



**SMITHDON HIGH SCHOOL**  
HUNSTANTON

# **Attendance Policy**

**Adopted by the Local Governing Body: September 2023**

**Review due: September 2024**

*Work hard, be kind and smile*

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## 1. Aims

Smithdon High School under the West Norfolk Academies Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We have developed this Policy in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

We want to do our best for all our children and believe that regular attendance at school is vital for children as it promotes learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. It enables children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and encourages them to be responsible, organised and motivated adults. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. We will work with families to identify the reasons for issues within attendance and try to help resolve any difficulties.

Attendance is central to our whole school ethos, vision and values – summed up in our motto to **Work Hard, Be Kind and Smile**. This is also represented in The Smithdon Seven, where number 5 is key to attendance “we are present...” referring to regular attendance and punctuality to school and lessons.

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. Our staff will form positive relationships with students and parents. All staff will contribute to a whole school approach to attendance which reinforces good school attendance, with positive teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and achieve.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and we will ensure that individuals’ attendance data and patterns are analysed to ensure learning interventions take place in a timely fashion.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

*“The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of the parent to make sure that their child received that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*

*Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission of an absence in advance from school.”*

Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022 (Section 1, points 9 and 10)

This policy meets the requirements of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) 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.

Throughout this policy, 'parent' refers to anyone with parental responsibility.

### 3. Key Roles and Responsibilities

**Designated Senior Leader** responsible for attendance: **Mr M Johnson – Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)**

[m.johnson@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:m.johnson@smithdonhigh.org.uk)

01485 534541

**Attendance Officer: Mrs V Cummings**

[attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk)

Tel: 01485 536123

Text: 07935 059774

At Smithdon High School we believe that attendance is a responsibility shared by school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

#### **The Local Governing Body will:**

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data at Local Governing Body Meetings
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school, including cohort groups identified as historically low attenders
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Appoint a link governor, who will monitor attendance, and report back to the school's link Trustee.

#### **The Headteacher will:**

- Be responsible for the implementation of this policy
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Make decisions on the authorisation of term time leaves of absences (or delegate this to an appropriate senior leader)
- Make decisions on the referral to the Local Authority for FPN and Fast Track (or delegate this to an appropriate senior leader)

**The Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance will:**

- Lead on attendance through the school
- Monitor and analyse attendance data, including groups of students such as Pupil Premium, SEND and LAC
- Implement and evaluate the attendance strategy
- Analyse the current strategies and evaluate their impact
- Communicate regularly to parents about student attendance
- Take responsibility for working with the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Managers to reduce absence and PA by monitoring data and implementing effective interventions
- Use weekly lesson attendance reports and SIMs to monitor punctuality to lessons, identify patterns and address these with relevant staff and students – including issuing detentions or creating a support plan as needed
- Lead on Fast Track meetings with students

**The Attendance Officer:**

Will have overall operational responsibility for attendance in school. They will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance data
- Take absence calls, emails and texts and amend SIMS with the reasons for absence
- Complete first day calls/contact
- Provide regular attendance and punctuality reports for relevant staff
- Work with the wider pastoral team to support good attendance and punctuality
- Issue letters to parents to inform them about attendance rewards and concerns
- Monitor the attendance of students in alternative provision
- Identify, arrange and support attendance meetings
- Identify, initiate and arrange Fast Track meetings
- Identify, initiate and refer to Norfolk County Council those who meet the criteria for additional support/interventions, including Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Liaise with internal and external agencies to support good attendance in school
- Identify barriers to attendance and support families in breaking down these barriers
- Build positive relationships with hard to reach families
- Report students with unexplained absences, which exceed 10 days, to the CME team
- Refer to the DSL any attendance concerns that may constitute a safeguarding issue

**Assistant Headteachers (Key Stage):**

- Are responsible for referring students to the Attendance Officer if they notice any patterns or receive information from parents pertaining to attendance concerns.
- Will use weekly attendance reports to support their tutors to monitor group attendance and target individuals' attendance, supporting the Attendance Officer in implementing interventions to improve attendance

**Pastoral Managers will:**

- Use their knowledge of students and their families to support the Attendance Officer in addressing concerns regarding attendance and together arrive at the most suitable intervention support to reduce absence
- Attend attendance concern meetings with the Attendance Officer, students and parents, where appropriate

**Form Tutors will:**

- Accurately record attendance for morning registration within the first 10 minutes of the session
- Support any student who has been absent by welcoming them back into school and offering guidance for catching up with work

