

SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Staff member with responsibility:	Kate Ross, Deputy Head
Reviewed by:	The Trust Board
Policy agreed date:	July 2024
Next review date:	July 2026

1. POLICY AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

- This policy is based on Government Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: 'Working together to improve school attendance' (2024)¹
- Sutton Grammar School is committed to ensuring that all students have high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a student to achieve their full educational potential; it ensures continuity of learning which supports progress and academic outcomes; continuity of friendships; supports emotional wellbeing; and establishes good habits for later in life
- All students at the school are expected to aim for 100% attendance and punctuality
- The school recognises that there can be exceptional circumstances when a leave of absence may be required; however these are rare and should not cause a student's attendance to drop towards 95%
- Attendance of 90% and below is a cause for concern and is classed as persistent absence by the Department for Education
- Attendance of 90% means that the equivalent of one day every fortnight is being missed due to absence
- Attendance of 80% means that a full year's education would be lost between Years 7 and 11
- Attendance of 50% or less (where a student is absent more than they are present) is classed as severe absence by the Department for Education
- It is expected that all students aim for at least 97% attendance each year
 - 97%-100% is defined as expected
 - 94%-96% is defined as satisfactory
 - Below 90% is defined as a cause for concern
- It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend on time every day that the school is open
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Deputy Head: pastoral@suttongrammar.sutton.sch.uk

2. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Process of recording attendance:

- Registration is completed in each lesson using SIMS Lesson Monitor
- The legally required morning and afternoon register is taken in registration periods at 8.30am and 1.42pm respectively
- Sixth Form students with 'exeat' privileges will register at 1.42pm before leaving school at the end of the afternoon registration period
- For morning registration, the register will be opened and taken at 8.30am. The register for morning registration will close at 9am

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

- If a student arrives at school after 8.30am, the student must sign in at the school office. They will be marked as late (L) in the register
- If a student arrives after the registers close they will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U)
- For afternoon registration, the register will be taken at 1.42pm. It will be opened at 1.42pm and close at 1.58pm
- If a student arrives at afternoon registration after 1.42pm they will be marked as late (L) in the register
- If a student arrives after the registers close they will be marked as unauthorised absence (U)
- Those students who leave site before the end of the day must sign out at the school office

Recording student absence

- Is a student has an unexpected absence (e.g. illness):
 - Parents must notify the school by **9am on each day of absence** by emailing: absences@suttongrammar.school or calling: 020 8642 3821 (pressing 1 for student absence)
 - If no contact is received by parents, the School's Attendance Officer will contact parents of students with an unexplained absence by email on the first day of absence
 - If no response is received by the next school day and the student is still absent, the School's Attendance Officer will phone home
 - If the absence continues, after 3 days the Head of Year will contact parents
- The Attendance Officer codes all absences in accordance with the Department for Education national codes
- **Only in exceptional circumstances will an expected leave of absence be granted by the Headmaster². Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headmaster to determine the length of time the student can be away from school.**
- To request an expected leave of absence (e.g. for doctor's appointments, music examinations, an interview) requests should be made via email to absences@suttongrammar.school
- Appointments during the school day should be avoided
- If there are very exceptional circumstances where parents must request a longer leave of absence, they must do so by completing Absence Request Form (Appendix A). These forms can be obtained from the website or the main school office. Completed absence forms should be either returned to the main office or emailed to: absences@suttongrammar.school. Where possible such requests should be made at least **two weeks in advance**.

² The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, amended in September 2013, make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

- The Headmaster will then write to parents to inform them of his decision with regards the request for leave of absence
- Generally the school does not consider a holiday or absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance and so therefore it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted in these instances.
- If the student is absent during this period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the following action will be taken:
 - You will receive a letter from the Headmaster
 - You will be asked to attend an attendance meeting in school
 - The matter may be referred to the London Borough of Sutton's School Attendance Service for consideration for a fixed Penalty Notice (see Appendix A)
- For any absence the school reserves the right to request evidence for unexpected or expected absence. This could include, for example, medical evidence, an appointment card or letter or details of travel arrangements
- If permission is granted for an absence during term time, it is the responsibility of the students to obtain work before going and/or to copy up notes/classwork on return
- If the absence is caused by prolonged illness, the Head of Year will liaise with parents to ensure that work is provided
- 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.

