
SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

THIS POLICY WAS APPROVED:	8 TH NOVEMBER 2022
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	AUTUMN 2023
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	DAVID HUNT

Sawston Village College

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Attendance at school is vital and it is our belief that regular attendance means 100% unless the absence is unavoidable or leave is required for exceptional circumstances. Absence during term time interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and fragments learning. Therefore we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

Attendance is a national priority. **Research shows that pupil attendance of less than 95% can impact on pupil attainment by as much as a grade or level.** If a child is taken away for a two week holiday every year and has the average number of days off for sickness and appointments, by the time they leave at 16 they will have missed a year of school. The College attendance team will be monitoring attendance closely and parents of any child whose attendance is seen to be of concern below 90% in the first half term rising to below 95% as the year progresses will be contacted by the College.

The vast majority of our pupils achieve over 95% attendance and this is what we expect as a minimum.

Sawston Village College aims to:

- raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school;
- ensure that every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled;
- make explicit to all relevant parties, including staff, parents, pupils, governors, the expectations of attendance;
- be proactive to address early patterns of absence.

Legal and National Context

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure that their children receive full-time education and that they have a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance and punctuality of that child at the school where he/she is a registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not authorise holidays in term time unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reason for absence circumstances. Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent

for single event absences of at least three consecutive school days where the absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.

Pupils who have unauthorised absence of 10% or more are classified as persistent absentees.

The school attendance policy follows the guidance outlined by Department for Education Statutory Guidance on School Attendance.

Implementation

The College will:

- Ensure that school policy with regard to term-time holidays is clearly stated in the school brochure and is regularly communicated to parents.
- Remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance.
- Actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term-time.
- Unequivocally remind parents that they do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted and that all leave is granted at the discretion of the Principal (or those authorised to exercise discretion).
- Advise parents that if leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence, and that the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- Advise parents that non-attendance or absence that is unauthorised that is 90% or less could result in parenting contracts, or legal enforcement including; Penalty Notices, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution.
- Provide attendance data on the termly report.
- Report on attendance to Governors.
- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the register where they are to be home educated, have ceased to attend the school, have a medical condition where the school medical officer certifies they will be unfit for school, are in custody or are permanently excluded.
- Inform the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend regularly and is missing for 10 days or more 'a child missing from education'.
- Pass on attendance data to all Post 16 centres as required.

Promoting attendance

The school uses opportunities as they arise to remind parents and pupils of the importance of attendance, for instance through parent information evenings and home/school agreements. Attendance is also celebrated through assemblies, certificates and attendance awards. In addition the following personnel have a role in promoting good attendance:

Heads of House/Year Leads

- Give attendance a high profile at assemblies and school events.
- Monitor House/Year attendance targets and record keeping.
- Implement system of rewards and sanctions.
- Support Mentors on issues of non-attendance and with internal truancy, remedying causes and applying sanctions.
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance problems as soon as they are identified.
- Lead on strategies to improve attendance of students who are identified as being a concern through meetings with students and parents.
- Pastoral team meet weekly to identify individual pupils and decide on relevant interventions.
- Meet every two weeks through the SAM (Sawston Attendance Meetings) referral meeting with the Pastoral/Inclusion team.
- Implement the three letter system.
- With parents and pupil formulate an Attendance Action Plan that is reviewed bi-weekly.
- Refer to the Local Authority Attendance Service if absence is legal proceedings need to commence.
- Ensure work is provided for excluded students and long-term absentees.
- Look for patterns of absences and consider impact of curriculum upon attendance alongside other possible causes.

Attendance Officer

- Oversee administration of the SIMS Register system. Streamline and make adjustments to systems and procedures.
- Ensure the correct attendance codes are used as outlined in the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on School Attendance.
- Keep parents informed of any unexplained absences before they become unauthorised.
- To monitor daily attendance and alert Heads of House in the event of non-explained absence or first alert absence (unexplained).
- To contact parents in the case of non-explained absence.
- To oversee registration and punctuality, following up reminders to staff.

- Keep the Director of Inclusion and Alternative Provision informed of inaccurate marking of staff registers; SLT implements a warning system for staff who do not maintain accurate recording of registers.
- Update daily the attendance data sheet with the whole school data, Year group and vulnerable groups.
- Providing data on those less than 95% before each attendance meeting and populate the letter sheet.

