

**Attendance Policy**

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| **Date:** 17th July 2025 | **Date of next review:** 17th July 2026 |
| **Ratified by:** Susi Earnshaw (Proprietor) |

**1. Introduction and Aims**

The Susi Earnshaw Theatre School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment where all children can thrive and achieve their full potential. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for children to benefit from the education offered and to develop positive habits for life. This policy outlines our school's approach to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality, and sets out our admissions procedures, in line with the statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (DfE, May 2024).

This policy aims to:

* Promote high levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
* Clearly define responsibilities for attendance within the school and for parents/carers.
* Establish clear procedures for monitoring, reporting, and improving attendance.
* Provide a supportive framework for pupils and families facing attendance challenges.
* Ensure a fair, transparent, and legally compliant admissions process.
* Foster a culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility.

**2. Legal Framework**

This policy is written in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

* The Education Act 1996
* The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
* The Children Act 1989 & 2004
* "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" (Department for Education, May 2024)

**3. Roles and Responsibilities**

**3.1 The Proprietor is responsible for:**

* Ensuring the school has an effective attendance policy and procedures in place.
* Monitoring attendance data and challenging the school where necessary.
* Ensuring the school meets its statutory duties regarding attendance.
* Holding the Headteacher accountable for attendance outcomes.

**3.2 The Headteacher and Attendance Head (champion) is responsible for:**

* Leading the school's attendance strategy and promoting a culture of high attendance.
* Ensuring staff are aware of and adhere to the policy.
* Overseeing the attendance monitoring system.
* Liaising with the local authority and other external agencies.
* Analysing attendance data and identifying patterns/trends.
* Implementing and overseeing early intervention strategies.
* Ensuring robust admission and pupil registration procedures are followed.
* Making decisions regarding leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

**3.3 All School Staff are responsible for:**

* Promoting the importance of regular and punctual attendance to pupils and parents.
* Taking accurate and timely registers at the start of both morning and afternoon sessions and for all extracurricular activities where attendance is expected.
* Following school procedures for recording and reporting absences and lateness.
* Noting any concerns about a pupil's attendance or punctuality and reporting them to the designated attendance lead.
* Creating a welcoming and engaging learning environment that encourages attendance.

**3.4 Parents/Carers are responsible for:**

* Ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time, every day the school is open, unless there is an authorised reason for absence.
* Notifying the school on the first day of any absence, 9:00, explaining the reason for absence.
* Providing medical evidence (e.g., doctor's note, prescription) for prolonged or frequent absences due to illness if requested by the school.
* Making routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
* Working in partnership with the school to address any attendance concerns.
* Not taking their child out of school during term time for holidays.

**4. School Day Timings and Registration**

* The school day begins at 8:30am.
* All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms ready for learning by the start of registration.

**5. Recording Attendance and Absences**

Attendance will be recorded using the following DfE codes:

* **/** (Present)
* **L** (Late, before register closed)
* **U** (Late, after register closed - unauthorised absence)
* **C** (Authorised absence - agreed school activity)
* **B** (Authorised absence - off-site educational activity)
* **D** (Authorised absence - dual registered pupil)
* **E** (Authorised absence - excluded but not taught off-site)
* **H** (Authorised absence - holiday, previously authorised by school – *Please note: This code is now rarely used as holidays during term time are generally not authorised*)
* **I** (Authorised absence - illness)
* **J** (Authorised absence - approved sporting activity)
* **M** (Authorised absence - medical or dental appointment)
* **N** (Unauthorised absence - no reason given/reason not accepted)
* **O** (Unauthorised absence - unauthorised absence, no explanation)
* **P** (Authorised absence - participation in a performance)
* **R** (Authorised absence - religious observance)
* **S** (Authorised absence - sickness at school, pupil sent home)
* **T** (Authorised absence - travelling to/from approved off-site activity)
* **V** (Authorised absence - approved educational visit)
* **W** (Authorised absence - work experience)
* **X** (Unauthorised absence - school not open to pupils)
* **Y** (Unauthorised absence - exceptional circumstances agreed by LA)
* **Z** (Unauthorised absence - pupil not required to attend)
* **#** (Planned whole or partial school closure)

**6. Punctuality**

* The school gates open at 8:00am
* Pupils should be in their classrooms by 8:30am
* Any pupil arriving after Morning Registration, but before the first class will be marked as **L** (late).
* Any pupil arriving after the register has formally closed will be marked as **U**(unauthorised absence) for the morning session. This will impact their overall attendance record and may trigger intervention.
* Persistent lateness will be treated as seriously as persistent absence and will be addressed through the school's attendance procedures.

