



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by: Vice Principal

Consultation with: Principal and South Gloucestershire Local Authority

Date of last review: December 2021

Date of next review: August 2022

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential to ensure the best outcomes for our students. It is clear that students with poor attendance fail to thrive as students, children and as adults into the future. By 'regular' we mean that all students attend each and every day that they are expected to attend. There may be exceptional circumstances when absences may be agreed in line with national attendance code guidance.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at SBL Academy is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – students, parents and all staff.

i) **Students**

All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Students who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and appropriate support, usually from the student's House Team.

ii) **Parents & Carers**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible – by phone call, on 0117 4565900. A parent is required to advise SBL Academy for each day of each absence. A student's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until an explanation satisfactory to the school is forthcoming from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents whose child's attendance is a cause for concern will be contacted by our Pastoral Team. Parents are encouraged to make medical/dental appointments for their children outside of during school hours.

iii) **Academy Staff**

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff). The Academy will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly absenteeism consistently.

Health needs and attendance

In order to ensure health needs are addressed we will take full account of the health needs as set out in the following policy:

<https://find-information-for-adults-children-families.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/advice.page?id=Sp7puUlj3Ek>

Threshold for parent/carer contact

Action will be taken to engage with parents (such as invitation to a meeting, written communication and/or a home visit. (See also the 'Engaging with Parents and Carers' section)

- i. Where there are a number of broken or incomplete weeks over two terms e.g. Autumn, Spring and Summer. A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register.
- ii. Where attendance is below 94% over a term
- iii. Where there have been repeat late or U code marks with or without other attendance concerns.

For example:

We will engage with parent, typically, as follows:

Threshold	Term 1-2	Term 1-4	Term 1-6
Broken Weeks	3-4	6-9	10+
Attendance %	Less than 95%	Less than 94%	Less than 93%

Stages of Intervention

Our stages of intervention and support will usually follow the following pattern:

Example:

Stage 1

Year-to-date broken weeks and overall absence pattern is a cause for concern = Letter home and support offered with clear indication of future direction if no improvement.

Stage 2

Ongoing concern and no signs of improvement after review period.

Letter, offering support put pointing out a need for change and invitation to School Attendance Meeting.

Stage 3

Continued broken weeks and no significant improvement following school attendance meeting. Letter sent to invite to Attendance Panel Meeting which will involve the Local Authority in the review process where necessary. At this meeting we will:

- Formally investigate reasons for absence and explore solutions
- set attendance targets with parents.

Stage 4

- Formal monitoring with Local Authority involvement as required with the potential for formal legal proceedings if suitable improvement is not achieved.

We have every wish to avoid involvement with legal processes and do what is reasonably possible to involve parents. Where parents do not engage with this important process, this will be noted and used as evidence in legal proceedings.

Attendance registration

We have a legal duty to register all students in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon. We will code according to national guidelines. Where there is a pattern of absence and no clear supporting evidence of acceptable reasons for absence we will mark these as unauthorised.

(See 'Health and Attendance')

Punctuality

Our policy is that we will allow a student who is late arriving by up to 20 minutes from the start of registration to be marked as "Late" in the attendance register. We believe that a student arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the student and may cause classroom disruption. Persistently late students will be dealt with in line with our Behaviour Policy.

Students arriving after 20 minutes from the start of attendance registration will be marked as (U) in the register. This has a meaning of an absence which is unauthorised. A pattern of unauthorised absence U code will lead to formal action for non-school attendance and possible Penalty Notice fine.

Health and Attendance

Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence then we will we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with the South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy

<https://find-information-for-adults-children-families.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/advice.page?id=Sp7puUlj3Ek>

We may require supporting information (for example repeat prescription information, medical appointment cards and/or information from other health professionals).

Where there are occasional (e.g. 1 or 2 a year) absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea there may be no requirement for medical supporting information. For repeat absences we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.

Absences which are not agreed by the school (Unauthorised)

The 1996 Education Act requires parents and carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified and where there are unauthorised absences we will seek to engage with parents-carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance have not lead to a reduction in unauthorised absence consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

Penalty Notice

In cases where parents or carers take their child on holiday during term time we will follow the Code of Conduct and request that a Penalty Notice is issued by the local authority where applicable. Where all or almost all unauthorised absence marks are U coded (late after registration) we will first seek to engage with parents -carer and student. If U code absences persist we will request a Penalty Notice in line with the Code.