Mentor

- Keep an accurate register.
- Be a good role model for pupils.
- Give attendance a high profile.
- Praise pupils for arriving on time.
- Take prompt action where pupils are late or absent without explanation, recording lateness and referring to Head of House.
- Inform Head of House/Year Lead and Student Support Officer when absence is causing concern.
- Ensure an accurate register for each session
- Praise students for their punctuality to lessons

Parents

- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day
- Provide written explanation for children's absences from school, all unexplained absence will be unauthorised, and the unauthorised mark will be changed permanently if after a week there is no forthcoming explanation of absence.
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time and complete a leave of absence form for all absences apart from medical appointments.
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance. If no letter has been sent in advance telephone the school on the first morning of their child's absence and subsequently for every further day they are absent.
- If the pupil's level of attendance is of concern, parents may be requested to provide medical evidence.

Pupils

- To be in their mentor base by 8.25 am ready for registration every morning at 8.30 and period 5 lesson 2.05 pm for registration every afternoon.
- Be on time for lessons.

- Make sure a note is sent from parents to explain absences.
- If late sign in at the Attendance Office.
- If need to leave early sign out at Attendance Office.
- Tell the Mentor, Head of House or Year Lead if having any problems attending school

The Educational Welfare Officer has a legal role to support the school if other ways of resolving attendance have failed, these officers can use legal sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates court.

Support Available

Attendance Officer – Mrs Debbie Chapman

Director of Inclusion and Alternative Provision – Mr David Hunt

Year 7 Lead/Head of Turing House – Mrs Claire Fane and Mrs Jodie Fink

Year 8 Lead – Mrs Clare Riondino

Year 9 Lead/Head of da Vinci House – Mr Andrae Davis

Year 10 Lead/Head of Mandela House – Mrs Cheryl Wombwell

Year 11 Lead/Head of Earhart House – Miss Darcie Jackson

Inclusion Manager – Miss Vicky Linzell

Local Authority Attendance Officer – Mrs Zena Cooper

- Attendance interviews and regular reviews with Pupil Premium Support Lead and/or Head of House/Year Lead.
- Attendance Action Plan.
- Meetings with Year Lead and other external agencies to provide support for children and their parents.
- Re-integration programme arranged between pupils, parents, and key staff as necessary: Year Lead, Director of Welfare and inclusion and Inclusion Manager/SENCO if appropriate after long-term absence.
- Re-integration timetables where appropriate.
- Individualised curriculum where appropriate.
- EWO involvement should the individual case need to be referred to the courts.

Rewards

- Celebrate attendance through Celebration Assemblies.
- Annual Attendance rewards.

- Annual 100% attendance pupil celebration.
- House points for top attendance each half term.
- Good attendance references to potential employers/colleges.

Sanctions

- Year group lunchtime detention for poor punctuality.
- Principal Referral for truancy or consistent poor punctuality.
- Year Lead report for poor attendance/punctuality.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.

This can result in the school offering the parent the opportunity to enter into a parenting contract following a pupil's truancy or non-attendance under section 19 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.

This can result in the school instigating a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (instigated by Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Principals authorised by them, authorised by the Local Authority).

Policy approved by the Local Governing Body on 8 November 2022

Review: Autumn 2023

Additional appendices related to absence

Appendix A: Procedure for reporting absence at school

Appendix B: Punctuality

Appendix C: Understanding types of absence

Appendix D: Letters to parents re absence (Letters 0, 1, 2a/b, Meeting and 3)

Appendix E: Cambridgeshire Local Authority Penalty Notice Guidance

Appendix A: Procedure for reporting absence at school

If a child is absent from school the following procedures are required to ensure the school is fully informed.

First day absence

- Parents should contact the school attendance officer every day their child is off by ringing 01223 712623 or emailing attendance@sawstonvc.org
- Information is provided, including the reason for absence, pupil name and mentor group
- On return to school, the parent provides a note with an explanation for absence, unless the reason has already been provided via school email

On-going absence

- In the case of longer term absence, Mrs Chapman is informed so that appropriate work or support can be provided

Ten days' absence

A pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days (will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Cambridgeshire Attendance Support Team. This is a legal requirement and could be an indicator that a child could be classified as a Child Missing in Education. For a pupil who is considered 'at risk' the timeframe is reduced to 5 days.

