

SARRATT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date:	Sept 2024
Next Review Date:	Sept 2027

Introduction

Here at Sarratt School, we are committed to ensuring the best for all our children through working with our families. Good attendance is key in achieving this. We aim to create a welcoming culture in which good attendance is expected and valued by all members of the school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

School	**The School Will…** • Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school in which children feel valued, safe and happy. • Offer a clear vision for attendance, communicating responsibilities and expectations to all members of the community. ▪ Set an example of punctuality and good attendance. ▪ Investigate absenteeism and lateness. ▪ Support children and families where necessary to improve attendance and punctuality, liaising with outside agencies and other professionals as required. ▪ Employ a range of strategies to actively try to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual children and the whole school. ▪ Compile attendance data for the Executive Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO). ▪ Establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) • Ensure that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly. • Welcome children back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

Role of Parents and Carers	**Parents and Carers will…** ▪ Ensure that children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance, instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly. ▪ Inform the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest. ▪ Provide the school with an explanation for the absence. ▪ Inform the school of any changes to their contact details. ▪ Work in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance. ▪ Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours. ▪ Not book holidays during term-time. ▪ Actively support the work of the school. ▪ Call on staff for help when they need it. ▪ Communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

School Procedures

Encouraging Good Attendance	**The School encourages good attendance by:** • Using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences. Making sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils. • Publicising good attendance during assemblies and the termly report to the Governing Body. • Offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance.

Dealing with Lateness	▪ The School doors are opened at 8.40am and pupils are then expected to enter the school building and make their way to their classroom. ▪ Children who arrive after 8.45 am must be signed in by school for purposes of emergency evacuation etc. ▪ Pupils who arrive between 8.45 am and 9.00 am will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L). ▪ Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session. ▪ Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U). **The office staff will…** ▪ Monitor lateness and inform the Head/SLT/Teachers of patterns of lateness. ▪ Inform parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed.

Pupils who are Persistently Absent/ at risk of Persistent Absence	Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue by: ● establishing robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by: ○ sending letters to parents and carers ○ meeting with parents and carers ○ engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations ○ using fixed penalty notices ○ engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate ○ engaging governors in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Absence	• **Holidays during term time** – *changes to legislation which came into force in September 2013 made clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request you should discuss these with the Headteacher.* • **Religious Observance** – a maximum of 1 day absence is allowed for *recognised* religious observance. • **Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – *please ensure* these appointments take place out of school time in order not to disrupt your child's education.
Fixed Penalty Notices	Statement on how school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice. The National Threshold will be applied when considering Fixed Penalty Notices. This is: ● 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. ● These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. ● For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold. ● The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years. First Offence The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be: ● £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. ● If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day. Second Offence (within 3 years) The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be: ● £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days. Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court: ● Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. ● Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Part-time Timetables	• As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable. • The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday) • All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time timetables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part -time timetable.
Monitoring	We believe this policy will be effective only if it is consistently monitored across the whole school.

Headteacher:		**Date:**	
Chair of Governing Body:		**Date:**	

Appendix A

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher.
- The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where

absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Further resources

Statutory guidance

- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures

- Children missing education
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- Keeping children safe in education
- Alternative provision
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school • School exclusion

Guidance and resources

- School attendance: guidance for schools
- Checklist for school leaders to support full opening: behaviour and attendance • Mental health and wellbeing resources
- Mental health and behaviour guidance
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying
- Respectful School Communities Tool
- Skills for care: toolkit for social workers to support conversations about returning to education settings in September
- Education Endowment Foundation: research on texting parents • Education Endowment Foundation: research on parental engagement • National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England

HCC Guidance and Resources

See guidance on HCC Grid regarding Children Missing Education
https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to school/attendance/children-missing-from-education

10 Day Absence Form.

See guidance on HCC Grid for form –

https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory responsibilities

See guidance on HCC Grid when a parent is considering Elective Home Education

https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to school/attendance/elective-home-education

See letter from Jo Fisher, Director of Children's Services on HCC Grid when considering a term-time holiday –

https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to school/attendance/holidays-in-term-time

Follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a Fixed Penalty Notice - https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised absenceholiday

Follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable - https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students