- Support any student whose attendance has begun to decline, using the tutor support pack (including example support plans)
- Liaise with the attendance officer and the pastoral team with any attendance concerns
- Record on the SIMS Contact Log, any contact made with parents regarding attendance
- Record and report any safeguarding concerns as a result of attendance conversations with parents on CPOMS

#### **Reception Team will:**

- Log the students who arrive late to school, but before 9am, as L on SIMS. Will have a conversation about the importance of punctuality and potential consequences for continued lateness and issue a lunchtime detention slip
- Register the students who arrive late to school after 9am (after Registration has closed), including the time of arrival:
  - as U on SIMS if no adequate reason is given
  - coded according to the reason provided, along with evidence (e.g. medical appointment card, M)

#### **All Teaching Staff and Support Staff will:**

- Complete registers within the first 10 minutes of every lesson
- Will email the Attendance Officer and Receptionist to investigate if a student does not arrive to a lesson but has been marked present previously that day
- Promote the importance of school attendance and punctuality
- Support any student who has been absent, allowing them to catch up on any missed learning
- Support with breaking down the barriers to poor attendance
- Challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like

#### **Parents:**

Are responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance and punctuality at school by making sure that they:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Comply with the Smithdon High School Home-School Agreement
- Take an interest in their child's education, asking about schoolwork and encouraging them to get involved in school activities
- Discuss any problems their child may have at school and inform the Tutor, Pastoral Manager and/or Attendance Officer about any concerns
- Do not let their child take time off school for minor ailments which would not prevent the student from coming to school
- Arrange appointments and outings outside of school hours (i.e. after school, at the weekend or during school holidays) to help prevent disruption to their child's education
- Do not take holidays during term time
- Notify the school on each day of absence (unless a medical note has been provided in advance which details how many days their child will need to be absent for)
- Seek medical evidence when a health condition is likely to negatively impact on attendance so that appropriate support can be put in place and communicate this with the school
- Make every effort to support their child in building resilience and leading a healthy lifestyle
- Ensure their child is organised and has good routines at home, including sleep routines, so that they arrive punctually to school each day
- Ensure that their child arrives to school on time, especially if driving them to school (to be on the premises by 8.25am at the latest – when the gate is locked)

**Students will:**

- Attend school everyday
- Arrive at school before 8.25am
- Inform their tutor/pastoral manager/the attendance officer if they have any worries or concerns about coming in to school

## 4. Recording Attendance

Students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first (morning) session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9am.

The register for the second (afternoon) session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm

*See appendix 1 for the list of attendance codes*

### 4.1 Attendance Registers

An attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where absence is recorded as unexplained (N), the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.

### 4.2 Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

### 4.3 The school will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not authorised
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### 4.4 Unplanned absence

On the first day of unplanned absence, parents and carers must contact the school (for example if their child is unable to attend due to ill health). This can be done by telephoning 01485 536123, texting 07935 059774 or emailing [attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk) before the registration period closes at 9am.

We may ask for medical evidence of an absence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. However, we will not ask for evidence unnecessarily.

If no contact has been made, the Attendance Officer will contact parents, either through Truancy Call, Text messages, the SIMS App or by telephone.

We will continue to make daily contact until a response is received or if no updates are received regarding the child's wellbeing/projected date to return to school. We may also make general enquiries during this time. This will include trying other contact numbers and/or email addresses, if we receive no response from the main contact number.

If we have had no response within 3 days of continued absence, we may use staff or the local Police to visit the home address to complete a welfare check.

#### **4.5 Planned Absence**

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible.

Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary (coming in before an appointment, arriving late or returning to school after an appointment) and the school should be notified in advance of the appointment. Evidence of any appointment will be required if the school is to consider recording the absence as authorised.