If a child needs to be absent during the school day the following procedures are required

- The school Attendance Officer, Mrs D Chapman is contacted by the parent on 01223 712623 or email attendance@sawstonvc.org to inform of reason for absence during the day, for example, dental appointment.
- The pupil must sign out before they leave the school premises and sign in on their return.

School action in the case of pupil absence

- On the first day of absence, the Attendance Officer will use telephone contact or the text alert service/InTouch will be used to confirm absence with the parent if contact has not already been made.
- In the case of pupil attendance that is deemed 'at risk', the parent will be invited to school to discuss absence and actions for improving attendance.

Appendix B: Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable at Sawston Village College. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss vital work and information. Lateness is also disruptive to lessons.

The school day

The school starts with mentor group registration at 8.30 am and pupils are expected to be in their mentor base by 8.25 am. Any pupil who arrives after this time is registered as late and minutes late will be recorded.

Registers are closed by 8.50 am. A pupil who is late after this time should sign in at the duty room, where they will be given a mark to show they are on site. However, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence for the morning session unless they have a genuine reason for lateness i.e. illness, medical.

Afternoon register starts at 12.10 pm. Afternoon registers close at 12.15 pm.

If a child arrives late to school, for example due to a dental appointment, a note must accompany the child on their return which they will give to the Attendance Officer, Mrs Chapman, when they sign in. In this case the absence will be recorded as authorised.

Punctuality

The Year Lead has the overview of punctuality and will follow up lateness with individual pupils. An after school detention may be given for repeated lateness without reason or if a pupil is late after 8:35am without reasonable explanation. In cases of persistent lateness, Year Leads will place pupils on a Support Plan or Report and sanctioned in accordance with the College's Behaviour Policy.

Appendix C: Understanding types of absence

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason.

Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The school monitors all absence thoroughly.

If a child's absence is deemed to be 'at risk' of PA, the parent will be informed of this by the Year Lead.

PA pupils are tracked through the pastoral system, combined with academic monitoring.

Appendix D: Attendance letters
Letter 0

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>
<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

Attendance Update

Pupil Name: <NAME>
Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>



We are writing to advise you of <NAME>'s attendance at Sawston Village College. As of the <DATE>, <NAME> has been absent for <NUMBER> sessions out of a possible <TOTALNUMBER> (each school day has two sessions) and, therefore, <NAME>'s overall attendance to date is <PERCENTAGE>%.

As I am sure you are aware, schools are expected to promote good attendance and reduce absence, ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and to act early to address patterns of absence.

We appreciate that these are unusual times. If there are any particular circumstances that the College may not be aware of which are having an impact on <NAME> attending regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us. We regularly monitor the attendance of all pupils and will contact you again if need be.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

The Attendance Team

Letter 1

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>
<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

Attendance Update

Pupil Name: <NAME>
Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>

Together
achieving

95%

We are writing to advise you that we have noticed a drop in <NAME>'s attendance at Sawston Village College. As of the <DATE>, <NAME> has been absent for <NUMBER> sessions out of a possible <TOTALNUMBER> (each school day has two sessions) and, therefore, <NAME>'s overall attendance to date is <PERCENTAGE>%.

The breakdown is as follows:

<TABLE>

The expected level of attendance for pupils at the College is 95% or better.

As I am sure you are aware, schools are expected to promote good attendance and reduce absence, ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and to act early to address patterns of absence.

If there are any particular circumstances that the college may not be aware of which are having an impact on <NAME> attending regularly, please do not hesitate to contact us. We regularly monitor the attendance of all pupils and will contact you again if need be.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

The Attendance Team

Letter 2a

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>

<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

School Attendance Second Concern Letter

Pupil Name: <NAME>

Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>

Together
achieving

95%

I am writing to inform you that there is continued concern regarding <NAME>'s irregular attendance. Since my previous letter <NAME> has had a further <NUMBER> sessions of absence. Therefore <NAME>'s attendance to date is <PERCENTAGE>% which is significantly below the school's target of 95%.

Personalised information about absences, where they are authorised/unauthorised lates etc. Specific information relating to circumstance if needed. For example: So far all <NAME>'s absences have been authorised by the school but if this pattern of odd days off continues we may have no choice but to ask for medical evidence to authorise any further absences.

