



LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed October 2023

Next review Term 1 October 2025

Principles:

We are aware that parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 2011 to make sure that their children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Every day counts.

Aims:

- To ensure that all pupils of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis.
- To ensure that good lines of communication are in place so that parents can contact school to report their child's absence.

Procedures:

The school's 'Attendance Policy' is updated in response to any 'Amendments to school attendance regulations' as outlined by the DfE at the time of policy review.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Please also refer to Appendix 4 –Attendance Intervention Procedures for Parents from SBC Attendance Strategy

Illness and other legitimate reasons	If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and each day of absence thereafter, preferably before 8.40am. The school operates an 'every day of absence' call system. If the school has not been informed then the school will ring the parent to investigate the reason for absence. Absences will not be authorised without contact with a parent. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness such as a Doctors note may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time: verbal messages or notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that take place during school time. The office will log all absences when telephoned in and inform the class teacher. As a school, we are aiming for zero unauthorised absence. The school will follow DfE guidance on recording covid related absences.
Holidays	The head teacher is not able to grant holiday leave time following this guidance. Applications for time off for exceptional circumstances must be made at least 4 weeks before the proposed absence where possible. Any time off taken without prior authorisation is unauthorised absence. The head teacher will consider all requests on a case by case basis and will consider the following factors when making a decision:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age of the child • The time of the year • The nature of the request • The overall attendance pattern of the pupil • The child’s stage of education and progress <p>Time off in term-time will only be granted where exceptional circumstances* apply. When time off is approved then it is an authorised absence. Should parents keep the child away in excess of the agreed period then the extra time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.</p> <p>*Exceptional circumstances could be where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are Forces Personnel and time-off is requested before or after a posting • Parents’ employment restrictions for example working in emergency services – evidence from the employer should be attached • Significant events or circumstances <p>The following would not meet the criteria unless there are additional circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatives coming to visit • Cheaper holidays • Family day trips or treats • Visiting family who have different holidays <p>Unauthorised absences could result in a fixed penalty issued by the Local Authority. (See below)</p> <p>Parents are advised that they should not book time off until authorisation has been granted from the school.</p>
Lateness	Children must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Late arrival after registration without authorisation is counted as ‘unauthorised absence’. Late arrivals will be recorded in the register. If a child is persistently late then a letter will be sent home to parents.
Education Welfare Officer	The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) is available to visit the school and check on attendance figures and follow up any concerns the school may have regarding poor attenders or pupil welfare. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school; persistent failure to do so may lead to the Local Authority taking legal action.
Deleting a pupil from the admission register.	<p>If the school authorises an absence for more than 10 school days and the pupil does not return within 10 days of the agreed return date, then he/she may be deleted from the roll. This is not the case if the school has reason to believe the pupil’s return is prevented by an ‘unavoidable cause’.</p> <p>If the absence is not authorised, then the pupil may be deleted from the roll after 20 days.</p>
The Education (Penalty notices) England regulations 2013	If an absence is unauthorised, the Local Authority could issue a fixed fine of £60 per child, per parent, per period of absence. This must be paid within 21 days. The fine rises to £120 per child, per parent, per period of absence if they pay within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts. Any money collected is not given to the school but retained by Swindon Borough Council.

We believe the above strategy is effective in maintaining good pupil attendance and pupil outcomes.

Intervention:

Staged Intervention Model — Stage One



Staged Intervention Model — Stage Two



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This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Appendix 1 - Swindon Borough Council Attendance Strategy 2022-2025 – this outlines full procedures for supporting children and families with attendance

Appendix 2 – Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Appendix 3 – School Attendance Information for Parents

Appendix 4 – Attendance Improvement Plan format

Appendix 5 – Every School Day Counts



Attendance Strategy 2022-2025

A Graduated Partnership Approach to improving attendance



https://www.swindon.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8828/attendance_strategy_2022-25.pdf

Appendix 2



Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential in order for students to maximise the opportunities available to them. Swindon Education Welfare will continue to investigate cases of regular non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable.

Regular attendance is in accordance with the rules prescribed by each school.