#### **4.6 Lateness and Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the morning register has closed (9am) will be marked as late, coded L (or other appropriate code)
- After the morning register has closed (9am) will be marked as absent using the appropriate code (or U if it is before the afternoon session has begun)

#### **Procedures for addressing lateness to school:**

If a student is late to school without good reason:

- on each occasion of lateness, the student will serve a lunchtime detention lasting the number of minutes they were late that day (to a maximum of 15 minutes)
- if lateness of longer than 15 minutes occurs on more than one occasion, then a C3 after school detention of one hour will be issued

If a student is late to school 3 times without good reason:

- The Attendance Officer will contact the parents of the student to discuss how best to address the lateness

If a student is late to school 6 times without good reason:

- The Attendance Officer will send a warning letter to the parents of the pupil
- A punctuality plan may be put in place with the student and parent to assist in punctuality
- On each occasion of lateness following this letter, the student will serve a C3 after-school detention of 60 minutes

If a pupil reaches 10 late arrivals:

- The Attendance Officer will issue a final warning letter
- A punctuality plan will be put in place (or reviewed and adapted if in place previously)

If there is limited improvement in punctuality a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to the responsible parent(s) – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the *Norfolk County Council Code of Conduct for issuing Fixed Penalties regarding School Attendance*, effective from September 2020.

## **Procedures for addressing lateness to lessons:**

The Pastoral Team will run regular 'late' reports from SIMs to identify students who are regularly late to lessons.

If a student has been late to lesson 3 times in a fortnight, the Assistant Headteachers (Key Stage) will set a C3 after school detention and the student will be issued with a late report. This report is handed to teachers at the start of every lesson and teachers record the number of minutes late to each lesson.

The next morning during tutor time, form tutors check students' late reports and tally up the total number of minutes late from the previous day. The total number of minutes late is multiplied by 3 (as a consequence) and this is the number of minutes the student will stay in B58 during lunchtime.

Once a full week of zero lateness has been completed by a student the late report is removed and a period of monitoring continues.

If students return to bad habits, the late report is re-issued.

## **4.7 Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the SIMS Parent App, which shows live attendance information. In addition, absence levels, punctuality to school and punctuality to lessons are reported in writing to parents on twice-yearly academic reports.

# **5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

## **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances". The application form for requesting a term-time leave of absence can be found at Appendix 2.

Exceptional circumstances can include funerals, weddings (for immediate family members only) and representation in major sporting competitions or public performances. For advice on exceptional circumstances parents should speak to their child's Pastoral Manager.

The Headteacher will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments, with evidence provided (and assuming appointments could not be made outside of school hours).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school in advance of the absence

Holidays during term time will not be authorised, and if a family takes a holiday that has not been authorised a referral to the Local Authority for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made if the absence meets the criteria of a minimum of 9 consecutive sessions of absence (4½ days).

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Long term/persistent absences due to illness, including mental health, must be supported by evidence from a medical professional, stating that the student is not fit for school or requires an adapted timetable. If these are not forthcoming, the Attendance Officer may ask the parent(s) of the student to complete a Medical Consent form (Appendix 3) for the school to contact any relevant medical professional(s) and request the information directly.

## **5.2 Truancy (incl. missing students)**

If a student is found to be truanting lesson(s) within the school site or off school site, then they will be disciplined in line with the school's behaviour policy. This policy can be found on the school's website.

If a student goes missing during the school day - having not arrived for a lesson but having been marked present earlier in the day - the following process will be followed (step by step, assuming the child is not found at the earlier stage):

- The class teacher will email the Attendance Officer and the Receptionist to notify them of the potential missing student
- The Attendance Officer/Receptionist will use the radio system to contact Pastoral Managers, Senior Leadership team, SEN HLTA and the SENDCo to check if the student is with them
- CCTV cameras will be checked to identify if the student may be in a toilet area or visible in a corridor, following which any possible sightings will be checked in person by one of the Pastoral Team
- The member of the team on-call, according to the WALKS timetable, will search the site alongside a second member of staff (as available from the pastoral team, SLT, site team, LSA team, teaching staff, support staff)
- If the student cannot be located on site and balance of probability suggests the student has left site, parent will be contacted
- If the student is also not at home/has not made contact with parent(s), the police may be informed of a missing child.

## **5.3 Early Interventions**

When a pattern of non-attendance is identified some or all of the following may be put in place:

- The Pastoral Manager may speak to the student
- The Pastoral Manager may speak to parents
- The Attendance Officer may invite the student to a formal structured meeting
- The Attendance Officer may call home
- An Early Intervention Meeting may be arranged. This meeting will include the Attendance Officer, the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), the child and members of their family. Types of support available are listed in Sections 6.5 and 6.6.

In each of these meetings the cause of the poor attendance is investigated, support offered and targets set. Rewards and praise will be used to reinforce improved attendance.

