

Sutton Veny CofE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Together, through **friendship**, in **peace** and with **courage**, we reach for the stars.

Colossians 3:12: '**clothe yourselves** with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness** and **patience.**'

Rationale

At Sutton Veny CofE School we understand that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children at Sutton Veny and endeavour to provide an environment where all our pupils feel happy, safe, valued and welcomed.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and punctually. Parents, carers and the school community share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

In addition, school is the foundation for preparing children and young people for life as adults. At Sutton Veny it is important that we help prepare our children for the demands of employment later in life, where regular attendance is expected, and non-attendance is unacceptable.

This policy represents our commitment to support children to achieve the highest possible attendance. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake, including strategies to improve attendance and the benefits of attending school regularly. Furthermore, the policy explains the sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and updated annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Aims

At Sutton Veny we believe that the foundation for good attendance is based on a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. This includes clear communication with our families regarding our expectations of what is required to secure positive attendance for pupils at our school. We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance and we will:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Promote high levels of attendance through our newsletters and via our school website
- Promote good attendance to reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Include attendance information in school reports about your child's performance in school and how any absence may be affecting their attainment
- Act early to address any patterns of absence
- Support parents and carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Work with you and your child to achieve the maximum attendance possible

At Sutton Veny School we expect:

- The children to arrive at school every day on time
- Parents and carers to work with the school to ensure that their child attends regularly
- Parents and carers to contact the school and share any factors that may be affecting their ability to get their child to school on time, or attending regularly

Legislation and Guidance

This Attendance Policy meets the requirements of the DfE guidance: '[Working Together to Improve School attendance](#): Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.' The guidance is statutory and effective from 19 August 2024.

The guidance is clear that improving attendance is everybody's business. It provides a framework that local authorities, schools, governing bodies and trusts must have regard to in order to support and maintain high levels of school attendance.

"Recognise that absence is a symptom and that improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare." Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE February 2024

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.

The law says that ensuring a child receives education is a parent or carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act). For most parents and carers this means registering their child at a school. Permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law and parents and carers who do not secure their child's regular attendance at school, may be issued with a Penalty Notice, or referred to the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service for prosecution in the magistrates' court.

To avoid this, we will work with parents and carers to address irregular or poor attendance to ensure full-time attendance.

- Authorised absences are those that have been agreed by the headteacher.
- Unauthorised absences are those where no valid reason has been provided for absence, or absence which the headteacher has not agreed.

Working in Partnerships – Roles and Responsibilities

At Sutton Veny School attendance is the business of everyone in our school community. The governors and all staff are committed to supporting all pupils to achieve excellent attendance and regularly review school procedures and strategies to support this.

Parents and Carers

We expect that parents and carers will work with us if school absence becomes a concern. Parents and carers can help to promote positive attendance by:

- Ensuring children arrive at school on time, before registers close, appropriately dressed and ready to learn (e.g. not too tired or too hungry) and with the right equipment they need for the school day
- Supporting their child to attend school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to help their child gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Working in partnership with us to take an active interest in their child's education
- Working in partnership with us and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance, which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix A), and submitting this information to the school office. Where class teachers are not aware of the reason for absence an N code should be used until the reason for absence is established.

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 children
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary and appropriate

The School Attendance Officer

The school's Attendance Officer is Mrs Laura Coughlan, who:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual level, including analysing groups of children
- Reports any concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. At Sutton Veny a nominated governor is responsible for monitoring the school's attendance policy and processes and feeding relevant information back to the Full Governing Body.

School Procedures

Our school attendance target is 96%, this is agreed by the Governing Body and is set so that it is both achievable and matches the aspirations for the children in the school.

This means that we are expecting every child to have 100% attendance. Children who miss just 3 days of school in a school year will contribute to the school not achieving this attendance target.

Legally the school register must be taken twice a day.

At Sutton Veny the register is taken at 8.45 am (morning registration time) and once during the afternoon session at 1.15 pm. The register will remain open for 15 minutes in the morning, after 8.45am, when the school bell rings. Pupils arriving before registers close will be marked as late. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (late after registers close but before the end of the morning session). A U code counts as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session.

Absence is recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as unauthorised absent. Ongoing and repeated lateness after the close of registration is considered as unauthorised absence and may be taken into account if any legal action is taken.

