



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every student 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 ensure Students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 SGS Forest Local School Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › 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 Students
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to Students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is S.Iannone

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is J Cinderey

3.5 SGS Forest Staff

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance during am and pm tutor times, as well as during e.g. fire evacuation

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for each lesson (in the first 10 minutes of lesson start)

Teaching assistants/SEMH & counselling staff doing small group/individual student intervention work are responsible for informing the school Attendance Officer which students they are working with.

SGS Forest use an online attendance system on Arbor – which should be used by staff – if there are any technical issues, the member of staff is responsible for recording on paper students in their care & ensure that this is given to the Attendance Officer in an expedient manner.

3.6 SGS Forest Admin Team

SGS Forest admin staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Discuss with SLT Attendance lead /Heads of House/tutors opportunities to provide parents/carers with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every 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, routine appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time (am registration is 8.30am)
- › Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students 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 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

If no such communication received from parent/carer, the SGS Forest Attendance Officer (or a delegated member of SGS Forest staff member) will contact by phone/text/email the student's parent/carer – if that, is

not acknowledged/no response received, the nominated emergency contacts (including identified social worker where applicable) will be communicated with. If there is still no response, the school will either conduct a home visit or contact the police to do a welfare check. This may result in either a referral to Early Help or the completion of a MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form) where there are significant welfare and/or safeguarding concerns.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer 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 student 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 first instance, the student's tutor will make contact with parent/carer to discuss concerns and ways forward
- › If there is still no improvement in punctuality the parent/carer will be invited in for a meeting with the tutor/deputy Head of House/Head of House

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- › Call the student'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 student's emergency contacts, the school may either a home visit or the police to do a welfare check
- › 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
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and will liaise with families regarding any concerns.

All parents/carers informed of the need to have consistently good attendance and the procedures followed where there are concerns.

Tutors remain first point of contact for parents/carers (aside from routine reporting of a student's absence)

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' may include:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement & performance level
- Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". The Headteacher may specify that only one day will be authorized. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller Students 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 student is attending educational provision

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with a leave of absence request form, accessible via The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Legal action to enforce school attendance

Gloucestershire County Council and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. They can give the parent/carer:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

A parent/carer can be given one or more of these but the council does not have to do this before prosecuting you.

Parenting Order

This means the parent/carer will have to go to parenting classes. They will also have to do what the court says to improve their child's school attendance.

Education Supervision Order

If the council thinks a parent/carer needs support getting their child to go to school but the parent/carer is not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order.

A supervisor will be appointed to help get the child into education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.

School Attendance Order

A parent/carer will get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child is not getting an education.

The parent/carer has 15 days to provide evidence that they have registered their child with the school listed in the order or that the parent/carer is electively home educating their child. If they do not, the parent/carer could be prosecuted or given a fine.

Fine

Gloucestershire council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if this is not paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid after 28 days, the parent/carer may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Parent/carer information letter about the negative impact of 'broken week' attendance.

House points, rewards and certificates for students demonstrating consistently good or significantly improved attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

SGS Forest track and monitor student attendance using the threshold guidance below

% Attendance Threshold	RAG Status	Action	Next steps	Impact
95%+	Green	Tutor house points for individual students	Attendance certificates & rewards	Recognition of student engagement in school community
85% - 94.9%	Yellow	Tutor makes contact home	Identify actions to support and improve attendance with parents – tutor monitoring	Attendance improves for the individual student
<85%	Orange	If tutor contact has not had an impact on % attendance. HoH/dHoH invites parent/carer in for attendance meeting	Identify actions to support and improve attendance with parents – dHoH /HoH monitoring Attendance meeting with EWO	Attendance improves for the individual student
<70%	Red	If dHoH / HoH interventions exhausted, then student is added to persistent absentee list	Phone call home & home visit to identify barriers to coming into school	Creation of action plan

7.1 Monitoring attendance

SGS Forest will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

SGS Forest will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify Students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these Students and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

SGS Forest will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to tutors and Heads of House, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of Students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- › [SGS Forest Persistent Absence Strategy 2022-23](#)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by SGS Forest SLT Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the SGS Forest Local School Board & the SGSAT Trust Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › SGSAT Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › SGS Forest Behaviour & Rewards policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed

B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day