## 5.4 Legal Sanctions

The law protects students' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

### Fixed Penalty Notice

Schools can refer parents to the Local Authority for consideration to impose a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay in accordance to the current penalty notice charges as set by Norfolk County Council. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer a Fixed Penalty Notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### Fast Track Proceedings

Schools can also make the decision to refer parents to the Local Authority for prosecution after the failure of Fast Track proceedings.

The Fast Track model promotes early intervention by both schools, the LA and parents in cases of persistent absence. It aims to ensure appropriate and time limited intervention is in place to tackle the underlying causes of poor or non-attendance as soon as it becomes apparent. It is a mechanism for ensuring parents focus their attention on their responsibility for ensuring their children attend school both regularly and punctually by engaging with them and specifying, by way of an attendance contract, what improvements need to be made. This should generally be concluded within a 12-week period. If the support process

## 5.5 Children Missing in Education

Any student who is missing without explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority as a 'Child Missing Education' by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Children in Need Team. This is a legal requirement and the school will include details of the action they have taken. A referral is made in the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate them
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (student file) has been requested by another school

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Smithdon High School works actively together with the West Norfolk Academies Trust to improve attendance in our area and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers of their responsibility to ensure their children receive a good education and will make clear links between attendance and attainment.

Tutors, subject teachers and school leaders take every opportunity to praise students whose attendance and/or punctuality is excellent – or improving, in the case of students who struggle to attend/be punctual.

## 6.1 Daily processes

For students who are registered as absent at 9.30am with no contact from parents to explain absence, their parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer - either by telephone, text message or Truancy Call message - to establish a reason for absence and to check that the parent does not believe the child to be in school.

If there is no response, we will make attempts to contact the parents and other listed contacts to identify that the child is safe.

If the child is thought to be in school we will ask the parent to try to contact their child directly on their mobile. We will also carry out checks to confirm the child's absence is accurate (including lesson checks, visual sightings by other students and using CCTV to check toilet blocks and other areas). If the child is still missing, the police will be contacted to report the child as missing and remain in contact with the parent.

Registers are taken within the first 10 minutes of every lesson. If a student is missing, who was present earlier in the day with no note or reason, the teacher will email the Attendance Officer and the Receptionist, who will contact pastoral and SEN staff to check if the student is with them. If not, then CCTV checks will be carried out. Finally on call staff will be sent to complete physical checks,

Period 4 is the official PM register (1pm). Processes follow those in the paragraph above and extra checks are carried out for every student registered as N on the PM registers.

Student attendance is monitored as per the Attendance Phases (see Appendix 4).

## 6.2 Communication with parents

Parents are asked to sign the Smithdon Home-School Agreement when their child joins the school. The first three bullet points of which for parents are that they will:

- *Make sure my child attends school every day, on time and in full and correct uniform.*
- *Contact the school with an explanation on the first day of any absence to confirm my child is safe.*
- *Avoid taking my child on holiday during term time - any absences are not authorised by the Headteacher, then action will be taken according to the Government guidelines.*

At the beginning of the year, when the county warning notice letter is sent, parents are also sent an Attendance Leaflet and a 'Parents' Guide to Attendance' booklet to support their understanding of the importance of attendance. These are also available all year on the school website 'Attendance and Absence Reporting' page. All this information also provides parents with the contact details for the Attendance Officer (phone number, text number and email address) as well as the Pastoral Manager for reporting absences or concerns about their child.

The half-termly school magazine, The Smithdonian, has a section dedicated to attendance with key messages and reminders for parents, along with a celebration of the attendance award winners and key positive data for nudging towards positive attendance behaviours.

Tutors, Pastoral Managers and/or the Attendance Officer make contact with parents regarding absences and encourage parents to support good attendance and punctuality.

### 6.3 Attendance Awards

Smithdon High School will reward students who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and by awarding certificates, badges and reward points.

Reward points will be issued for attendance on a half-termly basis:

- 100% attendance for the half term – R4 (4 reward points)
- 95-99% attendance for the half term – R3 (3 reward points)

Certificates and badges are awarded for 100% attendance on a termly basis:

- One term at 100% = Bronze
- Two terms at 100% = Silver
- Three terms at 100% = Gold

Students who have had an attendance intervention and who then demonstrate improving attendance will be issued letters and reward points to recognise their improvement:

- Improving Attendance letter = R1 (1 reward point)
- Continued Improvement letter = R2 (2 reward points)

The School also runs a regular year group competition for tutor group attendance figures with a 'travelling' award teddy and prizes for the winning Tutor Group in each period.