We will contact parents to address and improve attendance where:

- A child's attendance falls below 95%
- A child has 3 weeks or more in a term where they have not achieved full attendance. There are 6 terms in a school year
- A child has more than 5 recorded late codes in a term
- A child has a regular pattern of absence
- Siblings have a consistent pattern of absence

Parents are asked to:

- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first and subsequent days of absence. Parents should aim to make contact with school before the start of the school day, or at least within the first hour of the school day.
- Keep the school informed, in cases of ongoing absence. A note from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always remain with the school.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments outside of school hours unless there is urgent need for an appointment.
- Provide evidence of medical appointments that take place within school hours.
- Tell the school if their child is going to be late, the reason why and expected time of arrival. Only request leave of absence, or holiday in term time if it is for an exceptional circumstance. The process for requesting leave of absence is explained further in this policy.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Family celebrations, including birthdays
- Needing a day off due to being tired
- Staying at home because a sibling is unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (after the register has closed at 9.00am)
- Death of a pet

We will contact the parent or carer if a child is absent and they have not advised school that the child will absent. Parents can expect contact on every occasion where they have not notified the school of an absence. The school's attendance officer will initially phone parents within 45 minutes of registers closing. If we cannot speak directly with parents or carers, then we will make contact with nominated emergency contacts to establish the reason for absence; this is in line with school safeguarding procedures.

If after 3 days of absence, your child has not been seen and no contact has been made with the school, a home visit will be made by school staff, to ascertain the safety and well-being of your child and establish the reason for absence from school.

After 10 days of unexplained absence and no contact with the school, we are obliged to notify the local authority. The local authority will follow their procedures for Children Missing from Education (CME) and parents may expect contact and visits from an Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the well-being and safety of your child.

Collecting your Child from School

We ask that all parents or carers ensure that they are able to collect their children from school on time. School finishes at 3.15pm. If parents are unable to collect their child as usual, then they will need to communicate the alternative arrangements they have made with the school. If arriving late to collect their child, parents and carers will need to notify the school, so we can reassure the child and prevent them from worrying.

We will not release children in these circumstances to anyone who we have not been advised of. If children remain uncollected from school, the protocol is to keep the children safe in school and contact parents or carers by telephone. If we are unable to make contact with parents and carers, we will contact the emergency contacts on the child's school record.

Monitoring Attendance

Weekly monitoring of the registers will be made by the Attendance Officer to analyse overall absence for each pupil and identify pupils with low attendance, a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), patterns and levels of broken weeks, lateness, authorised absence and unauthorised absence and reasons for absence.

A child is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, whether it be authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and we need parents and carers full support and encouragement to tackle it. Persistently absent children are tracked and monitored carefully and we combine this with tracking academic progress to assess the effect on the pupil's attainment.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. The Attendance Officer will be responsible for putting in place actions for each child of concern. Initially, we will try to resolve the problem with parents or carers to see if there is any underlying reason for the absences. In the first instance the school will offer support to see how we can work in partnership with our families to improve a child's attendance.

Where concerns about attendance continue, we may need to escalate our school response to absences. This may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health and a school attendance meeting may be arranged. However, if the pattern continues, the school may make a referral to the Local Authority for interventions that may include penalty notices and court action. (See Appendix B for a flow chart of the stages school will go through to address any concerns about attendance).

Requesting Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

In accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, leave of absence from school, including for holidays in term-time, may only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form (see Appendix A), which must outline the exceptional circumstances for which the leave has been requested. Leave of absence request forms must be completed in advance of the dates requested.

We require one week's notice unless the absence is related to an emergency. As a school, we do not give retrospective agreement for leave of absence, so any absence not advised to the school in advance will be unauthorised. Requests will be considered by the headteacher and parents and carers will be advised if the request is authorised, or not.

Any pupil who has taken a term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence if they are ill in the period directly before or after the dates advised to school. Parents and carers will be asked to provide evidence if a pupil does not return to school on the agreed date following a holiday as a result of delayed or cancelled flights or other travel arrangements. Where an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, parents may be issued with a penalty notice if the absence is longer than five school days.

Consequences of Persistent Absence

At Sutton Veny School, we will always work with you to address any attendance concerns. If we have been unable to resolve the issue, despite a number of interventions, then we may have to refer you to the local authority. The Education Welfare Service has a range of actions available, which include penalty notices.

Penalty Notices

The Department for Education has issued a national framework and the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2024 which govern how and when penalty notices may be used. All local authorities and schools must work within the new framework.

This means that whenever a pupil accrues 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a school must consider whether a penalty notice should be issued. The unauthorised absence can relate to unexplained absence, absence that the school has not agreed to, including for a holiday in term time, or a pupil being late after the register closes.

Where a pupil has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks that is NOT related to a holiday in term time we may issue you with a Notice to Improve. This will provide you with an opportunity to engage with support to improve your child's attendance. If support is not working then we will refer the matter to the local authority who may decide to issue a penalty notice to you.

Where there are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period as a result of a holiday taken in term time the absence will be notified to the local authority, who may issue a penalty notice without further warning.

Each parent can receive a penalty notice for each child that has unauthorised absence. For example 2 parents with 2 children who take a holiday in term time can expect to receive 4 penalty notices.

The new framework allows for parents to receive a maximum of 2 penalty notices for each of their children in a 3 year period.

The first penalty notice issued in respect of an individual child will be in the sum of £160 to be paid within 2 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second penalty notice issued in respect of the same child within 3 years shall be in the sum of £160. If the national threshold is met on a third or subsequent occasion in 3 years then the local authority may present the matter to the magistrates' court.

or

The local authority may initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, imposition of orders such as Parenting Orders or even imprisonment.

or

In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Strategies for Improving and Maintaining Good Attendance

At Sutton Veny we place great value on school attendance as it impacts on many aspects of a child's development. We are a kind and caring school community where the needs of all pupils are carefully considered. The school provides and promotes a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that pupils feel happy, safe and know that their presence is valued.

If there are specific issues which might impact on your child's attendance, it is important that you talk to us so that we can support you and your child.

There may be times when we ask other agencies to become involved to help us understand and work with you to encourage regular school attendance (e.g. Wiltshire Council, School Nurse, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Service, Medical Needs Reintegration Service). If we feel that this would be helpful, we will discuss with you first.

We are very keen to listen to the views of children and parents regarding attendance matters and we welcome any feedback, which helps us to shape how we work with families to address any attendance issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The attendance policy will be reviewed annually by governors and school staff to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the school community. We will ensure that the policy reflects current DfE and Local Authority guidance so that parents may be assured of the standards that we strive to achieve.

Communicating the Contents of the Attendance Policy

All new parents are introduced to the policy and information on attendance is communicated in the school induction pack. It is also accessible on the school website. School attendance will feature in the school newsletter and we will advise parents of any changes to our policy and procedures.

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: 4/12/24
Last reviewed on:	December 2024	
Next review due by:	December 2025	

- **Parents and Carers complete this side of the form**
- **School will complete the form overleaf and return it to you**

Leave of Absence during Term Time Exceptional Circumstances Form

Amended attendance regulations came into force on 19th August 2024.

- We are unable to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- **We cannot grant leave for the purposes of a family holiday, family day out or birthday celebrations**
- We determine the number of school days a child can be away from School when leave is granted

Exceptional Circumstances (your reason) for applying for leave of absence during term time:
Please provide details of the special circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Taking your child out of School during term time may harm your child’s academic progress and attainment