Under Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 and Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Local Authorities are able to issue a Penalty Notice for certain cases of absence from school. A Penalty Notice will involve the recipient paying a fine of £60.00 if paid within 21 days rising to £120.00 if paid between 22 and 28 days. A Notice served by first class post is deemed to have been received on the second working day after posting.

In order to comply with Human Rights legislation it is essential that Penalty Notices be issued in a consistent manner. This Code of Conduct will govern the issuing of Penalty Notices for Swindon Borough Council.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices

In Swindon, Penalty Notices will be issued by the Lead Officer for Legal Processes, Education Welfare. The Lead Officer will ensure that the issuing of Penalty Notices is closely monitored with recipients paying the relevant fine.

In cases where the penalty is not paid within the appropriate period, Swindon Borough Council will instigate action through the courts as required by legislation.

For any person to be prosecuted the elements of s444 must be proven, the service cannot prosecute just because a notice has not been paid. The Rules of Evidence and Criminal Procedural Rules apply, any prosecution must meet the 'evidence test' and the 'public interest test' and must be proportionate otherwise a prosecution may not proceed. This will be in conjunction with Swindon Borough Councils Enforcement Policy.

The maximum number of Penalty Notices which can be issued to one parent for an individual child is three in any 12 month period.

Education Welfare will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from the Head Teachers of Schools/Colleges/Academies in Swindon, the Wiltshire Constabulary and neighbouring LAs. Education Welfare will action these requests providing that the relevant information is supplied in the specified manner, and that the circumstances of the unauthorised absence from School/College/Academy match those detailed in this Code of Conduct.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice will be issued

The issuing of Penalty Notices is considered appropriate:

1. In cases of absence from School/College/Academy when the pupil has been taken on a holiday during term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

In such a case, each parent will receive a separate Penalty Notice for each child taken out of school and each will be responsible for the payment of that Notice.

Should a parent fail or refuse to pay any Penalty Notice issued for this reason, then the evidence provided by the School/College/Academy will be the only information laid before the court. There will be no automatic Education Welfare Officer involvement.

2. Following a Truancy Watch Patrol enquiries will be undertaken with the School/ College/Academy of any pupil stopped. In cases where the School/College/Academy has recorded the absence of the pupil as unauthorised then a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Penalty Notices will not be issued during Truancy Patrols as further investigation may be required in order to obtain all the relevant evidence to prove the offence.

3. In the early stages of casework, a School/College/Academy might form an opinion that the issuing of a Penalty Notice is appropriate, e.g. in cases where a parent continually fails to provide an explanation for a pupil's absence in accordance with the school's procedures, and remains at an unacceptable level. This could include late arrival after registration has closed.

4. Following notification from a School/College/Academy to the LA that a pupil has had an unauthorised absence from School/College/Academy, the circumstances of which appear to have been totally avoidable (*e.g. too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting, shopping*).

5. Following a referral from the Wiltshire Constabulary, procedures as at (2) above will be followed.

6. When a child is found to be in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion from school. (Section 103 and 105 Education and Inspections Act 2006). Reasonable justification may include a prearranged medical appointment or a medical emergency

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by Swindon LA in any case in which the authority determines that:

- a) it ought not to have been issued – i.e. it was issued outside the terms of the Code of Conduct; or where no offence has been committed; or
- b) it has been issued to the wrong person; or
- c) it is materially defective

Where a Penalty Notice has been withdrawn in accordance with the above, a notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the recipient and any amount paid by way of penalty in pursuance of that notice shall be repaid to the person who paid it. No proceedings shall be continued or instituted against the recipient for the offence in connection with which the withdrawn notice was issued or for an offence under s.444(1A) of the Act arising out of the same circumstances.

Payment of Penalty Notices

The arrangements for the paying of penalties will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

There is no mechanism within either legislation or this code for the collection of non-payment neither is there an opportunity or pay in instalments and there is no right of appeal to the notice. Non-payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice must result in prosecution to be **considered** of that person under the Education Act 1996.