**7. Reporting Absences**

* Parents/carers must notify the school of their child's absence by 9:00am on the first day of absence, preferably by telephone 0208 441 5010 or email info@susiearnshaw.co.uk
* A reason for absence must be provided.
* For prolonged absences parents/carers should keep the school updated regularly.
* If no notification is received, the school office will attempt to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be made, this will be escalated to the attendance lead and may result in a home visit or welfare check.

**8. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

**8.1 Authorised Absence:** Absence will only be authorised by the Headteacher under the following circumstances:

* Illness (medical evidence may be requested for frequent or prolonged illness).
* Medical or dental appointments (evidence of appointment may be requested, and appointments should be outside school hours where possible).
* Religious observance.
* Participation in an approved sporting activity or performance.
* Exceptional family circumstances (e.g., bereavement) agreed in advance with the Headteacher.
* Educational visits or activities approved by the school.

**8.2 Unauthorised Absence:** Absence will be unauthorised if:

* No reason for absence is provided.
* The reason provided is not considered valid by the Headteacher (e.g., a birthday treat, shopping).
* Parents/carers have not sought prior permission for absence.
* A pupil arrives after the register has closed (coded U).
* Parents/carers take a child on holiday during term time without exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher.

**9. Leave of Absence During Term Time (Holidays)**

In line with government regulations, the Headteacher **cannot** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

* Requests for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's "Leave of Absence Request Form" well in advance of the proposed absence.
* Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
* Factors considered will include but are not limited to: the pupil's attendance record, the timing of the absence (e.g., during exams, assessment periods), and the nature of the exceptional circumstances.
* If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent.
* Unauthorised holidays will result in the absence being marked as **G** (Unauthorised Holiday) and may lead to the issuance of a Penalty Notice by the Local Authority.

**10. Monitoring Attendance and Intervention**

The school will rigorously monitor attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of developing attendance issues.

**10.1 Early Intervention and Support:**

* **Tier 1: School-Level Support (Universal & Targeted)**
	+ **Daily Monitoring:** Absence notifications and follow-up calls for unexplained absences.
	+ **Weekly/Fortnightly Reviews:** The attendance lead will review attendance data to identify emerging patterns (e.g., frequent illness, persistent lateness).
	+ **Informal Contact:** Initial concerns will trigger informal contact with parents/carers (e.g., phone call, text, informal meeting) to understand barriers and offer support.
	+ **Support Plan:** For pupils with emerging attendance concerns, the school will collaboratively develop a support plan with the family, which may include:
		- Referral to pastoral team
		- Setting attendance targets.
		- Signposting to external support services (e.g., Early Help).
		- Daily check-ins.
	+ **Attendance Meetings:** Formal meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns, review progress, and agree next steps.
* **Tier 2: Intensive Support and Formal Procedures**
	+ If attendance does not improve despite Tier 1 interventions, or if attendance is below [e.g., 90%] and causing significant concern, the school will escalate to more formal procedures.
	+ **Formal Warning Letters:** Letters outlining attendance concerns, the impact on learning, and potential legal consequences.
	+ **Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP):** A formal plan developed with the family, outlining specific actions, targets, and support.
	+ **Referral to Local Authority Attendance Team:** If attendance remains a concern, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team (LAAT) for further support and intervention. This may involve:
		- Meetings with the LAAT, parents/carers, and school.
		- More intensive support from the LAAT.
		- Consideration of legal action (e.g., Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Prosecution).

**10.2 Persistent Absence (PA):** A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below **90%**. These pupils will be a priority for intervention.

**11. Admission Procedures (General):**

* Applications for admission should be made via [e.g., the Local Authority's coordinated admission scheme, directly to the school for in-year admissions].
* The school follows [e.g., the LA's published admission arrangements, its own published admission arrangements available on the school website].
* Parents/carers are encouraged to visit the school and speak to staff before applying.

**12. De-Registration from the School Roll**

A pupil may only be removed from the school roll in accordance with Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended). This includes, but is not limited to:

* Where the pupil has reached compulsory school leaving age.
* Where the pupil is registered at another school.
* Where the pupil has ceased to attend school and the Headteacher is satisfied that the pupil is receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.
* Where the pupil has been permanently excluded.
* Where the pupil has been absent for a continuous period of at least 20 school days and the Headteacher has failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain the reason for absence, and parents have not notified the school that the child is absent for a good reason.
* Where the pupil has a medical condition preventing attendance and the Headteacher is satisfied that suitable education cannot be provided by the school or otherwise.

The school will always inform the Local Authority immediately when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register under any of these grounds.

**13. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body, or earlier if changes to legislation or guidance require it