Engaging with parents and carers

We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our students that we will review our attendance performance several times during each term. We will regularly look at the students where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of Broken Weeks we will contact parents and may arrange to meet and review progress. There is clear national evidence that children who are on Free School Meals attend less than students as a whole. We will ensure that support to ensure attendance of all students who are on FSM is prioritized.

Safeguarding and First Day Call

We will regularly request updates of parent-carer contact information. Adults who have day-to-day care of a student are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will contact parents/carers on the first day of unexplained absence. Where absences are of concern and all attempts to engage have failed we will refer to the Access and Response Team (social services) for further investigation.

Special arrangements

We view our school as a 'community'. We value all students equally and will work with parents, carers and students to ensure best outcomes. There may be occasions when special

arrangements are in place to support the attendance of young people who are more vulnerable. For example young people who have been ill may be placed on a phased return provided there is agreement from all parties. If any student is being supported through special arrangements with other schools we will ensure that agreements are in place with all parties including parents and that attendance is marked in the register properly.

Absence for sporting activity

Absence may be granted for students taking part in activities under the aegis of a national sporting body e.g. the Football Association, British Gymnastics Association, Amateur Swimming Association, Women's or Men's Rugby Football Union, England & Wales Cricket Board etc. Evidence may be required to clarify the level of participation before absence is authorised.

Celebrating success

We will acknowledge excellence in attendance progress by where individuals have outstanding attendance.

Holidays / extended leave

It is for the Principal to determine if a request to take children out of school on a holiday is reasonable. Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking holidays in term time and must consider the possible consequences of doing so. Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for holidays.

Parents must request in advance any time out of school for a holiday on the appropriate form and with an accompanying letter addressed to the Principal. It is not possible to seek authorisation retrospectively. The Principal will judge each request on a case by case basis. Parents should assume, however, that other than 'special' or 'exceptional' requests – most requests are likely to be rejected.

Should parents wish to appeal they should contact the Principal who will review and determine if the request is reasonable. The Principal will, according to the guidance, use discretion 'sparingly'. Equally, it is advised that there should be 'no blanket bans'. Therefore, the following, according to the guidance, could be considered reasonable justification for the use of the Principal's discretion:

Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting (if the time out of school is reasonable). Parents' employment restrictions (these are limited to the rosters for uniformed public servants and the armed forces); any other requests for the Principal's discretion will require evidence from an employer. Such evidence will not entitle parents to take holidays in term time but will be considered – if granted, this should be considered as a one-off and not be repeated.

Significant family events or circumstances - these will be considered on an individual basis and would need to be obviously 'one-off' and the students' attendance pattern will be taken into consideration.

However, the following, according to the guidance, would not be considered reasonable:

- Relatives coming to visit, including those from abroad.
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad during term time.
- Family day trips (e.g. for birthday treats, festivals, sporting events or shopping).
- Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays.
- Restricted parental working schedules.

If the Academy does not authorise an absence but the child is still absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, which may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued. It is important to note that staff of the Academy may check on absence especially if they suspect or are informed that it is suspected a family is actually on holiday but claim absence is due to other reasons.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.

If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school they will update SIMs. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team immediately. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-andattendance/children-missing-education/>

Part time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs and this decision is made by the Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

Review

We will review the attendance policy every two years and when national changes in legislation require us to do so.

Addendum

Advice:

For advice regarding attendance processes please see:

<https://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/school-attendance/>

For advice regarding use of attendance codes please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Data and Targets

Our School attendance targets are:

1. Our target for the whole year = 95.5% whole School
2. FSM Target = 93.5%
3. SEN Students = 92%
4. Persistent absence (attending < 90%) = 9.5%

Final Notes:

1. Our lead member of staff is Mr D Knowles (Assistant Principal)
2. Our Lead Attendance Governor is Mrs J Ware (Chair of Governors)
3. Our EWO is Ms C Dunwell
4. We regularly report to Governors showing progress of students in all year group and the performance of each tutor group and House and compare this with the previous year.
6. We have a clear protocol for engaging with parents/carers when there is a pattern of absence
7. We will offer clear information to parents/carers where we have concerns.
8. An attendance target of 97% for each student.

South Gloucestershire - Formal Attendance Processes

Amended September 2018