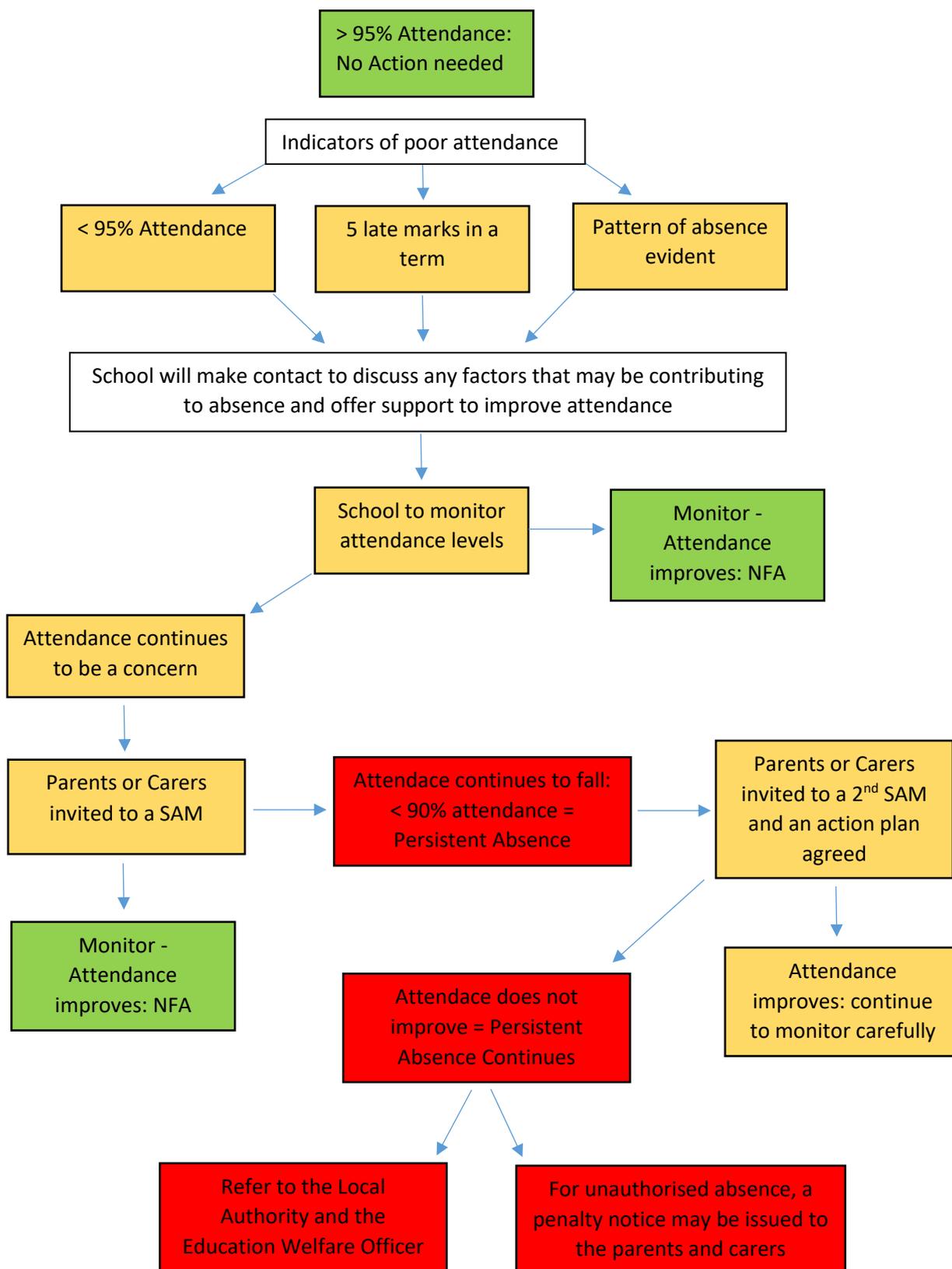
Name of Child(ren):	
Date of Birth:	
Class:	
Date of First day of Absence:	
Date of Return:	
No. of days requested:	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Signed by the Parent/Carer: **Date:**

Please return this form to the School Office and a copy will be returned to you with a reply overleaf

Appendix B

Sutton Veny CofE primary School - Attendance Process Flow Chart



Please note: A penalty notice can be issued immediately for a one-off attendance concern. E.g. if unauthorised absence equates to more than 10 days

Glossary SAM: School Attendance Meeting NFA: No Further Action

Appendix C

The impact of persistent absence and lateness on time spent in school.

- Research by the DfE suggests that a pupil who misses 17 days of school a year will drop 1 GCSE grade in attainment.
- 95% attendance equates to half a day off every two weeks in a school year
- 90% attendance equates to a day off every two weeks in a school year
- 85% attendance equates to one and a half days off every two weeks in a school year
- 80% attendance equates to one whole day off every week in a school year
- A secondary aged pupil, whose attendance is 80%, will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they finish their education

“Better attendance at school by pupils improves their educational achievements and, in turn, their lives and prospects. Even a small reduction in absence would result in many pupils receiving greater benefit from their education.” The National Audit Office.

One or two days a week...

If your child misses....	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day every 2 weeks	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 1/2 years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 1/2 years of school
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

A few minutes late each day?

He/she is only missing just....	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 1/2 weeks per year	Nearly 1/2 year
20 minutes per day	1 hr. 40 min per week	Over 2 1/2 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 1/2 years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 1/2 years

If you want your child to be successful at school and develop good habits for later in life, attendance matters and every day counts.