



# Attendance Policy

## Contents

1. Attendance Statement

2. Aims (1 to 9)

3. Campus Procedures

4. Ratification

5. Appendices (1 to 7)

- Appendix 1: Removal from roll Notification Checklist
- Appendix 2: Request for Support Form
- Appendix 3: Code G Holidays in term time (extra information and Pro forma letters)
- Appendix 4: Children's Act 2004
- Appendix 5: Pupils who may be considered at risk of poor attendance
- Appendix 6: School attendance letters
- Appendix 7: Student Entitlement Plan
- Appendix 8: Legislation

## **Attendance Policy**

*“Central to raising attendance in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption that is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school”*

**(DFE – “School Attendance” – Statutory guidance and department advice August 2013)**

### **1) Attendance Statement**

Sandwell Community School is committed to raising the achievement and progress of all its pupils in its 5 campuses. Sustained and regular attendance is key to this. Each campus has an expectation of each pupil that they will try to at least achieve the national accepted average of attendance of 94.7%. Each campus will work towards excellent attendance for all by ensuring an excellent working partnership between the campus and its staff, parents, carers and partner agencies. Each campus will provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby all feel wanted and secure.

### **2) Aims of the Policy**

#### **Aim One**

To ensure the safeguarding of all pupils by maintaining an admissions register, attendance register and reporting of missing children to the LA

#### **Aim Two**

To ensure the accurate recording of all pupils’ attendance

#### **Aim Three**

To increase attendance across the board by maximizing on individual pupil attendance; using their initial baseline attendance as their marker to be improved upon

#### **Aim Four**

To provide an environment that encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all pupils

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### **Aim Five**

To keep attendance a high priority for all pupils including parents, campus staff and school Governors

### **Aim Six**

To support and nurture the pupils who have a long history of non-school or erratic attendance

### **Aim Seven**

To support and work with the parents and carers of the above in order to help them both and the school resolve difficulty of non or erratic attendance and any related issues

### **Aim Eight**

To work closely with the Attendance Service when prosecution becomes the final alternative

### **Aim Nine**

To use a consistent, systematic approach to gather and analyse attendance data to inform policy and practice

## **3) Campus Procedures**

### **Aim One**

To ensure the safeguarding of all pupils by maintaining an admissions register

### **Procedure**

On admission to the campus each pupils details is entered onto SIMS data management system

## **Contents of Admission Register**

- The campus must maintain an admission register that contains the personal details of every pupil in the school
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Information regarding parents and carers
- Details of the school last attended
- Details of attendance data %

(N.B. Admissions register to be pulled down as a report from SIMS as and when required)

## **Expected First Day of Attendance**

- The campus must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school
- If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the campus must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register according

## **Deletions from the Admission Register**

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The reasons for deletion from the admission register are:

- a. The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- b. The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- c. Completion of compulsory school age
- d. Permanent exclusion
- e. Death of a pupil
- f. Transfer between schools
- g. Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- h. Failure to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- i. A medical condition that prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- j. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil

- k. Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

The campus will complete a 'Removal from Roll Notification Checklist' form (Appendix 1) and return it to the Attendance and prosecution Service.

When a pupil returns to their original mainstream school at which they are dual registered with SCS we DO NOT complete a 'Removal from Roll Notification Checklist' form.

### **Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register**

Every amendment made to the admission register and 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

### **Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register**

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

### **Children at Risk of Missing Education**

The campus must inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home educated (see below on the home educated children)
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than 4 months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period

- Have been permanently excluded

The local authority will be notified in advance of the deletion when the campus becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

The campus will contact the Attendance and Prosecution Service if:

- A pupil has had 10 unauthorised absences with a 5 week period. 3 points of contact will be required with a completed 'Request for Support' form (Appendix 2). It is essential to be mindful that the 'Request for Support' form will be used as an exhibit should the case go to court
- 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence and the campus staff are unable to locate the pupil

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education. If the campus identifies a child who is not on roll at a school it will inform the Attendance and Prosecution Service, '*Children Missing in Education (CME)*' Officer

### **Home Educated Children**

On receipt of written notification to home educate, the school must inform the pupils local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. The school should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupils or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

The school and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or the local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. If the school receives information from a parent who wishes to home educate their child its designated staff will need to complete a 'Removal from Role Checklist' form (Appendix 1) and return it to the Attendance and Prosecution Service.

