



Attendance Policy

23-24

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Attendance Policy

Attendance Statement

Sandwell Community School believes that in order to create excellence, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. At Sandwell Community School we are committed to raising the achievement and progress within all of our centres of learning.

We are committed to:

1. Promoting and modelling good attendance.
2. Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all and ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding
3. Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
4. Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

Further sources of information Relevant legislation on www.legislation.gov.uk

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 Other departmental guidance you may be interested in
- Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour
- Children missing education September 2016
- Keeping children safe in education September 2023
- Sandwell Community School's Safeguarding and behaviour Policy
- [Working together to improve school attendance September 2022](#)

1.1 All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

2. Definitions

2.1 Sandwell Community School defines “absence” as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2 Sandwell Community School defines an “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- A court appearance for which the school has granted leave.
- Study leave
- Parental leave i.e. maternity/ paternity leave (Appendix 9)

2.3 Sandwell Community School defines an “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Medical appointments whereby proof has not been submitted.
- Unable to contact parent/ carer regarding child’s absence.

2.4 Sandwell Community School defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason. (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year)

2.5 Sandwell Community School defines “severe absenteeism” (SA) as:

- Those missing 50% or more of school. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

- 3.1** The governing body has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of Sandwell Community School.
- 3.2** The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 3.3** The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- 3.4** The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of Sandwell Community School.
- 3.5** Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 3.6** Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.7** School is required to advise parents and pupils of the requirement to ensure regular school attendance and the penalties for failing to do so, at least once a year. A school wide letter and/or newsletter is sent to all parents at the beginning of the school year and that further, a copy of the advice letter to parents is permanently available on the school website.
- 3.8** Tutors will take the attendance register using lesson monitor or paper register if unable to access SIMs during tutor time, 9am-9.15am at the start of each school day and during tutor time in the afternoon 12:45 – 1:00pm. If a paper register is used it must be submitted to Administrators to input into electronic register within 10 minutes of lesson or straight after lesson.
- 3.9** The member of staff leading the lesson will use lesson monitor to register student attendance at the beginning of each lesson. If a student is late to a lesson, then a 'L' mark must be used and minutes late must be recorded. Paper registers must be completed and submitted to Administrators within the first 10 minutes of lesson to be uploaded into electronic register.
- 3.10** Unless there are mitigating circumstances (see point 5 and 6) the school will ensure that every student has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.11** For irregular attendance, school are required to follow the irregular attendance procedure including evidencing offers of support and early help appropriate to individual / family circumstances.

3.12 If school feels that a set of circumstances warrants a referral to the Attendance and Prosecution Service, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that a referral is completed accurately and in full.

3.13 The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home. (Appendix 1 and 13)
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school. (Appendix 1)
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and their YOS key worker does not reasonably believe they will be returning.

Sandwell Community School will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has an unauthorised absence for a period of **10 sessions** or more during the academic year. (Appendix 2)

3.14 Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.

3.15 Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day and ensure students arrive “fit for learning”.

3.16 Pupils are also responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

3.17 All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

3.18 Students who attend Sandwell Community School on a preventative placement will remain the responsibility of their mainstream school.

3.19 Mainstream school will need to liaise with Sandwell Community School to obtain attendance daily/ weekly. They will be responsible for completing and submitting all necessary referrals to the LA. This will include if a Parent/ guardian of a preventative child requests to home educate. Sandwell Community School will remove from their roll and the child’s main school will need to complete all checks and paper work.

3.20 This local authority (SMBC) prosecute parents for non-school attendance, breaches of school attendance orders and any other criminal offences as outlined within the Education Act 1996.

3.21 Referrals for prosecution are dealt with by the Attendance Support Service (ASS).

3.22 Once a referral has been accepted, the ASS will apply an evidential test to ascertain if there is sufficient evidence provided within the referral pack to warrant action being taken.

3.23 If a prosecution is deemed appropriate, the ASS will prepare the evidence for Court and then pass the matter on to Legal and Assurance who will assess the case and take over the prosecution of the matter.

