

**SUTTON ON SEA**  
**COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**POLICY ON**  
**ATTENDANCE**

This policy was amended and ratified by the Governing Body at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Signed.....Chair of Governors  
(LYN ROUSE)

Review date: January 2022

## 1. Mission Statement

Sutton on Sea School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore form regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

*Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.....*

**Article 28** – You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

2. We recognise the importance of school attendance in enabling pupils to achieve their maximum educational potential and to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.
3. The school will emphasise the importance of attendance in a variety of ways including through assemblies, weekly newsletters and records of attendance that are sent out termly that highlight good attendance and where improvement needs to be seen.
4. There is a team in school responsible for overseeing attendance (see Appendix 1)
5. Registers will be kept in accordance with requirements.
6. The registers will be kept open for 30 minutes after the beginning of each school session. Pupils arriving after 9.20am will be marked as “unauthorised absent”. Consideration is given to extending this time in event of bad weather or other such events e.g. road closures etc.
7. Parents and carers are required to notify the school on 01507 441319 to advise that their child is absent and the reason why on a daily basis.
8. The school will operate an Every Day Contact system whereby the parents and carers of pupils who are absent and no notification has been received will be contacted and asked for the reason of absence. Parents and carers are required to ring the school every day of their child’s absence to keep the school updated. If a reason for absence is not given, the school will write to parents and carers asking them to return a slip with the cause of absence (Appendix 2). Should no reason be given, this absence will be marked unauthorised. After 5 days if no contact has been made the school contacts the Local Authorities to inform that the child is missing education in line with Child Missing Education Policy. (Appendix 3)
9. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason the absence. The following may be reasons for authorising absence: illness, medical/dental appointment, family/close personal bereavement, days of religious observance etc. The school allocates absence codes accordingly using the Department of Education Attendance Codes (see Appendix 4). NB in the case of a close bereavement code “C” will be used. In line with the DfE guidance for schools opening in 2020, any absence relating to Coronavirus is marked with a code X and is not counted in the school census. After 5 working days of absence, the school will require medical evidence of illness to be provided either on a medical form/letter from the health care

professional or on the Authorised Absence from School for Medical Reasons Form available from the school office. (Appendix 5). The school has agreements with the local medical surgeries to complete these forms for parents and carers when requested. This is also applied to children who are absent for medical reasons on a regular basis.

10. The school operates a gold, silver, bronze, and red system. This informs a child's parents and carers of their child's attendance on a termly basis which is dated. (Appendix 6)
  - Gold represents – 98.5% or higher.
  - Silver represents – 96.1% to 98.4%
  - Bronze represents – 90% - 96%
  - Red represents – below 90%

The attendance of the children receiving a red code is monitored on the school's tracking system.

A child's attendance that falls into this category is then placed on the Attendance Escalation Process (see appendix 7). NB. National Average Attendance is shown on the bottom of the silver category and taken from Raise On Line data on a yearly basis.

11. "Persistent Absenteeism" is a term used to define the attendance of children with absence of 10% or more. The school's tracking system carefully monitors all children whose attendance is within our "red" category. School staff works with pupils, parents and carers and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a pupil's attendance. The parents and carers of children with Persistent Absence or likely to become Persistent Absentees will be considered for a School Attendance Panel with the Senior Leadership Team member responsible for Attendance, the Governor responsible for Attendance, The Education Welfare Service and the School Attendance Officer (see Appendix 8). The School Attendance Panel Meetings will be supportive, parents and carers and in some cases the child will be invited to attend. The reasons for absence are discussed and an Action Plan is formulated to support the parents and carers and child to improve the child's school attendance. Informal attendance meetings can take place with the Senior Leadership Team Member responsible for Attendance and School Attendance Officer to prevent children falling into the category of persistent absence. These meetings are informal, recorded (See Appendix 9) and identifies any ways in which parents and carers and school can work together to improve attendance.

Applications for Fixed Penalty Notices are sent to the Local Authority by the school who then uphold the decision to serve a penalty notice or not.

Research has shown that schools in partnership with a full range of support services have greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are unco-ordinated or disjointed.

Low school attendance may be due to a wide range of *institutional*, geographical (e.g. coastal, seasonal employment), community, family or individual circumstances. Some of these circumstances will require support beyond the remit of the school or of the Attendance Provider. It is therefore vital that positive partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children. These may include: Educational Psychologists, School Nurse, Family Action, Families Working Together, local police and CAMHS, etc.

Persistent absence due to medical reasons can be verified by parents and carers completing the Patient Consent Form (Appendix 10a) which allows the school to contact surgeries (Appendix 10b) for a breakdown of a pupil's absence and whether it is justifiable or plausible.

12. Absences are not authorised unless they are exceptional circumstances. The school interprets exceptional circumstances as being unique, cultural or associated with immediate bereavement, medical circumstances or other spiritual events.
  13. The school will support the reintegration of pupils after an absence sensitively and involving relevant staff and giving access to counselling or mentoring services as appropriate. In the case of the return to school of a pupil after long term absence (four weeks or more) it may require specific provision being implemented. It may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Plan which will support the child's specific need. This may involve the SEN Team in school. A phased return, part time timetable etc. may be considered if the need is deemed. This does not apply to events such as national pandemics where the school has had to close to the majority of children.
  14. The school identifies and supports pupils who have low attendance in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. The destination school is made fully aware of children's attendance needs.
  15. Sutton on Sea CP School considers that each child should attend regularly and punctually in order to avoid disruption to learning and maximise educational achievement. Sutton on Sea CP School follows the DfE and LA guidelines for requests for term time absence. Any leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
  16. Parents and carers are required to put any request for leave of absence in writing at least 2 weeks before the proposed leave. This is required to be submitted on a Sutton on Sea Request for Leave of Absence form (see Appendix 11). Parents and carers will be required to have a meeting with the Headteacher to further discuss the reasons for leave of absence. Non-attendance of a notified meeting will mean that any requests will be unauthorised.
  17. Parents and carers are made aware via our Leave of Absence Request Form that any absence during term time may trigger monitoring letters of attendance from the school. The school follows the DfE and LA guidelines and criteria for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices as per LCC Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.
  18. The school will respond to any such request in writing giving reasons for the decision, if accepted and include:
    - The expected date of return
    - That parents and carers are expected to advise of any delay in return
    - What action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected
- If the requested leave of absence goes on for longer than agreed, the extra days of absence will be coded in line with the Local Authority's codes.
- If it is refused, parents or carers will receive a letter with details regarding Fixed Penalty Notice if the holiday is taken.
19. If a parent/guardian decides to Electively Home Educate their child (ren) the school follows the protocols as given in the Local Authority's Elective Home Education Protocol 2016. (Appendix 12)
  20. We celebrate children's attending school regularly through attendance certificates, raffles, highest class attendance of the week etc.