Appendix 3

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

ARE YOU PLANNING TO TAKE A FAMILY HOLIDAY OR AN EXTENDED TRIP OVERSEAS DURING TERM TIME?

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION?

PLEASE THINK CAREFULLY!

We have no wish to deprive families of their well earned annual break but we need to raise parental awareness of the following issues:

- By law you must ask in advance for permission for your child to miss school (it is not simply enough to tell the school they are going away)
- Parents can request a term time absence of up to 10 days each school year, but it is at the discretion of the Headteacher as to whether it is approved or not, based on the current attendance pattern of the child, the nature and purpose of the request. Authorised absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances and NOT for holidays
- We recognise that it is often expensive to take holidays during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term time leave for their child. However, this is not a valid reason for such requests to be authorised.

You should consider the following:

- Arrange family holidays and extended trips to coincide with school holidays
- Try to include a school holiday within the requested time
- Don't take time out in September when the children are getting used to a new teacher and have just had a 6 week break
- Avoid time prior to or when there are important examinations or assessments (check with school first)
- Always ask the school well in advance for permission
- Do not book your holiday in term time.
- Prior notification helps your teacher plan carefully for the absence

APPENDIX 4

Pupil Attendance Plan

- This fully editable document provides a template for creating an individual attendance plan. You are free to add, amend or delete sections to allow you to address the needs of your individual school or pupils.

How to use this template

Writing **in blue** gives suggestions for how to complete the plan. Delete these instructions and replace them with your own content.

Please note: It is important to capture a full picture of support offered over time. Therefore, rather than deleting or editing historical entries, it is better to add subsequent interventions or updates to the plan along with the date that these were added. If the school has any other additional record keeping systems (such as an online safeguarding system), staff should ensure that the relevant details are recorded in both places.

The separate form to record review meetings can be copied and pasted as many times as needed.

<i>Name of pupil</i>		
<i>Year group/class</i>		
<i>Staff supporting with attendance plan and roles</i>		
<i>Date plan was agreed</i>		
<i>Attendance history</i>		
Include details of attendance percentages (broken down by attendance code where appropriate), details of trends or patterns over time and any historical factors that might be relevant.		
<i>Current risk factors/current barriers to attendance</i>		
To help with this, it might be useful to carry out an individual attendance audit . We have provided an editable template that can be used in conjunction with this plan.		
<i>Targets</i>	<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Date each milestone achieved</i>
Target 1 - add specific target here	For each target provide a number of measurable milestones •	

Target 2 - add specific target here	•	
Target 2 - add specific target here	•	

Strategies to be implemented by the school

Details of strategy (including date commenced)	Purpose of implementing strategy	Member of staff responsible
E.g. daily wake-up calls for two weeks, starting from 16 th October	E.g. to establish an effective morning routine	E.g. parent support worker to carry out calls

Expectations of the pupil

Details of expectations	How this has been communicated to the pupil?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)
E.g. set an alarm for 7 a.m. every day	E.g. discussion with attendance officer and ongoing reminders	E.g. attendance officer will monitor this daily

Expectations of the family

Details of expectations	How this has been communicated to the pupil's family?	Monitoring arrangements (who by and when?)
E.g. for parents to phone school before 9 a.m. to report the reason for any absence	E.g. expectations explained during face-to-face attendance meeting and agreed by parents-signed plan	E.g. attendance officer /DT/DSL etc

External support

Details of agency/partner	Support being offered	Date support commenced
E.g. social care	E.g. Early Help referral has been made as mother is reporting that she feels overwhelmed	E.g. referral made 2 nd November - currently awaiting first contact

