



Sacred Heart School

Attendance Policy

At Sacred Heart School we all aspire to provide a happy, safe and secure environment in which every child is encouraged to achieve their full potential.

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in EYFS.

Written by:	Head Teacher
Approved by:	SLT, Office Administrator and Governors
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Contents

Aims	3
Legislation and guidance	3
Roles and responsibilities	4
Recording attendance.....	7
Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	9
Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school.....	9
Monitoring attendance.....	9
Analysis attendance.....	10
Using data to improve attendance.....	10
Reducing persistent and severe absence	10
Monitoring arrangements.....	11
Links with other policies.....	11
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	12
Appendix 2: Absence request form.....	13

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on ['Working Together To Improve School Attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)'](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

In developing and implementing this policy, the school must consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader ('senior attendance champion'), Johanna Collyer

(head@sacredheartwadhurst.org.uk or 01892 783414), is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer, Victoria SirDeshpande, is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office after registration.

The Office Administrator

The school Office Administrator will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Pass information to the Headteacher, when necessary, for the Headteacher to contact parents with further support on attendance

Parents / Carers

Parents / carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and for each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and after lunch time. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:30am and ends at 3:25pm for EYFS, 3:30pm for KS1 and 3:45pm for KS2. Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register at the start of the day will be taken at 8:45am. If pupils arrive after this time, they must report to the school office. The register will close at 9:15am. The register for after lunch time will be taken at 13:00 and will close half an hour later.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible, via the school office, who can be contacted by phone: 01892 783414 or email: admin@sacredheartwadhurst.org.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 school days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, or as soon as they are able. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- the number of late marks will be monitored twice a year and parents/carers will be contacted if there is a concern.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance
- If the school has concerns for the safety of a child, they will follow their Safeguarding Policy

Reporting to parents

Attendance and punctuality will be shown on your child's Autumn and Summer reports. Where there is repeated or high absence (of below 90%), the school will send the parent/carer a copy of their child's attendance and where necessary (or absence is below 80%), the Headteacher will meet with parents/carers to discuss steps to improve attendance.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 School Attendance Regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. 'Exceptional circumstances' are likely to be events which are unavoidable. The school will look at each request individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted as 'authorised' entirely at the school's discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be authorised for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. Parents/carers are asked to complete an absence request which can be request via the school office: admin@sacredheartwadhurst.org.uk

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parent(s)/carer(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent’s/carer’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

The school will work with parents/carers and children to support those who have been absent and need support coming back into school. This might be due to mental or physical ill health or SEND. This will be done on an individual basis and may involve support from the SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil’s needs, the school will inform the Local Authority.

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. 10% absence means the equivalent of one day or more per fortnight across a full school year. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Access support from our wider support services, including the Local Authority.
- The expected attendance is at least 92.9% (national average). Where attendance is as low as 90%, the school will put targeted support in place, working with the local authority.
- Run and keep a weekly data analysis, focusing on individuals and cohorts with attendance problems, in order to target improvement for those pupils who need it the most.
- Ensure that those missing school because of mental or physical ill health, or those with SEND, will be given extra support, by considering the individual needs of pupils. The school will alert the Local Authority about any pupil who misses 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness, as they may need additional support from the Local Authority.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board. When the policy is due for review and update, the views of parents and pupils should be sought.

This policy will be sent to all parents of new pupils as they start, and all parents will be reminded of it at the beginning of each school year.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2- Absence request form



Sacred Heart School

REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These must be exceptional circumstances. It is unlikely a leave of absence will be authorised for the purposes of a family holiday.

Name of Child/Children:		Class(es):
First date of Absence:	Last date of Absence:	Total number of days:
Reason for Absence:		
Signature of parent/guardian:		Date:

Please send this form to the School Office

✂.....

(This section to be returned to parent)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE HEADTEACHER:

Thank you for your request for absence.

I confirm that the absence will be **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

I confirm that the absence will be **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Name of child/children: Class(es):

Absence from school from to

I will inform the relevant teacher(s) accordingly:

Signed:

Date:

Headteacher