3.24 If it is deemed appropriate to issue a penalty notice, ASS will issue the same in line with the penalty notice code of conduct.

3.25 In so far as possible, SMBC will avoid listing any hearings which may require the attendance of school staff during school holidays.

4. Induction Process

All new students will be inducted using a specified timetable which will include a visit to the school with parents and an induction with a key member of staff of their first day. If appropriate a modified timetable (Appendix 5) will need to be completed and MUST be signed by all parties before submitting to the Attendance Support Service following initial meeting. This will be in place for five days and each student will be made aware of the importance of good attendance for future well-being and the rewards that SCS offers for good attendance. Students will also be told of the consequences of poor attendance both on their future well-being and whilst at SCS. At the initial meeting an attendance target will be set using the student's previous setting attendance as a baseline. Student's previous setting attendance will be logged in place status and history on SIMs. Individual student attendance will be tracked daily and information shared with all other lead professionals and Sandwell LA exclusions team. SCS absence procedures will run as outlined in section 7.1 Within the induction meeting parent/ carers MUST provide school with at least two emergency contacts.

5. Pathways

Main pathway- SCS students will be expected to attend between the hours of 9:00am-2:30pm.

Personalised Pathway- SCS student's individual needs will be assessed which may result in a different start and end time to each day but in line with legal requirements. Personalised pathways will be reviewed at least fortnightly and signed by all stakeholders. (Appendix 5)

Sandwell Community School will occasionally decide, in consultation with a parent/carer/LA officer, that a modified timetable will operate for an agreed fixed term period for very exceptional circumstances. These arrangements are, for example, put in place following an exclusion to reintegrate a pupil back to school or mainstream lessons. These timetables would only be negotiated through Pastoral Support Programmes, Annual Reviews or Attendance Support Meetings with an Engagement Officer, designated member of staff, safeguarding lead or via consultation through reintegration meetings. They must have an agreed date for the return to fulltime education with arrangements kept under review at least every two weeks. Alternative timetables and any changes made at review must be sent to the attendance team. A Modified Timetable form will be completed and signed by all parties then submitted to the LA (Appendix 5).

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1** Parents are required to contact the school by 8.30am on the first day of any absence.
- 6.2** A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. Parents/Carers of LAC students and families with social workers will be prioritised. (Appendix 9) COL table outlining responsibilities.
- 6.3** The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto SIM's
- 6.4** In the case of persistent absence (less than 90%), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Engagement Officer/wellbeing manager/designated staff member/Executive Head Teacher. In some cases, a home visit will take place and this will be risk assessed. Staff will be expected to document the details of their visit on the Home visit books provided by school. This will then need to be filed and uploaded onto the students SIMs document area. When conducting a Home visit staff must adhere to the protocols outlined in Appendix 21 and refer to safeguarding policy point 23.
- 6.5** In the case of Severe absenteeism (less than 50%), in addition to the above. SCS will look to identify more intensive targeted interventions to identify the 'root cause' of the absenteeism and seek to support the student and family the address these. This support along with attendance may form part of a whole family plan, and we will work with families to look holistically at the needs of the student. This may mean referring to outside agencies, with consent for specialist support.
- 6.6** If all avenues of support have been facilitated by school, the local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute Educational neglect (See Appendix 17). As a school we will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, a referral to children Services may be made in line with Sandwell Community Schools Safeguarding policy. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).
- 6.7** Sandwell Community School will work to engage with students and families through regular correspondence. (Appendix 3)

- 6.8** Sandwell Community School will inform Attendance Support Service of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 sessions or more. (Appendix 3)
- 6.9** Absconding-the absconding protocol will be followed if students abscond from lessons. (see appendix 7)
- 6.10** Fix term exclusions and illness (Appendix 15 and 2)
- 6.11** Fixed term exclusions will be followed up with a back to school meeting which must be attended by Parent/ Carer and student. Within this meeting targets will be set and minutes will be uploaded to SIM's and hard copy stored in students file. (Appendix 15)
- 6.12** Illness will be monitored and parents will be expected to submit evidence if their child's illness lasts for longer than 2 days.

