

# Attendance Policy

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
CEO:	Mrs Lyn Dance		
Chair of Trust Board:	Mrs Kerry Brimfield		

<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	
Original implementation date:	October 2020
Review frequency:	2 years
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Review delegated to:	Quality of Education committee

### **Document Version control**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Changes made</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	Initial set up of Trust-wide policy	October 2020
	Revised in-line with The Key model policy	October 2022

## **1. Aims**

- 1.1. SAND Academies Trust is committed to meeting obligations with regards school attendance by:
  - 1.1.1. Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
  - 1.1.2. Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - 1.1.3. Acting early to address patterns of absence
- 1.2. We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- 1.3. This Attendance policy is designed to promote full attendance for all pupils attending schools within the Trust. We understand that there is a proven critical link between attendance, academic and social outcomes for all pupils.
- 1.4. It is the desired outcome of this policy that it supports the development of all pupils into academically successful young people of good character with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.
- 1.5. At all schools within the trust, we expect every child to have regular attendance of 100%, however, we accept that this is not always possible.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

- 2.1. 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:
  - 2.1.1. Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
  - 2.1.2. Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
  - 2.1.3. Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
  - 2.1.4. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
  - 2.1.5. [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- 2.2. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **3. Legal Duty of parents to secure regular school attendance**

- 3.1. The parent of any child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is registered. Failure to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution of the parent(s) in a magistrate's court. In Education Law, (section 576 of Education Act 1996), parent means:
  - 3.1.1. All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
  - 3.1.2. Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil.

- 3.1.3. Any person who has care of a child or pupil ie: lives with or looks after the child.
- 3.2. The local authority and individual school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 4.1. The **Local Advisory Board** (LAB) is responsible for monitoring attendance figures in the individual school on at least a termly basis. The LAB also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- 4.2. The **Headteacher** is responsible for:
  - 4.2.1. Implementation of this policy
  - 4.2.2. Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LAB
  - 4.2.3. Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
  - 4.2.4. Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- 4.3. The **Attendance officer** will:
  - 4.3.1. Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
  - 4.3.2. Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
  - 4.3.3. Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
  - 4.3.4. Inform the Headteacher when a fixed-penalty notice needs to be requested from the local authority / or advice from the Inclusion team concerning potential requests for legal action for non-attendance
- 4.4. **Class teachers** are responsible for:
  - 4.4.1. Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office
- 4.5. **Administration staff** are:
  - 4.5.1. Expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system

#### **5. Recording attendance**

##### **5.1. Attendance register**

- 5.1.1. We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils into this register.
- 5.1.2. 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 child is:
  - 5.1.2.1. Present
  - 5.1.2.2. Attending an approved off-site educational activity
  - 5.1.2.3. Absent
  - 5.1.2.4. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- 5.1.3. Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- 5.1.3.1. The original entry
- 5.1.3.2. The amended entry
- 5.1.3.3. The reason for the amendment
- 5.1.3.4. The date on which the amendment was made
- 5.1.3.5. The name and position of the person who made the amendment
- 5.1.4. Appendix 1 provides details on the DfE attendance codes
- 5.1.5. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made
- 5.1.6. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each day
- 5.1.7. The register for the first session will be taken by 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am.

## **5.2. Unplanned absence**

- 5.2.1. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of any unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.
- 5.2.2. Parents are to telephone the school and leave an attendance answerphone message or speak to the school administrator directly.
- 5.2.3. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 5.2.4. 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.
- 5.2.5. 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.

## **5.3. Planned absence**

- 5.3.1. 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.
- 5.3.2. The school should be notified in writing or by showing a copy of the appointment immediately (the school may take a copy for the child's file)
- 5.3.3. Parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- 5.3.4. 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. Section 6 details the types of term-time absence which will be authorised.

## **5.4. Lateness and punctuality**

- 5.4.1. A pupil who arrives late:
  - 5.4.1.1. Before the register has closed will be marked as late using the L code.

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- 5.4.1.2. After the register has closed will be marked as late using the U code.
- 5.4.2. Parents are to telephone the school and leave an attendance answerphone message or speak to the school administrator directly.
- 5.4.3. The school will monitor lateness of pupils and share any concern with parents initially verbally. If lateness continues, then the concern will be in writing and if it persists, then a meeting will be arranged.