### 6.4 Communication with students

Students are asked to sign the Smithdon Home-School Agreement when they join the school. The first two bullet points of which for students are that they will:

- *Attend school every day and be on time*
- *Be on time for all lessons, with the correct books and equipment to be ready to learn*

Students are publicly presented their attendance awards in assemblies, tutor times and lessons.

### A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all students are made to feel welcome. This will include tutors checking in and teachers ensuring that the students receive help to catch up on missed work and are updated on any important information that may have been given out during their absence. For students returning from a long term absence meetings are held with the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Team to put a support plan in place for their return.

### Tutor Support

Tutors have weekly discussions with their tutor group regarding their attendance and punctuality to school and to lessons, promoting good attendance. Where necessary, tutors have individual 1-2-1 discussions with students regarding their absence or concerns about punctuality, creating a support plan (from a variety of options as appropriate to the student and situation) for improving any concern.

### Attendance Officer

Students are asked to meet with the Attendance Officer if:

- their attendance has dropped and they have historically poor attendance

- patterns in absence are emerging
- there is a sudden large increase in absence
- they have had lots of unauthorised attendance

### 6.5 Supporting students who are Persistently Absent or have Severe Absence

A series of steps are taken to support students whose attendance has fallen below expectations and is at risk of or have become Persistently Absent (below 90%) or Severely Absent (below 50%).

The Attendance Officer will identify from the data analysis that a student's attendance has become a cause for serious concern. Following this some or all of the following supportive actions will take place. The Attendance Officer will:

- arrange a meeting with parents:
  - to establish the reasons for/causes of poor attendance
  - to identify what support the family has in place already
  - alongside another staff member (Pastoral Manager, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), Other Senior Leadership Team member) deemed most appropriate for the individual student/family involved - depending on positive school-home relationships, severity of absence, causes/reasons for absence (if already known)
- seek advice from NCC Inclusion Team
- seek advice from our assigned NCC Attendance and Entitlement Officer via the Duty Line
- call Just One Number and then seek medical evidence via a Joint Medical Protocol form (JMP) if no other evidence is available
- make a referral to the Medical Needs Team
- make a referral to the school SENDCo if appropriate
- recommend Just One Number for family support
- use the West Sussex Toolkit if Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- referral to CADs if deemed appropriate
- request an urgent Careers Guidance appointment (with our Level 6 advisor)
- implement a support plan (see below)

### 6.6 Support plans

A variety of potential support plans will be considered to support a student with poor attendance, including but not limited to:

- Tutor-support plans
- A reintegration plan, such as the model in the West Sussex Toolkit
- The introduction of a Part-Time Timetable - reviewed fortnightly - with an aim to achieve full time attendance within a maximum of 6 weeks
- Liaison with teaching staff for seating plans to be adjusted to support the student
- Organisation of a Peer Buddy to provide support in school
- Identify a trusted adult to be the point of contact for discussing concerns (at a set time if necessary, including meeting on arrival to school)
- An EHAP
- Organisation of other reasonable adjustments to remove barriers, which may include:
  - Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
  - Barriers from being a Pupil Premium student
  - Transport issues
  - Purchase of an alarm clock
  - Provision of uniform, equipment, etc.

## 6.7 Legal Intervention

### Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

An FPN will be issued to a parent if one of the following criteria is met. Parents are informed of this at the beginning of the school year to discourage these types of absences.

- 4.5 days (9 sessions missed) of consecutive absence or unauthorised absence within a 6 week period
- 10 'U' codes for being late after registration has closed
- where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.

All requests for holidays are unauthorised, as are other requests for absence which do not meet requirements of being for exceptional reasons.

### Fast Track to Court Proceedings

A Fast Track process will be put in place, following consultation with the Headteacher:

- when all other interventions have failed
- if it has the opportunity to change parents' behaviour

It will begin with supportive meetings to improve attendance, clearly outlining the next steps if there is no improvement in the child's attendance.

If there is a failure to improve after 6 weeks, then the school will decide if there are adequate reasons to extend the process for another 6 weeks or begin to apply to NCC for court proceedings. If after 12 weeks there is a failure to improve, the application to NCC for court proceedings will begin.

## 7. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring and analysing the data in the first instance and then reporting it to relevant members of staff, including the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and the Headteacher. Discussions and investigations into the data take place as needed.

