

Attendance policy

Sancton Wood School

For Early Years please see separate Attendance and Absence Policy.

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1. 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 We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), attendance is managed in accordance with the *Early Years Attendance and Absence Policy*, which aligns with the EYFS Statutory Framework (Section 3 – Safeguarding and Welfare).

2. 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents>The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

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Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs

Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy and reporting regularly to the governors.

Governors will review and discuss attendance data and trends termly as part of the Head's Report, and the outcomes of this review will be recorded in the Governing Board minutes.

3.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for:

The implementation of this policy at the school

Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

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, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

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

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Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader Hannah Settle, Vice Principal Pastoral, is responsible for:

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining 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

Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

Ensuring that HOS (Heads of School) are able to build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues

Working with HOS and SENDCo to create intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families .

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Hannah Settle, Ed Batty, Kylie Hodges. Julia Cottam and can be contacted via 01223 471 703.

3.4 The attendance champion

Hannah Settle is the school attendance champion, and she will work with HOS in the following areas:

Embedding attendance as a priority in the school's ethos policies and improvement plans.

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Working with education welfare champions to tackle persistent absence

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining high attendance across the school.

Leading staff training and ensuring consistent application of attendance processes.

Liaising with governors, the local authority, and external agencies to remove barriers to attendance.

Reporting attendance trends and improvement actions to the governing board.

The attendance champion at the School is Hannah Settle and can be contacted via email:

hannah.settle@sanctonwood.co.uk

3.5 Class teachers/Form teachers

Class teachers/form 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 twice a day.

3.6 School staff (Admin/office)

School staff will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

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Transfer calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled sessions on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Class teacher/Form teacher/Head of Schools/Vice Principals can be contacted via 01223 471 403, or via their school email. (All staff emails can be found on the parent portal or can be provided by the front office)

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school/Timetabled sessions every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 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 the day and in the afternoon/at the beginning of each lesson. 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:

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- 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 in the **Senior School** starts at 8:30am and ends at 4:00pm Monday – Thursday and 3:30pm on Fridays

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 8:40am . The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:05pm

The school day in the **Prep School** starts at 8:30am and ends at 3:40pm EYFS/KS1 Monday –Thursday and 3.50pm KS2. On Friday school ends at 3.20pm for EYFS/SK1 and 3.30pm for KS2 Pupils must arrive

in school by 8:30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 8:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1:40pm for EYFS/KS1 and for KS2 the register will taken at 2pm and close at 2.10pm

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

4.2 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 9:00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01223 471 703 office.seniors@sanctonwood.co.uk office.prep@sanctonwood.co.uk

They will email the office and copy in form teacher/class teacher. Alternatively, parents/carers can phone the office and speak to a member of the admin team or leave a voice message.

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 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.

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4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

In the Prep school, if a student arrives after the gate has closed at 8.40am then their parents will need to sign them in at reception via our electronic sign in system. In the Senior School, if a student arrives late then they must enter the school by the front entrance, tell the front office that they have arrived and sign-in at the electronic sign in system. They then must hand their phone in and then head off to lessons.

4.5 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. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call the student's mobile if this has been provided (senior students) When we cannot make contact with parents, emergency contact or the student then we will call the police.

- 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 on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare champion
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team champion
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: The school will contact the Local Authority to report the absences and that support has been unsuccessful. (see section 5.2 below)

4.5a Safeguarding concerns linked to attendance

Where attendance concerns raise safeguarding issues, these will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, in line with the school's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*. Persistent or unexplained absence will always be considered a potential indicator of harm or neglect.

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- [4.6 Reporting to parents](#)

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels every termly. This is done through school reports and communication from form teachers if there is a concern about attendance.

[5. Authorised and unauthorised absence](#)

[5.1 Approval for term-time absence](#)

The principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The principal 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, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as **situations that are beyond the control of the student or their family and that justify an absence from school**. These circumstances often involve:

- **Family emergencies:** In cases of family emergencies, such as the death of a close relative or a serious illness in the family, absences may be justified.
- **Court orders:** If a child is required to attend court or other legal proceedings, this would be considered an exceptional circumstance.
- **Other justified reasons:** In some cases, other circumstances may be considered exceptional, such as natural disasters, extreme weather conditions, or unforeseen events.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, leave of absence for the purposes of a family holiday will need to be discussed with the head of school/vice principal/principal. These will be decided on a case-by-case basis and the school will take into consideration the students attendance record.

The school considers each application for all term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted via email as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The head of school/Vice Principal/Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

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- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- 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
- Attending work experience
- 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

Sanctions

Our school places high value on regular attendance, as it directly supports each pupil's academic progress and wellbeing. While we work in partnership with families to encourage excellent attendance, there are times when concerns may need to be addressed formally.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **93%**, the school will:

1. **Initial Contact** – Parents will receive a phone call from the school to discuss the reasons for absence and to offer support. In most cases the form teacher will make this call.
2. **Written Follow-Up** – If attendance does not improve, the school will send a written reminder by email, outlining our concerns and the importance of consistent attendance.
3. **Meeting with Parents** – Continued poor attendance may lead to a formal meeting with parents and senior staff to agree on next steps and additional support where appropriate.

If, after these steps, attendance does not improve, the school may deem this a **breach of the admissions agreement**. In such cases, the school reserves the right to withdraw the pupil's place.

Each case will be considered individually, with fairness, sensitivity, and the best interests of the child in mind.

5.2 Persistent absence

The school follows the Department for Education's threshold for persistent absence (attendance below 90%). Where a pupil's attendance falls below this level, the school will work closely with parents and external agencies to address underlying causes. In

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accordance with statutory requirements, cases of persistent absence will be reported to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

In the Prep School, we promote attendance by awarding an attendance cup to the class with the highest attendance each week during our Celebration Assembly. In addition to this, children who have 100% attendance each term will get an Attendance certificate during assembly at the end of the Michaelmas, Lent and Summer term. At the end of each term, there will be a treat for all children who have maintained attendance of 96% or above such as a 'Popcorn or Pizza party with a movie!

In the **Senior School**, we promote attendance by recognising those classes with the highest attendance each week in our Celebration Assembly on a Friday. In addition to this, we recognise those children who have 100% attendance each term with a front of the line lunch pass for the first week of the following term.

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7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance and 7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school recognises that student attendance can be impacted by a variety of factors and circumstances. When concerns arise about a student's absences, the school will proactively contact parents/carers to discuss the situation and collaboratively develop a plan to improve attendance.

The school aims to take a flexible, individualised approach, which may involve measures such as a part-time schedule, coordination with external support agencies, therapy, support through the school's ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) program, or providing a quiet workspace for students who are feeling overwhelmed.

Any adjustments or interventions will be implemented with the full consent and involvement of the student and their parents/carers. Through open communication and tailored support, the school strives to remove barriers and facilitate consistent attendance for all students.

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.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

To support students in successfully reintegrating into the school environment after an extended absence, the school will collaborate closely with students and their parents/carers to develop an individualised transition plan. Depending on the circumstances, this plan may involve a gradual return through a part-time schedule, working with the school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) to address any emotional or social concerns, or a phased approach that combines supervised time in a quiet workspace under the guidance of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team with gradual reintroduction to class lessons. The transition process will be reviewed weekly, with targets set in partnership with the student and their parents/carers. When appropriate, the school will also coordinate with external agencies and support services to ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach to facilitating the student's smooth transition back into fulltime learning.

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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:
		• 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