3. Punctuality

- The school recognises that there might be occasions where students may arrive late to school and that this cannot be helped because of external issues. However, these are rare events.
- If a student arrives late to school 3 times across a term a 30 minutes Pastoral Detention will be issued
- Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers
- If a student arrives late to school 6 times across a term a 45 minutes Pastoral Detention will be issued and support strategies will be put in place (e.g. a punctuality report); certain privileges (e.g. leaving school at lunchtime) will also be revoked
- If a student is late to school 9 times across a term a 90 minute School Detention will be issued and a formal meeting will be arranged between the student, Head of Year and Deputy Head; and a support plan put in place to address this
- If a student's punctuality continues to be a cause for concern, and all support plans have been considered, not successful or not engaged with, the school will work with the local education authority and, if necessary, consider a fixed penalty notice

4. Monitoring attendance and punctuality:

School attendance and punctuality data is monitored:

- Daily and weekly by form tutors

- Weekly by the Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams
 - Half-termly by Heads of Year and the Deputy Head
 - Termly and yearly by the Deputy Head and Trust
- The Deputy Head will meet with Heads of Year and the Head of Sixth Form to discuss attendance and punctuality regarding their respective year groups; reviewing both individual student data as well as year group data
 - Attendance data will be benchmarked against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement (at whole school, year group and cohort level)
 - The Deputy Head will use the data to review and monitor school attendance strategies
 - Attendance data is reported to the Trust and submitted to the Department for Education on a termly basis

5. Supporting Attendance and Punctuality

- Good attendance is recognised and celebrated by Heads of Year through communication home; and by form tutors in individual conversations and form extraction with students
- When attendance data highlights concerns with an individual student's attendance levels, then intervention and support is put in place by the Pastoral Team; initially the form tutor, and then the Heads of Year and the Deputy Head if attendance levels continue to fall
- The school will work at all stages with the student and parents to help develop effective intervention strategies
- If absence continues the school will work with external organisations and with the school's Allocated Attendance Officer to explore further strategies
- If the support has not been effective, or not been engaged with, the school will work with the Local Authority to put formal support on place in the form of an attendance contract or an Education Supervision Order (ESO) and/or fixed penalty notice will be given
- If a student's attendance continues to be a serious cause for concern and if all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed; or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case, the Headmaster will discuss with the Local Authority prosecution to protect the student's right to an education
- The school's approach to attendance can be found in Appendix C
- If a student's attendance drops below 95% in the Sixth Form, they may have privileges such as early release removed until their attendance increases. If their attendance drops below 90% this may result in sanctions being escalated. These could include a discussion as to whether the student should be entered for their formal examinations at the end of their programme of study; the school requesting the student pays for their own exam entries and/or the student's position in the Sixth Form may be reviewed. This will be done on a case by case basis

6. Parental Engagement

- Parents should contact their child's form tutor or Head of Year if they have any concerns that their child is reluctant to come to school; has started to refuse to come to school; or shows anxiety around schooling. It is important that the school is aware so that help and

support can be put in place as early as possible. Contact information for key pastoral staff, including Heads of Year, can be found on the school website.

- Parents should encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality by: ensuring that medical or dental appointments are taken outside of school time where possible; not taking any trips or holiday in term time; ensuring that your child is on time for school every day; not allowing time off for very minor illnesses or complaints

7. Statutory Intervention

- Once the school has utilised all support measures fully and they have not been successful; or if support measures are not being engaged with, the school, working in conjunction with the London Borough of Sutton, may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers
- All schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where a student reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. This threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence; these sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence take in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.
- Local Authorities have the power to serve **each parent** with a penalty notice in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- The amount payable on issue of a first Penalty notice is £160, if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice. This amount is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within the first 21 days
- A second penalty notice (within 3 years) issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent with respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first. If the threshold is met for a third within 3 years, alternative legal intervention will be taken, this may include cases being presented straight to a Magistrate' Court.
- Further information about Penalty Notices can be found on the London Borough of Sutton Website³

8. Students with Medical or Special Educational Needs

- Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions, mental ill health or who have special educational needs or disabilities

³ [PN - CODE OF CONDUCT 2024](#)

- When working together to improve attendance with these students, the school will be mindful of these barriers and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access full-time education
- The school will adopt a personalised approach in each case, liaising with both the student and parents/carers to ensure the most effective support is put in place
- Such support may include: a HCP; a phased return to school; access to pastoral support; making referrals where appropriate
- Where students are unable to attend school because of health needs, the school will ensure that the student can access appropriate education; and will liaise with parents/carers and medical staff where appropriate to respond to any changing health needs
- All support is monitored and reviewed by the SENDCo and the Deputy Head
- For all students with medical needs, the school follows DfE guidance: 'Supporting students with medical conditions at school'

9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to our Safeguarding Policy; and Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy.

APPENDIX A: Absence Request Form

Sutton Grammar School Absence Request Form

Student name:	1.	Form:
	2.	Form:
	3.	Form:

Requested dates of absence from school

From **To**

Number of days absent

Reasons for requesting absence during term time and why this is an exceptional circumstance:

Signature of parent..... **Date**

Completed absence forms should be either returned to the main office or emailed to:
absences@suttongrammar.school

APPENDIX B: School responses to punctuality concerns

Students are expected to arrive to school on time every day. Morning registration will take place at 8.30-8.37am and afternoon registration at 1.42-1.58pm. A warning bell will go at 8.28am and 1.40pm to alert students to the need to go to registration.

Stage 1	<p>If a student is late to school, the school office will remind the student of the importance of arriving to school on time</p> <p>The second time a student arrives late to school without a valid reason the parents/FT/HOY will receive an email informing them of this. The email will be sent by the Pastoral and Student Support Officer.</p> <p>The form tutor speak to the student about the importance of punctuality</p>
Stage 2	<p>If a student is late to school on 3 separate occasions in one term a 30 minute Pastoral Detention will be issued</p> <p>Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers</p>
Stage 3	<p>If a student is late to school on 6 separate occasions in one term a 45 minute Pastoral Detention will be issued</p> <p>Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers</p> <p>HOY will make a phone call home to discuss punctuality concerns with parents/carers</p> <p>Support strategies will be put in place (e.g. a punctuality report); certain privileges (e.g. leaving school at lunchtime) may also be revoked</p>
Stage 4	<p>If a student is late to school on 9 separate occasions in one term a 90 minute School Detention will be issued</p> <p>Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers</p> <p>A formal meeting will be arranged between the student, Head of Year and Deputy Head; and a support plan put in place to address this</p> <p>Parents/carers will be informed of the support plan and their role in this</p>

If there is no improvement in punctuality, the school will contact the local authority's School Attendance Support Team.

APPENDIX C: School approach to attendance

Appendix D outlines the school’s general approach to attendance. It is important to note that this table is intended as a guideline; and individual approaches will be dependent upon the individual circumstances of each case.

Attendance percentage	Staff responsible	Responses
100%-95%	Form tutor Head of Year	<p>Form tutors tracks and monitors attendance weekly; discusses any concerns with individual students and HOYs</p> <p>Routines and expectations are set out clearly through assemblies, The Hoot, the Home-School Agreement; and reinforced</p> <p>Excellent attendance is celebrated by the Pastoral Team through form extraction, assemblies and letters home</p>
95%-90%	Head of Year	<p>Heads of Year review and monitor attendance data to identify students who have fallen to 95- 90% attendance</p> <p>Heads of Year to ask form tutors to discuss attendance concerns with students 93-95% attendance and identify reasons and if any additional support is needed.</p> <p>Head of Year to call parents of those students 92-90% attendance to discuss reasons for absence/barriers to attendance and intervention strategies and support that can be offered (e.g. pastoral support; PSSO; ELSA; EWP; Ed Psych; mentor; report card)</p> <p>Consideration of SEND/EHCP</p> <p>Actions and interventions agreed by Head of Year and parents.</p> <p>1:1 meetings between student and Head of Year to review action plan and progress.</p> <p>Heads of Year to discuss whole cohort and individual student data with Head of Sixth Form/Deputy Head; and discuss intervention strategies</p> <p>Improvements in attendance celebrated</p>
Below 90% (persistent and severe concerns)	Head of Year Head of Sixth Form Deputy Head	<p>A formal telephone conversation or an in-school meeting between the student and parent/carer and the Head of Year, Deputy Head or Head of Sixth Form to discuss further the reasons for absence/barriers for attendance; talk through the support already in place and possible adaptations to this; as well as explore the setting of attendance targets.</p> <p>Intervention strategies and work with pastoral team external agencies to continue/be extended (e.g. CAMHS; Ed Psych; ELSA; PSSO)</p>

		<p>Ongoing and regular monitoring and reviewing of progress and attendance levels by Head of Year; ongoing communication home</p> <p>Request for medical evidence for future absencesIf concerns over attendance continue (e.g. attendance targets are not met), discussions with the school's Allocated Attendance Officer to explore further strategies. Explanation of possibility of legal consequences and the issuing of a PN.</p>
Below 80%	Deputy Head	If attendance continues to fall below 80%, Deputy Head and EWO to meet with student and parent/carers. Consideration of issue of a PN.
Below 50%	Deputy Head	<p>Formal support put in place e.g. parenting contracts; through an Education Supervision Order</p> <p>Penalty Notice issued where support measures have not been successful; or if support measures are not being engaged with; or if support measures are not appropriate</p> <p>Statutory support through Children's Services</p> <p>Prosecution of parents as a last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed</p>