As a minimum data is used by the Attendance Officer to target attendance improvements as follows:

- a weekly review of whole school data and for cohorts, including looking for:
  - patterns amongst the school (for example a number of students absent with similar illnesses/symptoms)
  - data for specific cohorts in 2023 who have been historically poor - SEN, PP, Yr11
- a weekly overview of the data is sent to the SLT Lead for attendance
- form tutors receive a weekly report including each student's previous week % attendance and their year to date %, for them to discuss with tutees - those with poor prior attendance are highlighted for ease
- a weekly review of individuals' data takes place, to identify patterns of absence, unauthorised absence and the number (if any) of broken weeks
- a weekly review of lates to school

The Designated Senior Leader for attendance and the Attendance Officer meet fortnightly:

- to review data and individuals of concern
- to discuss actions taken
- to discuss impacts made

- to plan areas for further development

Once per half term this meeting also reviews the Attendance Improvement Plan - to review the impact of strategies and actions taken.

Further analysis of data is conducted during the year to identify trends and patterns (including for cohort groups).

Half-termly for:

- rewards letters (100% attendance, 96%+ attendance, improved attendance)
- concern letters (raising a concern, a continuing concern, warning letters) - these are focused on days missed rather than % attendance, due to %attendance being less effective and being less relatable language for parents and students

Termly for:

- comparing our own data term to term
  - to identify improvement in the year for the school and cohorts
  - to identify improvement in the year via a spreadsheet for individual students
- comparing our own data term to previous year's term
- the number of holidays taken per term (due to our local context)
- meeting with the AEO - to review whole school approach and analyse data
- a network meeting of those in the local area and the county
- Trust attendance meetings with the other West Norfolk Academies Trust Secondary Schools (Attendance Officers and Senior Leaders) to compare data, actions and impact

The school benchmarks its data against that of local, regional and national schools to inform interventions, comparing our data to the local/regional and national data we are provided in order to review trends.

## 8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE or Local Authority is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Data will be monitored regularly for the whole school and the identified cohort groups at Local Governing Body meetings and in Targeted Support Meetings with the Local Authority.

The school's Local Governing Body has a link Governor with responsibility for Attendance who will carry out monitoring activities to ensure the school's attendance management processes are consistently and effectively delivered. They will also report back to the school's Link Trustee.

## 9. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy (incorporating Child Protection)
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy
- Mental Health Policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## Appendix 2 - Request for Leave of Absence

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME****Important Information for Parents – please read before completing this form**

We expect every pupil's attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time. It is the Headteacher who decides whether a period of leave during term time will be authorised or not in line with legislation. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended in September 2013) make it clear that Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

Every request for leave of absence during term time will reviewed on an individual basis with due consideration of the circumstances but the Headteacher can only grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply. If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Headteacher will determine the length of the absence to be authorised.

All requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed. This form must be completed in full by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time. Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised.

**I have read the above information and wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school for:**

Child's Full Name:	Date of Birth:	Class:

**Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)**

First Name:	Surname:

Date of Birth:	Relationship to the child:

Address and postcode:

Telephone number:

First Name:	Surname:

Date of Birth:	Relationship to the child:

Address and postcode:

Telephone number:

**Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend**

Child's Full Name:	Date of Birth:	School:

**Details of the absence**

<b>Date of First day of absence:</b>		<b>Date of last day of absence:</b>	
<b>Total Number of days absent:</b>		<b>Expected date of return to school:</b>	
Will your child/ren miss any mock or national examinations during the absence?		Yes / No	
Is their attendance above 95% (or a previously agreed individual target)?		Yes / No	
Have they already had leave during term-time this academic year? If yes, please give previous date(s):		Yes / No	
Did they take leave of absence during term-time in the previous academic year?		Yes / No	
<b>Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:</b>			
<b>Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:</b>			
I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per child, per parent of £120 if paid within 28 days but reduced to £60 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days.			
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Full name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>To be completed by the school:</b>			
<b>Date request received by the school:</b>		<b>Total number of days requested:</b>	
<b>Child's Name:</b>	<b>Current % Attendance</b>	<b>Application Authorised or Declined?</b>	
<b>Reason for school's decision:</b>			
<b>Headteacher:</b>			
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	



### Guidance

All school staff have a key role in early identification, intervention, and support for children. Where there are concerns regarding a pupil's unsatisfactory attendance, interventions will be implemented by the school to try to improve the situation.