### **Aim Two**

To ensure the accurate recording of all pupils' attendance

## **Procedure**

The campus will record each pupil's attendance in line with DfE School Attendance, Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice which will enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way.

The Absence and Attendance Codes are:

### **A. Present at School**

#### **Registration Code / \ : Present in School / = AM \ = PM**

Present in school during registration

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

#### **Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed**

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with **Code U**, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

### **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in a supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving an off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6 (4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

**Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activities are as follows:**



## **Code B: Off-Site Educational Activity**

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately school are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using **Code B**, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

## **Consortia Schools**

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as a guest pupil at the consortia school. The consortia school however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupil/s involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school.

## **Code D: Dual Registered – at another Educational Establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than 1 school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but only when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained absence is followed up in a timely manner.

### **Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another Educational Establishment**

This code would be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

### **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### **Code V: Educational Visit or Trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

### **Code W: Work Experience**

Work Experience is for pupils in the final 2 years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

#### **B. Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**

### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a justification for absence.

The head of campus will make his/her judgement regarding authorisation on the basis of what evidence is provided by the family. However, only exceptional circumstances warrant an unauthorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the

frequency of the request' whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using **Code E**. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

### **Code H: Holiday authorised by the school**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the 1<sup>st</sup> day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support the illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, hospital appointment letters etc, rather than doctors' notes.

### **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Parents/carers should provide evidence of the appointment in the form of an appointment card or doctor/hospital appointment letter.

## **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has sent the day apart for religious observance.

## **Code S: Study Leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

## **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Travelling families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

### **C. Unauthorised absence from school**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence.

## **Absence codes are as follows:**

### **Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. (Appendix 3 – extra detail plus letter pro-forma)**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended accordingly. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with **Code O** (absent from school without authorisation).

### **Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

## **D. Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

### **Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend

## Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than 4 months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as **Code B** (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collect in the School Census for statistical purposes.

## Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable school to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupil's on admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified that the pupil will attend the school.

## Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to 5 non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of school as polling stations.

## Different Term Dates for Different Pupil's

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. **Code #** can be used to record the year group (s) that are not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered full education over the school year.

### **Aim Three**

To increase attendance across the board by maximising on individual pupil attendance using their initial baseline attendance as their marker to be improved upon

### **Procedure**

Induction processes in respect of attendance targets, mentors/tutors will be attached to pupils

### **Aim Four**

To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all pupils

### **Procedure**

Sandwell Community School aim to provide a safe, welcoming learning environment that encourages regular attendance. Sandwell Community School aims to offer a varied curriculum package to all students. All members of staff will provide a friendly but positive approach to pupils' attendance and their punctuality

### **Aim Five**

To keep attendance a high priority for all pupils including parents, campus staff and school Governors

### **Procedure**

The Executive Head and the Attendance Officer will inform the Governors of attendance figures for Sandwell Community School every half term

All campuses use the '*Teacher2Parents*' texting facility

### **Daily Attendance Procedure**

1. Registration marks to be entered and completed by 10.30am
2. First call home to be made by each campus (whom ever has this responsibility) and outcomes to be recorded on SIMS

3. Follow up calls during the day or towards the end of the day to be made by the Attendance Officer, information to be recorded on SIMS
4. All poor attendance letter 1-3 to be raised and sent by the designated person in each campus
5. Any letter sent regarding attendance to be attached to the students SIMS document links file so the Attendance Office can keep track of where we are up to
6. Once a week the Attendance Officer to upload the attendance data on Moodle for the previous week, the designated person from each campus will add any information regarding pupil interviews, parent telephone interview, home visits or parental meetings to the data if it isn't already recorded on the system
7. Each campus to inform the Attendance Office if any student becomes a concern (if the Attendance Officer hasn't previously identified)
8. New starters – all information to be passed on the Attendance Officer (especially new starters previous school attendance figures)
9. Any part-time timetables, amended timetables, alternative provision information that may affect the pupils' attendance to be passed onto the Attendance Officer immediately

