



SUSI EARNSHAW

School of Academics & Performing Arts

Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy

Date: September 2026	Next review: September 2027
Ratified by: Susi Earnshaw (proprietor)	

1. Purpose and ethos

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to pupils' academic progress, vocational development, wellbeing and safeguarding. As a specialist theatre school, Susi Earnshaw also recognises that properly managed professional performances, filming, recording, modelling, auditions, recalls and other industry opportunities can form a valuable part of a young performer's development.

The school will therefore combine high expectations for attendance with an informed, proportionate approach to legitimate arts-industry commitments. Professional opportunity is not treated as a blanket exemption from education: each request is considered in context, the correct attendance code is used, safeguarding and licensing requirements are checked, and cumulative impact on learning is monitored.

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy reflects the Education Act 1996; the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; the Children and Young Persons Act 1963; the Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014; current Department for Education statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026); and DfE child performance licensing advice.

Susi Earnshaw's is an independent school. It maintains attendance and admission registers in accordance with the requirements applying to schools and uses the national attendance and absence codes in force from August 2024.

3. Responsibilities

The Proprietor oversees compliance and holds school leadership to account. Attendance Champion leads attendance strategy, authorises leave where appropriate, reviews data and patterns, and liaises with parents, the local authority and other agencies. Staff take accurate registers, check attendance against the Attendance Calendar as part of the daily attendance procedure, and report concerns promptly. Parents/carers must notify the school in advance of any known absence and must report unexpected absence by email to attendance@susiearnshaw.co.uk as soon as possible and no later than 9:30am on the first day of absence.

4. School day and registration

The school day begins at 8:30am. Pupils should be ready for registration at the start of the school day. Registers are taken for morning and afternoon sessions. A pupil arriving after the register starts but before it closes is recorded as late (L); arrival after the register closes is recorded using U for that session unless another lawful code applies.

5. Reporting unexpected absence

Parents/carers must report any unexpected absence by email to attendance@susiearnshaw.co.uk as soon as possible and no later than 9:30am on the first day of absence, stating the reason and, where known, the expected duration. If an absence has not been reported by 9:30am, the Attendance Champion or a delegated member of staff will contact home promptly to establish why the pupil is not present and to confirm that the pupil is safe.

The school maintains an Attendance Calendar as part of its daily attendance procedure. Known absences are entered onto the calendar in advance so that staff taking and checking registers are aware of approved or expected absence. Each school day, the attendance register is checked against the Attendance Calendar and any absence that is not already recorded or explained is followed up in accordance with the first-day response procedure.

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school in advance of any absence they know about. This includes professional performances, filming, rehearsals, auditions, recalls, castings, appointments and any other planned absence. Performance and rehearsal dates should be provided as soon as they are confirmed so that the Attendance Calendar can be updated and, where required, the appropriate leave, licensing, safeguarding, tuition and attendance-code arrangements can be considered before the absence takes place. Advance notification does not in itself mean that leave has been authorised; the school will confirm the decision where authorisation is required.

6. Attendance codes - key Susi Earnshaw's applications

Present: / (morning) and \ (afternoon). L is late before register closure; U is late after closure. I is illness; M is an agreed medical/dental appointment; R is religious observance; G is term-time holiday without leave; N is absence where the circumstances are not yet established; O is other unauthorised absence.

C1 is used for absence with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. This replaced the former use of P for performance absence. C is used for other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances where the school has granted leave and no more specific code applies. B is attendance at another place for an approved educational activity only when the statutory conditions are met, including educational purpose, school approval and appropriate physical supervision. W is approved work experience arranged as part of education.

The school will use the full current national code set where relevant. This summary is not a substitute for the current DfE code definitions.

7. Professional performances and regulated work

Susi Earnshaw's is supportive of legitimate professional opportunities. Parents/carers must inform the school as soon as performance, filming or related rehearsal dates are known, rather than waiting until the day of absence, so that the Attendance Calendar can be updated and the necessary arrangements considered. Where a pupil will miss school to take part in a regulated performance, the parent/production must provide sufficient information and evidence for the school to determine the appropriate attendance code and any licensing, safeguarding or tuition arrangements.