Attendance below 90% is a cause for concern as this equates to an average of one half-day missed per week. Over a child's whole school career this would mean in excess of one whole school year being missed. Where a child's attendance falls below 80% (equating to two whole school years missed in a child's school career), their opportunity to reach their full potential is considerably diminished. We need to understand the reasons contributing to this poor attendance, (which may include a medical cause), so that we can offer appropriate support to address the issue. Please note, we will only ask for information from your healthcare professional if there is no other source of information.

### Children and Young People - Data protection

- Please see the Norfolk County Council Privacy Notice for further information about how we protect your data and your rights.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time by contacting the relevant professional in writing.
- The Local Authority and school recognise that young people aged 12 and over (and sometimes younger) who are 'Gillick competent' have the right to make decisions around how their health information is shared. However, as noted in the DfE guidance<sup>1</sup>, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.
- As parents and carers are responsible for ensuring attendance at school, it is the parent/carer who is being asked to provide consent for access to information which justifies absence from school.
- To ensure we incorporate the voice of the child, they are invited to attend planning meetings prior to any medical needs provision.

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[1] DfE guidance School attendance parental responsibility measures Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police January 2015

Name of child		Date of birth	
Parent/carer name		Telephone	
Address		Postcode	
School		School contact (email/telephone)	
<p>I, the parent/carer, confirm that I have parental responsibility for the above-named child, give permission for the school and healthcare professional/practice/organisation named on this form to be contacted with regard to my child's medical needs.</p> <p>I give consent for any relevant information (e.g., diagnosis, treatment, medication, impact on school attendance) to be shared with relevant professionals (e.g., with the Norfolk County Council Medical Needs and/or Attendance Service) I am aware that I may withdraw this consent at any time and will inform relevant professionals of this in writing/by email.</p>			
Signature		Relationship to child	
Signature		Child (if Gillick competent i.e. 12 or over)	
Date			
Healthcare professional	<i>(name/role)</i>	Address of practice/clinic/Trust	
Healthcare professional telephone		Healthcare professional email address	
School		School key contact Name/role	
School telephone		School key contact email address	
<b>Date</b>			

## Appendix 4: School information Form

Completed by the school and emailed[1] to the health professional, with Appendices 3 and 5, and a copy of the child's attendance herringbone)

Full name of child			
DOB		NHS number	
School contact making this request	Name/role	Telephone	email
	Name of school	School address	
<b>Information for schools:</b> 1. <b>Complete this form</b> following consent from the parent/carer (cells may be expanded) 2. Email the pre-filled form to the child/young person's healthcare professional, <b>with a copy of the consent form</b> 3. The form should be returned to you by email, by the health professional, within 5 working days of receipt 4. <b>Attach a copy of the child's attendance herringbone</b> so that the health professional has as full a picture as possible of the issues around attendance 5. <b>Attach all fully completed forms to the Medical Needs Service Referral form if required</b>			
<b>Consent</b>			
A parental/carer/child (if Gillick competent) consent form has been signed and is attached			
<b>Personal Details of the young person requiring support</b>			
Gender		English as an additional language	Free school meals/Pupil Premium
EHCP in place		EHCP Coordinator name/email	
Date of last EHCP review		SEN Support	Name of SENCO
Looked After Child		If LAC, date of last PEP	Child Protection
Parent/carer			
Telephone		Email	
Address			Postcode
Date of 1 <sup>st</sup> absence in this current pattern			
Number of sessions missed (a session is half a school day)			
Full name of child			
DOB		NHS number	

School contact making this request	Name/role	Telephone	email
	Name of school	School address	
Current attendance %			
5-19 Healthy Child Programme contacted: name of school nurse			
School nurse outcome			
Comment:			
What are the key issues affecting this child's education?			
<i>E.g., poor attendance due to headaches</i>			
What agencies are involved with this child? (E.g., FSP, Early Help, Youth Worker, Nelson's Journey, Matthew Project etc.)			

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- Consent can be withdrawn at any time by contacting the relevant professional in writing.
- The Local Authority and school recognise that young people aged 12 and over (and sometimes younger) have the right to make decisions around how their health information is shared. However, as noted in the DfE guidance, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. As parents and carers are responsible for ensuring attendance at school, it is the parent/carer who is being asked to provide consent for access to information which justifies absence from school. If the child is 'Gillick competent', s/he may also sign the consent form in Appendix 3. If a Medical Needs referral is accepted, the voice of the child will be sought during the initial planning meeting.