## **5.5. Following up absence**

- 5.5.1. Where any child expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:
  - 5.5.1.1. Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
  - 5.5.1.2. Identify whether the absence is approved or not
  - 5.5.1.3. Identify the correct attendance code to use
  - 5.5.1.4. Follow up on their absence with the parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephoning the parent and carrying out a home visit if it is deemed necessary

## **5.6. Reporting to parents**

- 5.6.1. Attendance is reported to parents each time a written report goes home and will be informed through a written school report.
- 5.6.2. Parents will also be informed through parents' evenings.
- 5.6.3. Parents will also be written to throughout the academic year if attendance is a concern.

## **6. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **6.1. Approval for term-time absence**

- 6.1.1. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances".
- 6.1.2. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. A meeting with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will take place for any holiday requests.
- 6.1.3. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:
  - 6.1.3.1. If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
  - 6.1.3.2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent/carer's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
  - 6.1.3.3. The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional.
  - 6.1.3.4. Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

- 6.1.3.5. Religious observance – the Education Act 1996 S444(3), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent belongs”.
- 6.1.3.6. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on the parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations, the Headteacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
- 6.1.4. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher will consult with the CEO/LAB prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.
- 6.1.5. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
  - 6.1.5.1. Illness and medical/dental appointments
  - 6.1.5.2. 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 parent’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
  - 6.1.5.3. 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.
  - 6.1.5.4. Flexi-schooling – parents who request flexible attendance are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve both attendance at school as well as times when the child will receive educational provision at home. Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education and is also different to children below compulsory school age attending school part-time.
- 6.1.6. Parents must complete the appropriate form to request absence. Should this be for holiday purposes, parents should be reminded that they put themselves at risk if a Penalty Notice from the local authority.

## **6.2. Reducing persistent absence**

- 6.2.1. The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and makes daily calls/texts if no contact has been made by the parent.
- 6.2.2. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

- 6.2.3. Attendance data is monitored regularly, and each term's attendance data is analysed and shared with the CEO, LAB members and Trustees.
  - 6.2.4. If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, we will contact the parents and discuss the reasons for this.
  - 6.2.5. If after contacting parents, a pupil's attendance continues to rise, the school will consider involving other agencies/support strategies.
  - 6.2.6. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
  - 6.2.7. Pupil-level absence data is 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. Schools will compare their attendance data to the national average.
- 6.3. Legal sanctions
- 6.3.1. The school can request assistance from the Local Authority who can fine parents for the persistent unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
  - 6.3.2. Or if issued 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. This could be for an unauthorised holiday, persistent lateness after the registers are closed or where an excluded child has been seen in a public place.
  - 6.3.3. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice/legal action lies with the Local Authority and may take into account:
    - 6.3.3.1. The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year. This may result in an Attendance Improvement Meeting, held in school. Failure to meet any targets set could result in prosecution for non-attendance.
    - 6.3.3.2. 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
      - Where there is persistent Lateness after the register has closed.
  - 6.3.4. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **7. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- 7.1. Positive praise for good attendance and punctuality may be carried out by a combination of strategies and may include:
  - 7.1.1. Verbal praise to child and parent
  - 7.1.2. Weekly class rewards
  - 7.1.3. Attendance prize raffle



- 7.1.4. Certificates
- 7.1.5. Stickers
- 7.1.6. End of year 100% attendance prizes

