

Southover Partnership Attendance Policy



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Useful Contacts

The name and contact details of the SLT Attendance Lead – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Name: Jonathan Harper

Email address or contact details: jonathan.harper@southoverpartnership.com

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are the school operation leads:

Kingsbury: Shawn George Email: shawn.george@southoverpartnership.com

Phone: 07517846741

Edgware: Georgia Bance Email: georgia.bance@southoverpartnership.com

Phone: 07508582697

Southgate: Emma Wilson Email: emma.wilson@southoverpartnership.com

Phone: 07946370140

Speak to the student's Head of school if pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance.

Attendance Policy

Introduction and Background

The Southover Partnership recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is an expectation that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At The Southover Partnership, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Promote the benefits of high attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law
- Reward/acknowledge good or improving attendance
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the an agreed expectation of attendance
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance expectations at the beginning of the academic year

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning AM or afternoon PM sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own or family birthdays
- Parental/carer commitments affecting the child's ability to attend school
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Executive Headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

Name: The school office

Email: info@southoverpartnership.com

Tel: 020 8446 0300

For Outreach students, parents/carers should email the Head of Outreach at headofoutreach@southoverpartnership.com

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.30am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents/carers and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness- [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#) Appendix B

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not received any communication from home
- Telephone other emergency contact numbers if we are unable to contact parents/carers
- Send an email if we are unable to contact anyone by telephone regarding a child's absence
- Conduct a home visit or conduct further enquiries if we are concerned about the safety of a child

If your child's absence continues or deteriorates over time, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is causing concern, and/or where punctuality is a concern
- Make contact to discuss the reasons for absence
- Consider and offer reasonable adjustments
- If appropriate, offer an Early Help Assessment or signposting to services or agencies to provide additional support

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

If a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at The Southover Partnership are:

Morning start 9:30
 Lessons begin 9:40
 School day finishes 2:30

How we manage lateness:

- Students arriving in school are signed in by staff members, who keep a record of their punctuality
- If your child arrives late, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns

If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Head of School. You can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to their children and, as a school, we celebrate individual punctuality to lessons which is rewarded on the student's points sheet.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any student may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any issues preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. You may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. Students' wellbeing is always paramount at the Southover Partnership, this will be always taken into consideration in any conversations regarding attendance. The student's welfare will remain the clear priority and any improvement plan that is used will be mindful of this need.

High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary/reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents them from attending full-time education and a reduced timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A reduced timetable would only be considered for the shortest time necessary. This will only be agreed by the Head of School, who will consider each case individually. Where this has been agreed, this will be set out through the reduced timetable and shared with parents/carers. There will generally be a clear expectation to return to full-time as quickly as possible and this will be reviewed regularly in discussion with the parent. In this case it will be recorded as an authorised absence.

We will ensure that we refer to the child's EHCP in defining our expectation of good attendance, but expect every child to aim for 90% attendance in order for them to access their education and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving The Southover Partnership, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all our pupils, even those who leave us. This will always be part of a managed transfer with the assistance of the local education authority.

It is crucial that parent/carers keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

Annex A: Attendance protocols at The Southover Partnership

School Attendance & Punctuality Flowchart

Attendance Flowchart

Step 1: Student Absent

Step 2: Has Parent/Carer Contacted School?

- **Yes** → Record absence. No further action needed.
- **No** → Proceed to Step 3 ↓

Step 3: Phone Call to Parent/Carer

- **Answered?** → Record reason. No further action needed.
- **No Answer?** → Proceed to Step 4 ↓

Step 4: Send Follow-Up Email

- **Response Received?** → Record reason. No further action needed.
- **No Response?** → Proceed to Step 5 ↓

Step 5: Call Emergency Contacts

- **Contact Made?** → Record reason. No further action needed.
- **No Contact?** → Proceed to Step 6 ↓
-

Step 6: Home Visit Conducted

- **Student Located & Safe?** → Record reason. No further action needed.
- **No Response or Concerns Raised?** → Escalate to Safeguarding Team.

Punctuality Flowchart

Step 1: Student Arrives on Time

- Signed in. No further action needed.

Step 2: Student Arrives Before 10:00

- Reason for lateness ascertained.

Step 3: Student Arrives After Periods One and Two

- Marked as absent for the morning session.
- Parents/Carers contacted and reason for lateness ascertained.
- No further action needed.
- Student is registered for the morning session.
- Parents/Carers contacted. No further action needed.


Step 4: More Than Two Sessions Missed in a Week Due to Lateness

- Meeting arranged with parents and student.
- Student starts the process of a punctuality plan.
- Plan reviewed after half a term. ↓


Step 5: Frequent Lateness Identified (e.g., 3 times in a week)

- Issue Verbal Warning & Discuss with Student.
- Inform Parents/Carers. ↓


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Step 6: Continued Lateness (e.g., 5 times in a half-term)

- Formal Meeting with Parents/Carers.
- Identify Causes & Develop Support Plan. 

Step 7: Review Support Plan Fortnightly


- Assess effectiveness of interventions.
- Gather feedback from student, parents, and staff.
- Adjust strategies as needed. 

Step 8: Has Punctuality Improved?

- **Yes** → Continue monitoring and gradually reduce support as needed.
- **No** → Escalate to Senior Leadership & Consider Further Actions (e.g., Detentions, Attendance Panel, External Support).

Student Struggling to Attend School Regularly?

Step 1: Identify Causes of Non-Attendance

- Discussions with the student, parents/carers, and staff.
- Consideration of medical, emotional, social, or logistical barriers. 

Step 2: Develop a Support Plan

- Tailored strategies to address identified barriers.
- Adjustments in school (e.g., timetable changes, mentoring, additional support).
- Engage with parents/carers for collaboration. ↓

Step 3: Review Support Plan Fortnightly

- Assess effectiveness of interventions.
- Gather feedback from student, parents, and staff.
- Adjust strategies as needed. ↓

Step 4: Engage with External Services

- Work with social workers, CAMHS, education welfare officers, or other professionals supporting the family.
- Implement multi-agency approaches. ↓

Step 5: Has Attendance Improved?

- **Yes** → Continue monitoring and gradually reduce support as needed.
- **No** → Escalate to Safeguarding/Local Authority (Legal Intervention if necessary)

Annex B – Illness Absence Guidance

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my-child-off-school-guidance-A3-poster.pdf>

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

[Wellbeing: national resources - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning \(thegrid.org.uk\)](https://the-grid.org.uk)

[Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Appendix C

Attendance Agreement for Parents/carers

Expectations of parents	<p>Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.</p> <p>Parents/carers whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.</p> <p>Parents/carers are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance • Instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly • Impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct • Informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30am at the latest • Providing the school with an explanation for the absence • Informing the school of any changes to their contact details • Taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings • Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance • Proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for further intervention • Booking any medical appointments outside of the school day where possible • Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance <p>Treating staff with respect when contacted about your child's attendance concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively supporting the work of the school • Calling staff for help when they need it • Communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support
	<p>I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to the academy's expectations for parents regarding attendance and understand that I have a legal responsibility to ensure my child attends school.</p>
Parents Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix D

Registration Codes used at the Southover Partnership are as follows:

Applied in accordance with Working together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) Working together to improve school attendance

/ = Present (AM)

\ = Present (PM)

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code B: Educated at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable Page 5 of 11 Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code V: Residential trip organised by the school

Code W: Pupil in final 2 years of compulsory education attends work experience

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure