SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Staff member with responsibility:	Kate Ross, Deputy Head
Reviewed by:	The Trust Board
Policy agreed date:	July 2026
Next review date:	July 2028

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' (2026)[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. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

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 TRUST BOARD

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure that the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data presented by the Senior Leadership Team
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance and punctuality is monitored by the full Trust Board.

3.2 THE HEADTEACHER

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and overseeing reports to the Trust Board
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance and punctuality strategies
- considering requests for leave of exceptional absence alongside other senior leaders
- requesting and issuing fixed-penalty notices via the Local Authority, and authorising the deputy headteacher to be able to do so
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority where relevant including: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times; providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days; and providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 T HE DESIGNATED SENIOR LEADER FOR RESPONSIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE:

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- leading and championing attendance and punctuality across the school
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, including by benchmarking school attendance data against local, regional and national levels to identify possible areas for improvement
- overseeing and analysing attendance data
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance or punctuality
- providing required attendance and punctuality reports to the Head and Trustees, including analysis of the attendance of specific groups such as disadvantaged or SEND cohorts
- working with parents/carers, Heads of Year, the broader pastoral team, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Local Authority to discuss and tackle attendance concerns where needed
- advising the Head when to request that the Local Authority should issue a fixed-penalty notice

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs K Ross, Deputy Head.

3.4 HEADS OF YEAR

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance and punctuality of their year group, including all key groups, (including our young carers; pupils with a social worker; pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding); identifying any emerging attendance and punctuality concerns
- Working with pupils and parents, and other relevant staff (e.g. SENDCO; Pastoral and Student Support Officers) to address concerns and resolve problems
- Working with the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and punctuality in addressing concerning patterns of absence or punctuality, or persistent absence
- Meeting with the school's Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate to discuss specific attendance and punctuality concerns
- Supporting pupils back into school after an extended period of absence

3.5 FORM TUTORS

- Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance and punctuality each day via the school's MIS system, using the correct codes, and submitting this information at the start of each tutor period.
- Any pupil arriving after the registration bell has sounded, whatever the reason, must be marked as late.

3.6 SCHOOL OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF (INCLUDING ATTENDANCE OFFICER)

They will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record appropriate notes on the school's MIS system
- contact the parents of children who have not arrived at school and have not been reported absent

- administer parental requests for leave of absence in advance of any planned absence
- refer queries from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance and punctuality
- provide administrative support to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and members of the Pastoral Team, including Heads of Year, in relation to attendance and punctuality
- administer amendments to registers
- Support the preparations of applications for fixed-penalty notices on behalf of the Head and Deputy Head

3.7 PARENTS

Parents will ensure that:

- Their child attends every day and every morning and afternoon registration on time
- Inform the school of their child's absence before 8am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that , wherever possible, appointments are made outside of the school day to help avoid unnecessary disruption to their child's education

3.8 PUPILS

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled morning and afternoon registration on time
- Attend every timetabled lesson on time

4. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Process of recording attendance:

- Registration is completed in each lesson usingthe school's MIS system
- 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
- If a pupil 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 pupil 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 pupil arrives at afternoon registration after 1.42pm they will be marked as late (L) in the register

- If a pupil arrives after the registers close they will be marked as unauthorised absence (U)
- Those pupils who leave site before the end of the day must sign out at the school office

Recording student absence

- If a pupil has an unexpected absence (e.g. illness):
  - Parents must notify the school by **8am on each day of absence** by emailing: absences@suttongrammar.school or calling: 020 8642 3821 (pressing 3 for student absence); or via the Arbor Parent App
  - If no contact is received by parents, the School's Attendance Officer will contact parents of pupils 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
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where there are doubts about the authenticity of an illness, the school will ask for medical evidence such as a doctor's notes, appointment card or prescription. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- Parents should consult the NHS guidance: Is my child too ill for school? When deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness[2]
- 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 a daytime appointment cannot be avoided, pupils should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend school before/after their appointment
- **Only in exceptional circumstances will an expected leave of absence be granted by the Headteacher;** and only if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 attendance regulations[3]
- **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 Headteacher to determine the length of time the student can be away from school.**
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- 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

[2] https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

[3] These circumstances are: taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad; attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution; study leave; a temporary, part-time timetable; exceptional circumstances.

can be obtained from the website.. 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**. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

- The parents will then be contacted to inform them of the 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 pupil is absent during this period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the following action will be taken:
    - You will receive communication from the school
    - You may 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 pupils 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.

5. Punctuality

- The school recognises that there might be occasions where pupils may arrive late to school and that this cannot be helped because of external issues. However, these are rare events.
- If a pupil arrives late to school 3 times across a term a 30 minutes Pastoral Detention will be issued
- Pupils will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers
- If a pupil 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 pupil 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 and theirHead of Year ; and a support plan may be put in place to address this
- If a pupil'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

6. Monitoring attendance and punctuality:

School attendance and punctuality data is monitored:

- Daily and weekly by form tutors
- Weekly by the Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams
- Fortnightly 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 to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that might need additional support with their attendance; and to identify pupils whose absences might be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severely absent; these meetings will ensure that the attendance data for all key groups, including those pupils with a social worker, young carers and pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, will be reviewed and discussed as a priority
- 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

7. 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 pupil and parents to help develop effective intervention strategies
- If absence continues the school will work with external organisations and with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) 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 pupil'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 Headteacher 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 pupil'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 done on a case by case basis.

8. 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 (see the NHS guidance: Is my child too ill for school?).

  The school will inform parents of their child's attendance and absence levels via their school reports; parents can also access their child's attendance data at any time via the Arbor Parent App.

9. 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 Website[4]

[4] https://www.cognus.org.uk/services/attendance-support-team/attendance-legal-intervention/penalty-notices/

10. Students with Medical or Special Educational Needs

- Some pupils 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
- When working together to improve attendance with these pupils, 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 pupil 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 to external agencies and other professionals where appropriate
- Where pupils are unable to attend school because of health needs, the school will ensure that the pupil 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 pupils with medical needs, the school follows DfE guidance: 'Supporting students with medical conditions at school'

11. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to our Safeguarding Policy; the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy; and Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy.

12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of every three years by the Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust.

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.s**chool**

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.

Please see below the school's response to punctuality concerns, It is important to note however that this is a guideline and the school response will be determined by staff as appropriate to the individual circumstances of the situation.

Stage 1	If a student is late to school, the school office will remind the student of the importance of arriving to school on time The second time a student arrives late to school without a valid reason the form tutor speak to the student about the importance of punctuality
Stage 2	If a student is late to school on 3 separate occasions in one term a 30 minute Pastoral Detention will be issued Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers A further, follow up conversation with the form tutor.
Stage 3	If a student is late to school on 6 separate occasions in one term a 45 minute Pastoral Detention will be issued Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers HOY will make a phone call home to discuss punctuality concerns with parents/carers Support strategies will be put in place (e.g. a punctuality report); certain privileges (e.g. leaving school at lunchtime) may also be revoked
Stage 4	If a student is late to school on 9 separate occasions in one term a 90 minute School Detention will be issued Students will be informed of their detention by an email home to parents/carers

	A formal meeting will be arranged between the student, parents and Head of Year; and a support plan put in place to address this. Continued lateness will incur further sanctions and these will be outlined at the meeting with parents.

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 C 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	HOYs and form tutors track and monitors attendance weekly; FT discusses any concerns with individual students Routines and expectations are set out clearly through assemblies, The Hoot, the Home-School Agreement; and reinforced Excellent attendance is celebrated by the Pastoral Team through form extraction, assemblies and letters home
95%-90%	Head of Year	Heads of Year review and monitor attendance data to identify students who have fallen to 95- 90% attendance Heads of Year to ask form tutors to discuss attendance concerns with students 90-95% attendance and identify reasons and if any additional support is needed. Head of Year to contact parents of those students at 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) Consideration of SEND/EHCP Actions and interventions agreed by Head of Year and parents. 1:1 meetings between student and Head of Year to review action plan and progress. Heads of Year to discuss whole cohort and individual student data with Head of Sixth Form/Deputy Head; and discuss intervention strategies

		Improvements in attendance celebrated
Below 90% (persistent and severe concerns)	Head of Year Head of Sixth Form Deputy Head	A formal telephone conversation or an in-school meeting between the student and parent/carer and the Head of Year, 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. Intervention strategies and work with pastoral team and external agencies to continue/be extended (e.g. CAMHS; Ed Psych; ELSA; PSSO) Ongoing and regular monitoring and reviewing of progress and attendance levels by Head of Year; ongoing communication home Request for medical evidence for future absences if concerns over attendance continue (e.g. attendance targets are not met), discussions with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to explore further strategies. Explanation of possibility of legal consequences and the issuing of a PN.
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	Formal support put in place e.g. parenting contracts; through an Education Supervision Order 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 Statutory support through Children's Services Prosecution of parents as a last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed