

SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Staff member with responsibility:	Kate Ross, Deputy Head
Reviewed by:	Pastoral Board
Policy agreed date:	November 2018
Next review date:	November 2021

1. ETHOS STATEMENT

Sutton Grammar School firmly believes that academic achievement is directly linked to regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To achieve this, we do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. Students are expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers are required to contact the school at the earliest opportunity.

2. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE LAW

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at the school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence and could be liable to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

In line with the Education (Student Registration) Regulations (2006), all unexplained absences of 10 sessions or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority who have a duty to make sure that parents/carers carry out this responsibility. In Sutton, this duty is carried out by the Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS).

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(3.1) Students, including those in the Sixth Form, are expected to:

- Attend school regularly, aiming for 100% attendance
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the school day
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor or Head of Year any problems that might affect their school attendance
- Sign in at the main office if arriving to school after their morning tutor session has ended
- Sign out at the main office if they are leaving school for a planned absence, illness etc
- Ensure that all written notifications of absence are passed to the relevant people

(3.2) Parents/carers with day to day responsibility for a student will:

- Support regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child/children arrive for school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework that has been set
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of their student's absence by 8.30am if this is unforeseen absence (if the absence is known about in advance, please see Section 5)
- Ensure that for an absence of 2 or more days they give their child a written note to bring in to the school on their return to explain their absence

- Ensure that the student is not taken out of school, unless in exceptional circumstances
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- Respond to school correspondence regarding attendance and punctuality

(3.3) The school will:

- Provide a safe environment for all students
- Keep regular and accurate records of am/pm session attendance and punctuality for all students, including the Sixth Form
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a student fails to attend school and no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up on all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Monitor every student's attendance and punctuality
- Make enquiries to parents/carers of any students who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concern and clarifying the school's and Local Authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Liaise with Sutton's Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS) to follow up concerns about attendance. Failure by the family to comply with the support put in place by the school and Local Authority may result in further action
- Encourage and celebrate 100% attendance
- Provide regular updates to parents/carers regarding their child's attendance through the HTR/SFR reporting cycle

(3.4) The Pastoral Team, led by the Deputy Head, will:

- Oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually for all year groups, including the Sixth Form; and that explanations are received for all absences
- Monitor attendance of all year groups every 5 weeks to identify any issues of concern
- Ensure that parents/carers are contacted in cases of unexplained absences and lateness
- Send letters to parents/carers where attendance is causing concern
- Have 1 to 1 meetings with students whose attendance falls below 90%
- Request parental meetings with students whose attendance falls below 90% on a half-termly basis
- Monitor the punctuality of all students on a weekly basis and identify any students who are a cause for concern
- Contact home and carry out the relevant sanctions when necessary regarding regular lateness

- (3.5) Form tutors and subject teachers will:
- Complete registers accurately and punctually using SIMS Lesson Monitor, including the Sixth Form, within 10 minutes of the lesson starting
 - Investigate any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the Head of Year/Head of Faculty
 - Contact the main office if a student, who has been registered in school, fails to turn up to their lesson
 - Inform their Head of Year/Head of Faculty of any concerns that they may have regarding a student's attendance or punctuality

4. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

(4.1) Attendance registers:

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on the register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day, the tutor period, and again during the afternoon tutor period. This includes the Sixth Form.

Any student who is on the register must be marked with one of the DfE approved attendance codes (see Appendix 1).

(4.2) Unplanned absence:

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the main school office; ideally by 8.30am.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. In these cases the school may ask parents/carers to provide verifications from a GP or other relevant body.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If this is the case, parents/carers will be notified in advance of the absence being marked as unauthorised.

(4.3) Medical, dental or other appointments:

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is recorded as an authorised absence, however advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents/carers should confirm in writing the reason for the planned absence, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to the destination. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. This written confirmation should be brought to the main school office by their child or given to their form tutor.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make such appointments out of school hours where possible. Where it is not possible, students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Students must sign out at the main school office on leaving the school and sign back in on their return.

(4.4) Illness during the school day: if a child becomes ill during the school day, they must ask for permission to go to the main office and, if necessary, the parents/carers will

be contacted for the child to go home. Children must never contact parents/carers directly to make arrangements to go home.

- (4.5) **Responding to Non Attendance:** if a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. However if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedures apply: on the first day of absence if no note or telephone call has been received by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact the parent/carer by phone or email; a message will be left if no contact can be made. On the second day of absence the same procedure will be followed. If, after two days of absence there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss their concerns with a member of the Pastoral Team. Parents/carers will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS).
- (4.6) **Following up absences:** the school will follow up any absence to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absences is authorised or not and identify the correct attendance code. This action is done on a two week cycle by form tutors when they review their registers. Heads of Year monitor the reviewing of registers and support the process when necessary.
- (4.7) **Punctuality:** the school strongly believes in the importance of punctuality and that morning tutor registration is an important session. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. The school expects all students to be at school in time for the start of the school day at 8.30am. If a student is not present in their form registration by the time the session has ended (8.37am), they will be recorded as late ('L'). Registers close at 9.30am and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence ('U').
- Lateness reports are run for all year groups on a weekly basis by the Pastoral Team and persistent lateness by a student is investigated with possible further sanctions. On occasion, persistent lateness may be referred to the Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS).
- Once a student accrues 3 instances of being late to registration, their form tutor will contact Parents/carers to express concern over their punctuality and inform them that they are nearing the threshold for a Pastoral leader detention.
- If a student is late on 6 separate occasions, they will receive a Pastoral Leader detention of 45minutes; their Head of Year will send a letter home informing Parents/carers of this.
- If a student is late on 9 separate occasions, they will receive a Deputy Head late detention of 45 minutes; the Deputy Head will send a letter home informing Parents/carers of this. For senior students, certain privileges (e.g. leaving school at lunchtime) may well be revoked.
- If a student is late on 12 separate occasions, they will receive a School Detention; the Deputy Head will send a letter home informing Parents/carers of this. A meeting will also be requested with parents/carers to discuss the student's punctuality and

put a plan in place to address this. If a student receives three separate School Detentions, they will be placed on internal exclusion for one day with the Deputy Head.

5. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headmaster is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an Absence Request Form must be completed prior to the leave date and where possible at least two weeks before. These forms can be obtained from the website or the main school office. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and the relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headmaster's discretion.

6. FAILURE TO ENSURE REGULAR ATTENDANCE: LEGAL SANCTIONS

The Sutton Grammar School Trust can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be paid directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headmaster, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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
- Persistently arriving late at school after the morning tutor session has ended

If the payment has not been made within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

7. FREQUENT ABSENCE

When any child is absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents/carers should contact a member of the Pastoral Team who will work with them to support their child's regular attendance.

8. PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A student becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more days schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considered to be hugely damaging to a child's educational prospects.

The Pastoral Team monitors attendance and absence levels thoroughly. Any cases that are seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or are at risk of moving towards that

mark will be addressed by the team. In the first instance the form tutor will contact home to express concerns over the attendance levels; if the level of absence continues a letter will be sent home by the student's Head of Year to invite parents/carers to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

9. CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the Headmaster in writing as soon as possible. A student will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known and has changed

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date of their child. Following this date the student's records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by the Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS).

10. DELETIONS FROM THE ADMISSIONS REGISTER

A student can be lawfully deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.

11. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to our safeguarding policy.

APPENDIX 1: The following are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

Attendance codes:

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 [‘B’ will also be used in the lesson attendance codes for an educational activity occurring during a timetabled lesson e.g. music or LAMDA lesson]
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

Absence codes:

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 GCSEs [This also covers Year 10-13 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 reason emerges)
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