[1] Emails between [norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:norfolk.gov.uk) and [nhs.net](mailto:nhs.net) are secure; if other addresses are used, encryption will be required

[2] [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendix 5 – Health information Form

Completed by the healthcare professional and **emailed[1] to the school contact (with Appendix 3 if contact initiated by the health professional)**

<b>Full name of child</b>			
<b>DOB</b>		<b>NHS number</b>	
<b>School</b>		<b>School contact name and email address</b>	
<b>Healthcare professional contact information</b>	<b>Name/role/service</b>	<b>Telephone/email</b>	
<b>Information for health professionals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Please complete this form</b> (cells may be expanded) and email it to the school referrer within 5 working days of receipt</li> <li>● There should be no reason for you to contact the child or the person with parental responsibility, we are only asking for known factual information</li> <li>● If you require additional information, please contact the referrer directly</li> <li>● Please contact Norfolk County Council’s Medical Needs Coordinator at <a href="mailto:medicalneeds@norfolk.gov.uk">medicalneeds@norfolk.gov.uk</a> should you require any further clarification</li> </ul>			
<b>When was the child last seen (in person) by a clinician?</b> <b>Please note if this has been in person, via video link or other online consultation.</b>			
<b>What are the current key diagnoses for the child?</b>			
Provide details:			
<b>Is there treatment/medication currently in place which may impact on school attendance? If so, how? (prescription details are not required)</b>			
Provide details:			
<b>Are you aware of any pending referrals to other health services (e.g., where the child is on a waiting list)? Please provide details.</b>			
Provide details:			

<b>Full name of child</b>			
<b>DOB</b>		<b>NHS number</b>	
<b>School</b>		<b>School contact name and email address</b>	
<b>Healthcare professional contact information</b>	<b>Name/role/service</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>email</b>
<b>Are you aware of any other health services involved with this child?</b>			
<i>Provide details: e.g. CAMHS, Point 1, Community Paediatric services/treatment</i>			
<b>In your clinical opinion would you expect any child with this child's diagnoses to experience difficulties in attending school and if so, why?</b>			
Provide details:			
<b>Any other information which is relevant to absence from school due to health (e.g. how this child may be supported to return to school)?</b>			
Provide details:			
<b>Health professional name</b>			
<b>Health professional role</b>			
<b>Health professional signature</b>			
<b>Date</b>			

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- The Local Authority and school recognise that young people aged 12 and over (and sometimes younger) have the right to make decisions around how their health information is shared. However, as noted in the DfE guidance[1], parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. As parents/carers are responsible for ensuring attendance at school, it is the parent/carer who is being asked to provide consent for access to information which justifies absence from school. If the child is 'Gillick competent', s/he may also sign the consent form in Appendix 3. If a Medical Needs referral is accepted, the voice of the child will be sought during the initial planning meeting.

[1] Emails between norfolk.gov.uk and nhs.net are secure; if other addresses are used, encryption will be required

[2] [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## Appendix 4 – Smithdon High School Attendance Phases

<b>Monitoring Phase</b>	Form tutors will discuss concerns with students and identify any support needed. Form tutors may contact parent(s).
<b>Phase 1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student placed onto Phase 1</b></p> <p>Attendance Officer will meet with student to discuss concerns and any additional support that is needed. Attendance Officer may refer student for pastoral support and/or contact parent(s).</p>
<b>Phase 2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student moved onto Phase 2</b></p> <p>Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and/or Pastoral Manager along with the Attendance Officer will meet with student and parent(s), raising concerns and offering an appropriate support plan and attendance target.</p> <p>Fortnightly review.</p>
<b>Phase 3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Student moved onto Phase 3</b></p> <p>Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and/or Assistant Headteacher (Key Stage), (SENDCo) or (DSL) along with Attendance Officer will meet with student and parent(s).</p> <p>Student is placed on an Attendance Support Plan with review in 2 weeks.</p>
<b>Phase 4 Failure to improve</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>At Phase 4</b></p> <p>If Attendance Support Plan has failed, a Governor Attendance Panel meeting may be held.</p> <p><b>Formal Fast Track procedures through the courts will begin</b> – if found guilty, parents face a fine of up to £2500 per parent and the court can decide to sentence each parent to imprisonment for up to 3 months.</p>