7. Daily Attendance Procedure

- 7.1** Registration marks to be entered and completed by 9:15am at the latest by the tutor
- 7.2** If a child arrives late (after 9:15) a text will be sent to inform parents (Appendix 8)
- 7.3** First call home and texts will made by administrators and outcomes recorded on SIMS by 10:00am. For any students who have not attended by 12:45pm a call or text home will be made informing parents/carers that their child has yet to arrive. (appendix 8)
- 7.4** Follow up calls notifying parents/carers of their child's arrival at school during the day or towards the end of the day will be made by the designated member of staff with details of the conversation recorded on SIMs.
- 7.5** Preparation for prosecution will begin for students who have more than five unauthorised sessions (Appendix 4).
- 7.6** All written correspondence home will be attached to the student's file on SIMs on the same day.
- 7.7** Each Friday the Engagement Officer will email the attendance heat map to designated staff members at each centre of learning who will identify targeted students.
- 7.8** Each centre of learning will inform the Engagement Officer if any student becomes a concern with details of any interventions that have already been put in place.
- 7.9** New starters – all information will be passed on to the Engagement Officer at the point of referral.
- 7.10** Any modified timetables, amended timetables, alternative provision information that may affect the students' attendance will be passed onto the Attendance Lead.

7.11 Engagement Officer will monitor registers and ensure correct coding is being used. Staff will be informed via email should any amendments need to be made.

7.12 Administrators must contact any student who is open to children services first and their main priority must be LAC students. Social workers and any case leaders must be informed of non-attendance and given updates on attendance on a weekly basis. LAC students must take priority as outlined in SCS safeguarding policy.

7.12 Any student who is identified to attend an Alternative Provision or Work Experience placement will be monitored using the same procedures outlined in point 7.

8. Alternative Provision

Due to the student receiving part of their education offsite the SLT member with this responsibility must monitor the placement using the school's half termly review form (Appendix 16) and an initial health and safety check must be completed along with a detailed risk assessment. Sandwell Community School will follow own safeguarding procedures outlined in SCS safeguarding policy.

9. Contact information

- 9.1** Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details of emergency contacts stating their relationship to the child. All students **MUST** have **two** emergency contacts.
- 9.2** Parents are responsible for updating the school if their contact details change.
- 9.3** School administrators will check contact details termly.
- 9.4** Data collection sheets will be sent to parent/ carers every year by school. Parent/ carers will be expected to update their details and submit them into school office.

10. Attendance register

- 10.1** The member of staff leading the lesson will take the register at the beginning of each lesson using lesson monitor. Staff will record in the register whether the student is:
 - Present.
 - Absent. See section 7 for absence procedure
 - AM registers open at 9:00am and close at 9:30am. PM registers open at 12:15pm

Sandwell Community School will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used: (Appendix 7 outlines descriptions of codes).

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site educational activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- S = Study leave
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- W = Work experience
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z – Pupil not on admission register

10.2 When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, for example: induction days.

- 10.3** All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment, and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- 10.4** Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.
- 10.5** If students are persistently absent, students will be referred to the Engagement Officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. Correspondence will be sent home to parents to inform them of the attendance procedures and sanctions (Appendix 3).
- 10.6** If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Engagement Officer will refer to attendance and prosecution (ASS) who will take over the case.
- 10.7** If there are mitigating circumstances that prevent a referral for prosecution from being accepted and school have exhausted all their resources, then a referral to the Attendance support service will be completed and consideration with parents for Early Help support to be given. (Appendix 2) However evidence of interventions/ strategies must be available to support referral.

