completed by 9am and during the afternoon registration they must be completed by 1pm.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents to senior leaders in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance, if appropriate
- › Take detailed notes and will update Senior leaders/ class teachers if there is a concern

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence no later than 9.30am 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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

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 in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.40am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55pm and will be kept open until 1pm.

4.2 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 no later than 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by emailing admin@sunhill-jun.hants.sch.uk stating your child's name and class, as well as the reason for absence, or calling the office on 01962 732801 (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 pupil'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 pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We ask that appointments are made out of school hours but we know this is not always possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

If parents/carers need children to attend an appointment during school time they should inform the office in writing or email admin@sunhill-jun.hants.sch.uk.

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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › After the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code and the number of minutes late will be recorded

A weekly report is given to our designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

- › If a child is identified as having more than 25 minutes late over a week, further investigation is held. The member of staff may talk to the child, look into the reasons for the lateness recorded on the system and if warranted may contact the parent/carer to offer support.
- › If a child continues to be late over consecutive weeks and any conversations from above have no had impact then parents/carer may be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss attendance. The school will offer support and intervention to help the family and child get to school on time.

4.5 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 will record this communication and continue to make contact. Please see below table for more information.
- 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 the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues, as stated in the school's Missing in Education Policy.

Day 1 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact via phone, text or email sent to parent/guardian's main contact information • Documented on CPOMS/ARBOR
Day 2 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to contact via phone, text or email sent to parent/guardian's main contact information • Check with children's peers to see if they are aware of where they might be • Documented on CPOMS/ARBOR
Day 3 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to contact via phone, text or email sent to parent/guardian's main contact information • Contact schools of siblings to discuss any absence • Documented on CPOMS/ARBOR
Day 4 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to contact via phone, text or email sent to parent/guardian's main contact information. • Leave a message to inform that a home visit will be undertaken if they do not hear back from them. • Documented on CPOMS/ARBOR
Day 5 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home visit completed by two members of staff • Documented on CPOMS/ARBOR
Day 6 – 10 of unexplained absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to make contact as above • Alert the Children Missing Education Officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. All parents have access to the parent portal in Arbor which will communicate their child's attendance. The importance of attendance is communicated during Parent Information Evenings and they are made aware that if a child's attendance is below 95% school will be contacting them to find ways of support the family to improve attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The head teacher 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 head teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Under the Hampshire code of conduct Head Teachers are only allowed to authorise an absence if it is 'unexpected, rare, unavoidable and short'.

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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website <https://www.sunhilljs.net/absence>. The head teacher 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 pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

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 head teacher, 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school actively promotes good attendance via

- › Attendance awarded to the class with the highest attendance in the weekly celebration assembly
- › Weekly celebration of attendance on the parental newsletter
- › The school boasts a strong culture of inclusion

7. Attendance monitoring

A weekly report is produced by the Senior Administration Assistant, this report highlights the attendance across the school and is broken down by pupil and group. This data is used to highlight any potential children who may need monitoring/intervention/communication with parents. This information is then communicated with the Senior Leadership team during weekly leadership meetings.

Tailored interventions are put in place to support the family, if appropriate, outside agencies may be contacted to aid our support.

7.1 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 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 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

7.3 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

7.4 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 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
- Use personalized intervention to encourage and promote school attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by Miss Amy Craig/Assistant Head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trustee board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Missing in Education

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
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