



Sitwell Infant School

Attendance & Absence Policy

Statement of intent

Sitwell Infant School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some children find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with children and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving child attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, children and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and children.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Kirstey Peart and can be contacted via office@sitwellinfantschool.co.uk. Staff, parents and children will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%; full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Children with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring children do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual children to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with children and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any child being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to exceptional circumstances for which the school has granted leave

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays/leave of absences in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Attendance expectations

Sitwell Infant School has high expectations for children's attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and children.

Children will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.45am, and children will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time. At Sitwell Infant School, the school doors open at 8.40am each day to give children the opportunity to enter school and be ready for the start of the school day. Children will have a morning break at 10.30am, which will last until 10.45am, and a lunch break at 12.15pm, which will last until 1.15pm.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.50am. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Children attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

- The morning register will close at 9.20am. Children will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1.20pm. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The afternoon register will close at 1.50pm. Children will receive a mark of absence if they are not present by this time.

Parents will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9.15am on the first day of their child's absence; they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a child is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a child is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA of the details of children who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

Where a child has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the child from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time children
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant children who are absent. This code will also be used to record year

groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the child and the impact on the child's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a child a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to meet with the Headteacher, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. Parents will then be asked to complete a Leave of Absence Request form. This will need to be handed in as soon as possible to the school office.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the child's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a child's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a child's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a child out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all children engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s). Additional arrangements will be made by the school for children engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the child.

The child will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the child would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a child receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the child would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a child's attendance would fall below 96%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Only one day's absence will be granted for religious observance when this falls on a school day. This absence will not affect those children gaining 100% attendance for the year. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the child's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parents must inform school prior to or on the day of the absence to ensure the child's attendance record is correct. If school is not notified about the reason for this absence, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence. The school cannot authorise absences for

religious observance retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a child's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for children from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that children with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support children who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a child's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All children will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a child is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a child is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the child's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the child reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the child is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the child to stay in contact with other children during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any children with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the child is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of children with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.

- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying children's unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a child to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a child can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby children can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a child will be allowed to leave the premises. Parents will meet with the Headteacher, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent of their decision within one week of the request.

Parents will be required to collect their child at the school office when taking them off the premises; the child will be signed out and back in using the digital system at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the child leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No child will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time; this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of children, and understand the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All children are expected to be in their classes by 8.45am and 1.15pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any child with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out by a parent or carer at the school office and be signed back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the child, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Absent children

Children will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a child going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing child will inform the Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the child has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the child will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the child, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing child's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the child going missing.
- If the missing child has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the child has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the child to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the child has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that children understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the children whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Weekly celebration in assembly of all classes that have attendance above the school's target of 96%
- Weekly celebration in assembly of class that has the highest attendance that week; the winning class will take the attendance trophy to their class for the week
- Attendance certificates and prizes for all children with attendance of 100% for all three years of their time at Sitwell Infant School
- Letters home to parents to celebrate good attendance following attendance reviews each half term
- Letters home to parents to celebrate improved attendance following attendance reviews

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with children and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with children and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will raise parents' awareness of school attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Sharing the class attendance figures with the school community via weekly attendance newsletters on the website/twitter/google classroom
- Attendance display in school updated each week with attendance figures
- Half termly attendance newsletters shared to raise awareness of school attendance figures and the impact absence can have on children's attainment and well-being
- Attendance information on monthly newsletters, breaking down the Attendance Policy, so that parents can understand this

The school will ensure that there are at least two sets of emergency contact details for each child wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child where the child is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education; parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the child and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the child from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for child absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the child's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the child's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of children who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Young carers
- Children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Children with SEND

- Children who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support children at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress; giving praise where improvements are being seen.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on children who have attendance less than 50%, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these children are facing.

Where a child at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the child in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve children's attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after a half term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a child reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance. A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual children.
- Demographic groups, e.g. children from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of children, e.g. children with SEND, LAC and children eligible for FSM.
- Children at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of children and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data. The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk children as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development. Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for children who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role; this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting children to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Deletion of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A child's name will never be

removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when children's names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of children whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the child will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the child normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the child normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the child's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the child is going to live with and the date the child will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the child's other school and when the child began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the child's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered child and their attendance at any given time. Children's attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

Monitoring and review

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

*This policy will be reviewed biannually in the Autumn term.
Autumn 2024*

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Sitwell Infant School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that children's attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where children's attendance falls below the standard:

- An attendance poster is created and shared weekly with school community, detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
- An attendance newsletter is shared half termly to share updates with parents and expectations about attendance and punctuality with the whole school community.
- Contact by telephone is made with parents on the first day of absence for any child absence not reported. If school is unable to reach parents, an email will be sent. After the afternoon register, if parents have still not made contact with school, a telephone call will again be made. All contacts will be logged on Arbor on the child's attendance record. If a child is absent and school have not been informed, a code of 'O' will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If no contact has been made by the afternoon, a home visit will be made to ensure the child is safe and well. If there is no answer, telephone contact will be made again and a further home visit will be made the following day. School will continue to try to make contact with parents until the child returns to school. Contact details will then be checked to ensure these are accurate and up to date.
- Attendance figures are tracked each week and added to the school attendance spreadsheet. Emerging patterns with absences are monitored carefully.
- Formal monitoring of attendance takes place every 4-6 weeks. The attendance team meet to consider the current attendance figures, share successes and plan actions to support families where children's attendance is concerning.
- Letters are shared with parents and advice and support offered where attendance is concerning. Letter 1 is shared to raise parents' awareness of the school's concerns about their child's attendance. Letter 2 is shared to share the school's continued concerns and to organise a meeting to discuss concerns and offer formal support to families. An attendance plan may be put in place at this point. Minutes from the meeting are logged on CPOMS and shared with families so they are aware of what was agreed.
- Letters are also shared with those families where attendance is in line or above the school attendance target.
- Letters are also shared with those families who attendance has improved since the last attendance monitoring date.

Where attendance continues to be a concern after a meeting has been held offering support, school will follow the Rotherham Early Help 'Attendance Matters' Pathway for Schools from this point to support families and children.