### **Aim Six**

To support and nurture the pupils who have a long history of non-school or poor attendance

### **Procedure**

Sandwell Community School will provide a pupil entitlement plan that meets the needs of pupil's that cannot attend a full-time timetable due to a variety reasons. Timetables are amended to suit individual pupil needs.

The Attendance Officer will produce regular data on pupils with 85% or below.

See Appendix 4 – Children's Act 2004

See Appendix 5 – Pupils who may be considered at risk of poor attendance

See Appendix 7 – Student entitlement Plan

### **Aim Seven**

To support and work with the parents/carers of the above in order to help them both and the school to resolve the difficulty of non or poor attendance and any related issues



## **Procedures**

Sandwell Community School will maintain regular contact with parents/carers regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence calling procedure. All parents/carers are provided with a direct link to the Attendance Officer. Visiting procedure to homes depends on the pupil and the situation (1<sup>st</sup> day calling and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> day visit)

## **Aim Eight**

To work closely with the Attendance Service when School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders, Penalty Notices and Prosecution becomes the final alternative

## **Procedure**

The named officer from the Attendance Service attends half termly meeting with the Sandwell Community Schools Attendance Officer. The meetings can be to:

1. Look at data of individual pupils who do not meet the criteria for a referral to the service and advise on any more strategies that could be used in attaining the pupils sustained attendance
2. Look at patterns / trends and develop an action plan if needed
3. Updates on referrals made to the Attendance and Prosecutions Service

The Attendance and Prosecutions Service works alongside the Sandwell Community School. A referral can be made to them if there are 10 unauthorised absences over a period of 5 weeks. To make a referral to the Attendance Service complete a '*Request for Support*' form (Appendix 2) with documented evidence of 3 points of contact and send via WebXchange to Senior Practitioners who will assess referrals and determine their response (option 1, 2 or 3, see below). If there is sufficient evidence from the School the Attendance Service will return the referral with an explanation. The Attendance Service will also comment on the likelihood of success in a court of law (this is called *public interest*). It will be at this point the Head Teacher / Attendance Officers responsibility to decide the next course of action.

Response Option 1 – The family have been previously prosecuted, a) 15 day notification will be issued or an interview under caution. If there is no improvement following a review then the family will be prosecuted under 444(1)a.

Response Option 2 – The family is previously known and to date there has been no court action. A warning letter will be sent out followed by a 10 day review. If there is not improvement a 15 day notification will be issued or there will be an interview under caution.

Response Option 3 – The family is not known. A home visit with a pre-written letter will be given to the parents outlining the Attendance Services concerns. If the family needs additional support the officer will discuss with the school that will be most appropriate to lead on a CAF completion. If there's no improvement a 15 day notification will be issued.

### **Aim Nine**

To use consistent, systematic approach to gather and analyse attendance data to inform policy and practice

### **Procedure**

The Executive Head Teacher and Attendance Officer will report on attendance to the governors each half term.

Weekly analysis of pupil attendance data per campus is recorded with details of home visits and uploaded to Moodle by the Attendance Officer.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Removal from roll Notification Checklist

Appendix 2: Request for Support Form

Appendix 3: Code G Holidays in term time (extra information and Pro forma letters)

Appendix 4: Children's Act 2004

Appendix 5: Pupils who may be considered at risk of poor attendance

Appendix 6: School attendance letters

Appendix 7: Student Entitlement Plan

Appendix 8: Legislation

Ratification

D Smith

Acting Executive Head:

Date:

Signed:.....

T Lecointe

Acting Executive Head:

Date:

Signed:.....

J McBride:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Signed.....

Implementation: 22.11.16 (Academic Year 2016 -17)

Review Date: November 2017