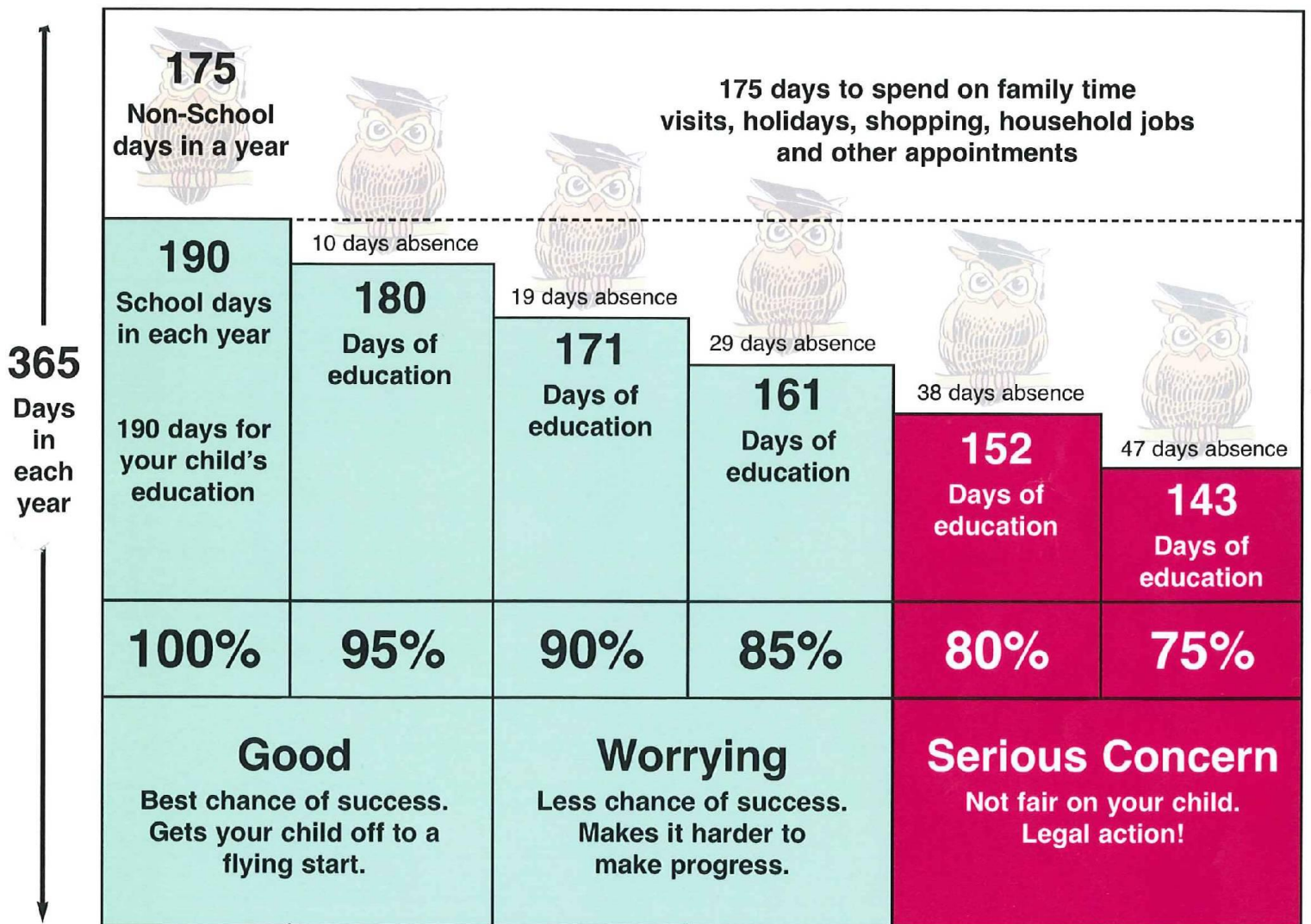
Record of attendance reviewing meeting

Date of review	
Individuals present	
Situation since last review	
Milestones achieved since last review	
Areas discussed	
Outcome of meeting (tick as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue with initial plan <input type="checkbox"/> Continue plan with new or supplementary strategies added <input type="checkbox"/> Escalate attendance plan to next stage
Date of next review	
Headteacher Signature	

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS!



- Days off school add up to lost learning.
- Please don't let your children miss out on the education they deserve.
- Every school day counts.



If you are worried about your child's attendance please talk to your school about it or contact The Education Welfare Service on 01793 463095