11 Lateness

- 11.1** Punctuality is of the utmost importance, and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 11.2** Doors open for students at **8.45**. The school day starts at **9:00am**; pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 11.3** Registers are marked tutors by **9:15am**; pupils will receive a late mark (L) if they arrive between 9:15-9:30.
- 11.4** The register closes at **9:30am**, (**unless there are mitigating circumstances or at HoC Discretion**). pupils will receive a mark of absence, 'U', if they do not attend school before this time. Students will be given a detention up to 30 minutes to ensure they can catch up on missed learning.
- 11.5** Attendance after the register closes will receive an unauthorised late mark (U) to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

12 Children at Risk of Missing Education

The centre of learning must inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register. (Appendix 1)

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important that as a school our response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. A child absent from Education may:

- 12.1** 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)
- 12.2** Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered. Parents will be informed in writing that their child will be removed from roll if they move out of borough.
- 12.3** 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
- 12.4** 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
- 12.5** The local authority will be notified of any student not attending as stated in safeguarding policy. They will also be told in advance of any deletion from role and the Engagement Officer will await the LA confirmation of receipt before the student is taken off roll.
- 12.6** 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 centre of learning identifies a child who is not on roll at a school it will inform the designated CMFE team within the LA, '*Children Missing from Education (CMFE)*' Officer
- 12.7** Please see (Appendix 12) for definitions of CMFE.

Electively Home Educated Children (EHE)

On receipt of written notification to Electively 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. If a parent/ carer submits notification to electively home educate Sandwell Community School will ensure their EHE protocol is followed. (Appendix 13)

The school and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from electively 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.

13 Leave of Absence (Term-time leave)

- 13.1** At Sandwell Community School, our aim is to equip students with the cultural capital they need to take the next step in their lives. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

- 13.2** Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.
- 13.3** Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. (Appendix 9)
- 13.4** Considerations when making decisions about requests for leave will include but not be limited to:
- The amount of unauthorised absences
 - Student's absence rate
- 13.5** If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

14 Religious observances

- 14.1** Sandwell Community School will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 14.2** Parents must inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 14.3** The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

15 Appointments

- 15.1** As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 15.2** Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card or letter should be sent to the school.
- 15.3** If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.
- 15.4** Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

16 Young carers

- 16.1** Sandwell Community School understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
- 16.2** Sandwell Community School takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate. An alternative timetable may be used to support the student

17 Rewarding good attendance

17.1 Sandwell Community School acknowledges 100 percent attendance in the following ways:

- **Certificates**
- **Reward trips**
- **Half Termly Prize**
- **End of year prize**
- **Written correspondence home**
- **Attendance report letters**

17.2 Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

- **Postcards nor phone calls home**
- **Certificates**
- **Rewards raffle and daily dip box**

17.3 Some school trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below **80** percent, these privileges may be taken away.

18 Display

18.1 Each centre of learning will have an attendance board which will display details of rewards and the impact of poor attendance. It will also celebrate students for good attendance. These boards will be consistent across campuses to reinforce consistent positive messages about good attendance to pupils, parents, staff and visitors.

18.2 Tutor rooms will have an attendance display that shows the attendance and future targets of students in that tutor group.

19 Monitoring and review

19.1 Sandwell Community School monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

19.2 Weekly Wellbeing meetings.

19.3 SLT will have designated students that they are responsible for monitoring. A referral must be completed and shared with Engagement Officer's to ensure all strategies and interventions are being completed.

19.4 Heads of COL will review and monitor centre of learning/ tutor files at least every term and report any concerns to Engagement Officer.

19.5 Home visits will be carried out using current protocol outlined in Appendix 14.

19.6 All staff will follow Attendance protocols and procedures and ensure they are implementing the Attendance policy at all times.

19.7 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher, Engagement Officer and Chair of Governors.

19.8 Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

Ratification

K.Morgan

Executive Head Teacher:

Date:

Signed:.....

C Nixon

Safeguarding & Pastoral Lead:

Date: 29/08/23

Signed:..... *C Nixon*

Anna Misiewicz:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Signed.....

Implementation:)

Review Date: September 2024