



<p>Sandlings Primary School</p> <p>ATTENDANCE POLICY</p>	
Date	November 2022
Review	November 2025
Reviewed by	Resources
<p>Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not priorities' or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.</p>	
<p>Statutory Policy for Website</p>	
<p>This policy links to the following policies: Child protection and safeguarding policy Behaviour policy</p>	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- A named governor responsible for attendance

The governing body ensures that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer (Office Manager)

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- › Working with Suffolk County Council's education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Monitor the absence line calls and update the school system

The attendance officer is the Office Manager and can be contacted via email or telephone admin@sandlings.suffolk.sch.uk or 01394 420444.

3.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on a daily basis.

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return notifying the school using the absence line number
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- › Understand that the school will not automatically agree to any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school
- › Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- › Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;

- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Sandlings Primary School will endeavor to support parents to address their concerns

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

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 pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age only)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school at 8.50am on each school day so that they are on time for the register for the morning session which will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the afternoon session is taken at 1.15pm after lunch break.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school absence line. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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.

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.

4.3 Planned absence

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. We have a "Leave of Absence form" which needs to be filled in, available at the school office or on our website.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

It is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg. a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day be signed in and out at the School Office by a parent.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Sandlings Primary school identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues by letter, see Appendix 4.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving after 9.10 am or 1.15 pm must be signed in at the office by a parent.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Sandlings Primary has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences through phone calls, emails and letters sent home.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. The school will also try to reach the pupil's emergency contacts.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

If the absence continues, the school will consider talking to the army welfare office if it is a military family, speaking to the Educational Welfare Officer for advice and carrying out a home visit to the family house.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly written reports, advising parents of their child's absence percentage.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as determined by the headteacher

Sandlings Primary school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website and the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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 parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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
- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis or other exceptional circumstances;
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Valid reasons for an **extended leave of absence**:

In considering absence for extended trips overseas, Sandlings Primary School will take account of the following:

- Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents will be expected to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip)

- The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs may be involved
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the student undertakes some school-set work during this period.

Sandlings Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence by letter

Sandlings Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during or immediately prior to, periods of national tests, e.g. SATS

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or 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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Sandlings Primary School. Good attendance is recognised and is regularly discussed at assemblies. Parents are regularly reminded on Classdojo and Parentmail about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

7. Attendance monitoring

Sandlings Primary school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that may require support with their attendance. Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with Special Education Needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. The Attendance Officer will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headteacher who will should check the current position against the target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection. Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Sandlings Primary will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

- › Sandlings Primary will:
- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

- › Sandlings Primary will:
- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- › Sandlings Primary school has procedures in place for targeting unauthorised absence. Such as meetings with parents, letters to parents (please see in the appendix for sample attendance letters) and close monitoring by the Office Manager and Headteacher.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Headteacher and resource committee at every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil 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 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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 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

Appendix 2

Model letter – attendance under 95%

Dear

Re: NAME, DOB

The attached registration certificate shows that your child’s attendance has fallen to 95% or below.

Clearly there may be a number of explanations for this level of attendance. For example, if your child has been ill, that would account for the drop in their attendance. We would ask you to encourage excellent attendance from this point forward so that your child’s attendance rate improves over the next few weeks. Suffolk County Council’s Education Attendance Service monitors attendance at this level and if there is no improvement you may be required to attend a meeting with myself and our Education Welfare Officer, so that we can implement an Attendance Agreement for your child.

I am sure that you view attendance at school as very important and appreciate that this level of attendance will have a detrimental effect on your child’s progress at school.

If you have any concerns about your child’s attendance, or if you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to speak to your child’s teacher.

Yours sincerely

Miss Patricia Toal

Appendix 3

Model Letter - Medical evidence letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The attached registration certificate shows that your child’s attendance has fallen below ??%.

Most of the absences have been due to illness and with this level of absence we know parents will be concerned and probably consult the family doctor.

We will monitor your child's attendance over the next few weeks and may, in future, request confirmation that they have been to the doctor - evidence, such as a named appointment card or a copy of a prescription will be acceptable to show that the illness has been addressed.

We would ask you to encourage excellent attendance from this point forward so that your child's overall attendance rate improves over the next half term. Research shows that poor attendance has a detrimental effect on the progress children make at school.

Thank you for your support in helping your child to improve their attendance.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please con... or make an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Patricia Toal
Headteacher

Appendix 4

Model letter - Persistent lateness

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: XXXXXX, DOB: XXXXXX – XXXXX

I have been looking through the registers and noted that XXXXX has been late on at least XXXX occasions this academic year and I have enclosed a copy of XXXXX's registration certificate so you can clearly see when he arrived into school late.

Good punctuality sets a positive pattern for the future, leads to good attendance, better achievement, and enables your child to meet with friends before school.

Arriving late also disrupts the lesson for everyone and can be embarrassing for both you and your child.

Our school day starts at 8.50am and each child should be in the playground ready to line up with the rest of their class at this time.

Any pupil who arrives into school after 8.50am should go through the main office and sign into the school late book.

If you would like to come into school for a meeting to discuss how we can support you to ensure that XXXXXX attends school on time each day, please contact the school office to arrange a time.

Yours sincerely

Miss Patricia Toal