The school may consider the pupil's existing attendance, academic progress, examination or assessment commitments, the number and pattern of days requested, proposed tuition or catch-up, travel, welfare and safeguarding arrangements, and the educational or professional significance of the opportunity. The school will remain sympathetic to genuine licensed professional work while ensuring that education is not adversely affected.

Where a child would otherwise rely on a licensing exemption such as the four-day rule, parents/productions should note that DfE licensing advice states that the exemption cannot be relied upon where absence from school is required; a licence will be needed.

8. Auditions, recalls, castings and meetings

An audition, recall, casting, screen test, agency meeting or similar opportunity is not automatically a regulated performance and does not automatically qualify for C1. Requests should be made in advance wherever possible using the Professional Engagement / Audition Request Form and supported by evidence from the agent, casting director or production.

The Headteacher will consider such requests individually. Where leave is granted as an exceptional circumstance and no more specific code applies, code C may be appropriate. Pupils should attend school before or after the appointment wherever reasonably possible so that only the minimum necessary learning time is missed. Repeated or speculative castings resulting in significant absence will trigger a review with the family and, where relevant, the pupil's agent.

9. Rehearsals, filming, performances and tuition while working

Rehearsals connected to licensed professional performance may fall within the licensing arrangements. Parents/productions must provide the licence or relevant confirmation when requested. Where a pupil is working for a sustained period, the school expects clear arrangements for education, liaison with the production tutor where applicable, exchange of curriculum information and prompt return of completed work or progress information.

Work completed with a private or production tutor does not by itself mean the pupil should be coded as present at school. The attendance register code must reflect the pupil's actual statutory attendance circumstances.

10. Holidays and combining holidays with work

Term-time holidays are not treated as professional engagements. A family holiday should not be presented as travel connected with a performance, audition or professional booking unless the absence is genuinely required for that purpose. Unauthorised term-time holiday is recorded using G.

11. Monitoring and intervention

The school reviews attendance data and patterns regularly, including authorised professional absence, illness, lateness and repeated short absences. Persistent absence is generally identified when a pupil misses 10% or more of possible sessions. SETS will not wait for a threshold where an individual pattern already causes concern.

Intervention will be supportive and proportionate: discussion with the pupil and family; identification of barriers; catch-up or pastoral support; an Attendance Concern & Support Plan; liaison with external services or the local authority where appropriate; and formal escalation where support has not secured improvement or safeguarding/legal concerns arise.

12. Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained or unusual absence, conflicting information about a pupil's whereabouts, or absence linked to exploitation, neglect, health, emotional wellbeing or other vulnerability will be escalated to the DSL in line with safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures. Industry work must also comply with applicable child performance licensing, chaperone, supervision and welfare requirements.

13. Records and evidence

The school will retain attendance records, absence explanations, professional engagement requests, licensing/evidence supplied, decisions, support plans and relevant communications in accordance with its data-protection and records-management arrangements. Decisions should be sufficiently clear that the school can explain why leave was or was not granted and why a particular attendance code was used.

14. Linked documents

Document B Attendance Monitoring Register; Document C Unexplained Absence / First-Day Response Record; Document D Attendance Concern & Support Plan; Document E Attendance Review Record; Document F Late Arrival / Early Departure Record; Document G Attendance Escalation & Safeguarding Decision Record; Document H Professional Engagement / Audition / Recall Request & Decision Form; Document I Monthly Attendance Dashboard; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Children Missing in Education Policy; Data Protection/GDPR Policy.

Source and guidance note

Key sources reviewed for this 2026/27 edition: Department for Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated 9 July 2026); DfE school census attendance-code guidance; GOV.UK child performance licensing guidance; Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014. These sources should be checked again at policy review or sooner if guidance changes.