Should <NAME>'s attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

We will be monitoring <NAME>'s absence over the next two weeks and hope to see an improvement. If this is not the case we may ask you to attend a meeting to discuss the matter further and put an attendance plan in place.

I hope you will work with the College to improve <NAME>'s attendance and therefore avoid the need for further discussions regarding attendance.

Yours sincerely

The Attendance Team

Letter 2b

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>

<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

Persistent Absentee Concern Letter

Pupil Name: <NAME>

Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>

I am writing to inform you that there is continued concern regarding <NAME>'s attendance at Sawston Village College. <NAME> has been absent for <NUMBER> sessions out of a possible <NUMBER> (each school day has two sessions) and his/her overall attendance to date is <PERCENTAGE>%. The expected level of attendance for pupils at our school is 95% or better.

Should <NAME>'s attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Poor attendance can disrupt a pupil's learning and mean that they fall behind their peers in class. Persistent absence from school can put particular emphasis on this knowledge gap and place the pupil at a significant disadvantage academically.

Persistent absence data is collected every half term and will highlight any pupil who has missed 10% or more sessions of school since the beginning of the academic year. We will be monitoring closely <NAME>'s attendance and punctuality hope to see an improvement over the next two weeks. If <NAME>'s attendance continues to cause concern we will ask you to attend a meeting at the College so we can discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

The Attendance Team

Together
achieving

95%

Meeting Letter

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>
<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

School Attendance Meeting Letter

Pupil Name: <NAME>
Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>

Since I last wrote to you on <DATE>, <NAME>'s attendance has not shown a significant improvement. <NAME>'s attendance as of the <DATE> is <PERCENTAGE>%. This is still significantly below the school's target of 95% and is having an impact on <NAME>'s learning.

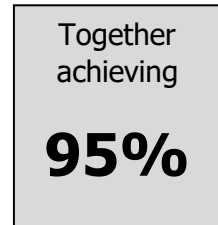
Should <NAME>'s attendance remain irregular, the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

So that we can ensure that <NAME> does not miss any further education, I would like to hold a meeting with you on <DATE> at <TIME> to discuss these absences and to develop an attendance plan to support <NAME>.

Yours sincerely

<YEAR LEAD SIGNATURE>

<YEAR LEAD NAME>
On behalf of The Attendance Team



Letter 3

<DATE>

<PARENTNAME>
<ADDRESS>

Dear <SALUTATION>

School Attendance Referral Letter

Pupil Name: <NAME>
Date of Birth: <DATEOFBIRTH>

Thank you for attending the review meeting for <NAME>'s attendance plan on the <DATE>. As we discussed at the meeting because <NAME> has not shown a significant improvement in his overall attendance we have no choice but to refer you to Cambridgeshire Attendance Support Team where this case will be considered by a legal panel.

<NAME>'s attendance as of <DATE> is <PERCENTAGE>%. This is still significantly below the school's target of 95% and having an impact on <NAME>'s learning here at the College. Since we first agreed to the attendance plan on the <DATE> <NAME> has only attended school <PERCENTAGE>% of the time.

Yours sincerely

<YEAR LEAD SIGNATURE>

<YEAR LEAD NAME>
On behalf of The Attendance Team



Appendix E: Cambridgeshire Local Authority Penalty Notice Guidance

PENALTY NOTICES

NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

1. Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 local education authority officers, headteachers and the police have the discretionary power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
2. The new power provides an alternative to prosecution of parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days.
3. Should the Penalty Notice remain unpaid or have been paid only in part at the end of the 28 day period Cambridgeshire County Council must prosecute the parents for the offence to which the notice relates, or, in specified circumstances (see section 29 below), withdraw the notice.
4. Penalty Notices may only be issued in Cambridgeshire in accordance with the terms of this Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power is applied fairly and consistently across the County Council and that suitable arrangements are in place for the effective and efficient administration of the scheme.
5. In implementing this Code of Conduct the County Council will liaise when appropriate with neighbouring education and police authorities.
6. This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004: Statutory Instrument 2004 No 181 and guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills.
7. In preparing this Code of Conduct the County Council has consulted with Cambridgeshire headteachers and the Chief Officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This complies with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.