

Sybil Elgar School Supplementary Policy



Title: School Attendance

This guidance is to be read in conjunction with related National Autistic Society Policies

Declaration

The Sybil Elgar School does not promote partisan political views.

The school will have regard for The Human Rights Act, 1998, The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001, including new duties 2002, and The Principles of the New Code of Practice, 2001, with special focus on Student Empowerment, Parents in Partnership and Consultation and Joint Working initiatives.

In addition, the school has regard for the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.


Policy lead (s)	Designated Attendance Lead
Date of document	November 2022
Latest revision	September 2024
Signed Chloe Phillips Principal	

Table of Contents

Purpose of this document	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Scope	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Approach	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Operational delivery	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Evaluation of policy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
The Legal Framework.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all students* to enable fulfilment of their potential at Sybil Elgar School.

Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and supportive measures may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some students find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with students, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or students have should be discussed with the Tutor Teacher where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents should contact Reception to liaise with Anne Williams, Family Liaison Manager.

Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The school will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with students and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying supportive measures where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and

guidance, looking after the health and safety and mental wellbeing of our students

- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify students or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all students can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the trust board and school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, *Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024)*
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children/young people who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (please refer to our Safeguarding Children and Young People (Child Protection) policy)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child/young person's attendance and absence levels
- refer to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures
- support students who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the school on time appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment

- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.1 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent/carer with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf).

3.3 Students

We expect students to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- attend all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

3.4 Designated attendance lead

The designated attendance lead ("DAL") at the school is Thea Smit, Lead Teacher.

The DAL will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the school and will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and students
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

3.5 The board of trustees

The board of trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and school's ethos and policies
- ensure the school's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support students or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies
- require the school to report to the trustees on the school's attendance at regular intervals, via the Trust Attendance Lead.

Registration

- 4.1** The school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each student's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time (no longer than 30 mins after session start time)
Morning	9.00am	9.15am
Afternoon	1.00pm	1.15pm

- 4.2** Students who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where students arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- 4.3** The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671412/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Late arrival

- 5.1 If a student arrives at the school after the relevant registration period has ended, tutor staff will ensure that SLT are informed and that registration is completed
- 5.2 All arrival times are monitored and consistent late arrivals will be followed up with the appropriate transport authority and parents/carers. In line with Behaviour Policy

Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 6.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.
- 6.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- 6.3 **Reporting absence from the school**

Where a student is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephoning reception on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the student to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence. Reception will record the information and liaise with the DAL and relevant tutor teachers. However, should there be more exceptional circumstances requiring additional support, the school has a Family Liaison Manager who will work closely with families and related agencies to improve attendance

On the day of return to the school, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child/young person's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

Should the young person be well enough to access learning, remote learning resources and support will be provided. Absence within this category could be related to (for example) transport issues, adverse weather conditions or Coronavirus.

Refer to remote learning policy and protocols

6.4 Appointments

Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a student should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during school time, the student should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to Tutor Teacher/Reception.

For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Principal and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Principal will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Principal's discretion and
- is final.

Where permission is granted, the Principal will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.6 Religious observance

We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs,

the absence from the school will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the School by writing to the Tutor Teacher/Reception in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

6.7 Coronavirus (Covid-19)

There may be circumstances in which students cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The school will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.

6.7.2 If a student tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

7.1 The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the students or groups of students who need it most. In doing so, the School, led by the DAL, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify students at risk of poor attendance.
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify students who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of weekly, half-termly, termly and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This discussed and actioned at weekly SLT meetings. Information stored in meeting minutes and on BROMCOM and CPOMS
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular students and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of students who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable, including home visits by the school's Family Liaison Manager

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found in **Appendix 1**.

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

we will contact the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality. This will include support from the Family Liaison Manager and details of access to wider support services as appropriate (for example Early Help). see **Appendix 2**.

- 7.4** Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of a positive attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.
- 7.5** Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.
- 7.6** Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, the LA may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents.
- 7.7** When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, the LA will have regard to:
- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
 - the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 7.8** In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.
- **The term 'student' will be used throughout for ease and fluency; referring to all age groups (Early Years through to Post 22)**

Appendix 1 – Managing unexplained absences and responding to children missing education

School to attempt to contact parent/carer on Day 1 of Absence



If contact has not been made, no later than Day 3 of absence (best practice Day 1), school staff will alert LA to establish pupils' whereabouts. LA may conduct a home visit



Days 0-10, Staff will work with the LA to continue to make efforts to engage the family and locate the pupil; recording their contact including all telephone conversations, texts, e-mails, letters, Home-visits. Liaising with professionals who



Whereabouts confirmed to be known

but not attending education or
engaging with the school.



Child and family meet the threshold for Early
Help or Social Care involvement. Make a
referral evidencing the actions you have
taken.

Absence meets the threshold for
enforcement action as outlined in the [Local
Authority] Code of Conduct, Child stays on
roll.



Whereabouts unknown

evidencing reasonable efforts to
locate/contact the family, this can
include move out of area.



Referral is made to: Children Missing Education
Team No later than day 10 when there is no
explanation for absence and above checks have
been completed in line with local LA protocols
and procedures]

Detail clearly any safeguarding concerns you
may have.

DO NOT remove from your roll until CME team
has completed initial checks and confirmed that
they can be removed.

Appendix 2 – Attendance flowchart