## **8. Attendance monitoring**

- 8.1. The attendance officer at the school monitors pupil absence on a regular basis
- 8.2. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Telephone the school on 01242 216180 and leave an answerphone message if needed.
- 8.3. The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school on the first day of their child's absence, and on every subsequent day of absence, give the reason for the absence and, where appropriate, supply a medical certificate or other evidential paperwork as requested.
- 8.4. If a pupil's absence goes above 4 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, the school will consider involving the LAB member for attendance, the senior leaders in school or the Local Authority.
- 8.5. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
- 8.6. 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 Local Advisory Board and Trust Board.
- 8.7. The attendance officer will:
  - 8.7.1. Monitor and update registers along with the Headteacher as necessary when they have been completed by teachers
  - 8.7.2. Ensure codes are recorded accurately
  - 8.7.3. Prepare, analyse and share relevant data to share with the Headteacher
  - 8.7.4. Liaise with the Headteacher and staff to identify causes for concern and decide appropriate levels of intervention
  - 8.7.5. Follow indicative action protocol with pupils and families giving cause for concern
  - 8.7.6. Review weekly and termly attendance data and ensure an appropriate level of response to attendance concerns
  - 8.7.7. Pupils who are persistently absent from school for whatever reason will be monitored on a week-by-week basis. These pupils are known as PA students – this is someone who has a 90% attendance or lower at any given time during the academic year.
- 8.8. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Attendance 97% +	An excellent level of attendance. This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give children a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic
Attendance 95% to 97%	A good level of attendance but there is scope to make it better
Attendance 90% to 95%	Absence might be now affecting attainment and progress at school (letter can be issued)
Attendance 90% and below	Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting a child's learning. A meeting will be held to discuss attendance. The school will work with the local authority and parents/carers to improve a child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

#### 8.9. Attendance concern process:

- 8.9.1. Initial attendance concern will result in a meeting with the Family Support Worker and Designated Safeguarding Lead. At this meeting, the pupil's attendance and punctuality will be discussed and if relevant their academic levels which are being hindered. A plan going forward will be devised between school and home. This may include talking with the pupil and an offer of Early Help may be in place at this stage.
- 8.9.2. If attendance continues to be of concern, this will be stepped up and an official Attendance Improvement Meeting will be held. This will identify any further support / external referrals that may be required and plans in place.
- 8.9.3. If attendance continues to be of concern, a meeting will be held with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- 8.9.4. Legal proceedings or external referrals may be considered.

### 9. Part-time timetables

- 9.1. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of the re-integration package.
- 9.2. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time or be provided with alternative provision. Any decision about a part-time timetable needs to have due and full consideration of any safeguarding and welfare risks, plus steps to prevent these; any vulnerabilities and risks must be fully regarded as part of the school's duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 9.3. Not being in school full time can put children at significant risk, including risk of harm, neglect, abuse, exploitation and radicalisation, for example, as well as risks of underachieving, poor outcomes and becoming NEET. Full consultation with, and agreement of, the children's social worker should be sought where the child is a Child in Need (CIN) or has a Child Protection Plan

(CPP) and, in such cases, notification of the part-time timetable should also be sent to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board.

- 9.4. A reduced timetable is not considered an appropriate method of managing poor behaviour, or pupils at risk of exclusion, in the longer term. This intervention should only be considered after other strategies have been exhausted and they should be for the benefit of the pupil. Such arrangements must be made with the agreement of the parent/carer.
- 9.5. Any pupil on a part-time timetable is expected to have a MyPlan+ with a My Assessment in place to ensure needs are identified and SMART targets set in conjunction with parents. This will enable pupils to work towards attending school full time with appropriate support in place. The school should record these absences as code C in the attendance register. It is important that the local authority have a central record of all children not accessing full-time education in the usual way, including those accessing alternative provision full time away from their normal school.

## **10. Children Missing Education (CME)**

- 10.1. Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to the CME Officer at the local authority. CME refers to any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity eg: school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks.
- 10.2. CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are usually children who are either registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either:
  - 10.2.1. Has not taken up an allocated school place as expected
  - 10.2.2. Has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation
  - 10.2.3. Left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.
- 10.3. It is the responsibility of the local authority:
  - 10.3.1. To collate information on all reported cases of CME of statutory school age children in maintained schools, academies, free schools, alternative provision settings.
  - 10.3.2. Liaise with partner agencies and other local authorities and schools across Britain to track pupils who may be missing education
  - 10.3.3. Ensure each child missing education is offered full-time education within 2 weeks of the date on which the local authority was informed.
- 10.4. Any professional should alert the local authority when they suspect that a child might be missing education. Complete form: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/childrenmissing-education/> Email it to: [missingpupils@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:missingpupils@gloucestershire.gov.uk) Telephone: 01452 328774 or 01452 42601

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed annually as and when guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. The policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## **12. Links with other policies**

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12.1. This policy is linked to the following policies:

12.1.1. Safeguarding

12.1.2. Behaviour

## Appendix 1 – the following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil present for morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil present for 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupils 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 student is on study leave during their period of public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
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

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 a 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

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