



Attendance Policy

November 2019

Attendance Policy

Introductory statement

Social Arts for Education (SAFE) understands that many of its students have school-related anxiety which can impact negatively on attendance. However, SAFE also understands that avoiding school only worsens anxiety and can lead to young people avoiding engaging in other areas of life and education. Therefore, to prevent avoidant behaviours, SAFE seeks to ensure that all its students receive an individualised and appropriate education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with students and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty and to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will address the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives SAFE has established good lines of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Implementation

It is the responsibility of the school leadership team (SLT) to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Aims

The aim of SAFE's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance at school is key to steady student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible. SAFE takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, students and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support. This document is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and SEND.

Legal Framework

SAFE is dedicated to complying with attendance laws, set out by the legal framework and has produced this document accordingly. The Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of

every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable — (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A person begins to be of compulsory school age — (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age. Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) — (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following, (b) if he attains that age on that day, or (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietorial body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the proprietorial body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively. Nominate or identify a member of the proprietorial body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and report these to the parents and local authorities.
- take time at proprietorial body meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year. Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future

SLT

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the SLT will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the

- attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively. Develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily. Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment

- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school, and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- support a regular routine at home in terms of extended learning, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher.
- sign all terms and conditions within the Admissions Handbook.

Students

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we give our students regular and positive feedback about the importance of regular attendance by awarding certificates and other rewards that can include off-site visits. We request that students:

- be aware of the school's attendance rules, and when and what class they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late. Students are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is upon admission. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- sign all relevant terms and conditions within the Admissions Handbook

Procedure for Reporting Absences

1. When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence.
2. Parents/carers should let us know what date they expect the child to return.
3. For all absences, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences. Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

Categories of Absence

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a **phone call to alert the school on the first day of absence.**

The Sickness Policy (appendix 2) must be adhered to. When the child returns to school they should bring a **written note from their parent explaining the absence** – this is for the school records. For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

Mental Health

Given the difficulties faced by many of our students, we recognise that poor mental health can have a significant impact upon school attendance. In situations where this is the case, although we are very sympathetic to the issues faced by any student in mental health crisis, we cannot allow stasis - our expectation is that the student's family engage with any and all help (for example outreach, mediation, online work) that we offer in order to facilitate the child's return to school and to keep them up to speed with their peers. We will work closely with outside agencies such as CAMHS to ensure that the appropriate support is given to any child in this situation and that if a new transition back to school needs to be planned, any such transition is conducted at a speed that is suitable for the situation and the child's needs, and is evidenced as such. A careful, graduated approach will be taken to plan appropriate support. **Absence taken for mental health issues will be treated as authorised absence if correct procedures to notify SAFE are followed by parents and students.** Please

note, continuous absence that leads to attendance falling below 90% may result in Social Arts for Education making case that we can no longer meet a child's needs.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible and proof of appointments should be shown to the school office.

Authorised absences

There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as, for a family bereavement.

Outreach or Interventions off-site

Outreach or Interventions off-site are treated as authorised absences.

Family holidays and extended leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration. Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request and the length of absence approved. All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return. It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time. If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the school or prosecution by the local authority.

Religious observance

SAFE recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification before the start of the academic year or before the child's first day (if starting mid-term)..

Late arrival

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. In the morning the registration period begins at 09:00 and ends at 09:45am. Students who arrive after 09:30 will be marked as late. Students who arrive after the registration period has ended should sign in at reception, give a reason for their lateness, then go straight to class. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that students sign in at reception to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all students are accounted for. In the afternoon the registration begins at 12:45pm and ends at 01:30pm. Students who arrive after 01:00pm will be marked as late. A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register. Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action.

Consequences of Poor Attendance

In cases where a child's absence falls below 90% and all reasonable measures have been made to improve attendance by Social Arts for Education, we reserve the right to:

- Remove awards for bursaries of any size
- Make case for not being able to meet the child's needs at annual reviews or mid-placement
- Involve other agencies such as education welfare officers (EWOs)

Stages of Action

Stage 1 - For students under 100%

Cause for Awareness

Letter expressing low concern and importance of good attendance. SAFE will also offer support at this stage.

Stage 2 - For students under 90%

Cause for Concern

Letter expressing concern and consequences of poor attendance, including conditions of bursaries and possible . SAFE will remind parent/carer of stages of action. SAFE will also offer support at this stage.

Stage 3 - No improvement or decline in attendance percentage

Cause for Advisory Services

Informal meeting with SAFE's Attendance Officer. Meeting will address reasons for absence and suggestions of how to improve attendance. Attendance Officer will provide advisory support to help parents/carers if they are struggling to get their child to come into school.

Stage 4 - Further decline in attendance percentage

Cause for Interventions

Formal meeting with SAFE's SLT and other professionals if necessary. Meeting will address reasons for absence and suggestions of how to improve attendance. Meeting will also take professional advice to implement interventions to improve child's attendance. Professionals will provide advisory and/or practical support to help parents/carers if they are struggling to get their child to come into school. SLT will follow up with a letter and review weekly.

Stage 5 - Further decline in attendance percentage over prolonged period

Cause for Consequential Action

Letter expressing continuous and serious concern of poor attendance. SAFE will action relevant consequences mentioned in previous stages, including removing bursaries, involvement of other professionals or meeting to inform appropriate bodies that we can no longer meet that child's needs.

School Action:Children Missing Education

Registers are checked at the end of the registration period. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019, SAFE will hold at least three emergency contact details for each child. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the teaching team will take the following steps:

- 1. Contact parents and/or all three emergency contacts by phone. The reason for absence will be marked accordingly on the register.
- 1. a. If the school office is unable to reach any of the three emergency contact numbers, they will inform the Safeguarding Officer.
- 1. b. The Safeguarding Officer will use a CME checklist (appendix 1) to ensure required steps are being followed.
- 2. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the school office and/or senior leadership will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

The school office will contact parents/carers for a written explanation regarding their child's absence at the earliest convenience. This is for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence. Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed. School may also send missed work home during a longer term period of absence.

Where a child has unauthorised absence from school for a period of more than 10 days and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, the school will liaise with the local authority Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The school will take all necessary steps to promote regular attendance. The school will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be persistently truanting. Parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the EWO.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or when there are relevant changes in legislation.

Appendix 1: C

CME checklist

Child Missing Education (CME) Checklist

School	
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If you suspect a pupil is 'missing' and there are existing child protection concerns or the child is on the child protection register, you **must** make a referral to the relevant social care team immediately, as well as inform the Children Missing Education Officer.

Pupil Details			
Forename		Surname	
Date of Birth		Year Group	

CME Checklist

CME Checklist				
		Action Taken	Who & When	Outcome
Weeks 1 - 2	Days 1 to 9	Check within school community for whereabouts - staff, SENCO, learning mentor, friends, siblings etc		
		Contact the parent or carer using all available contact numbers/email addresses/write to address		
		Contact any other relatives/contacts using all available contact numbers/email addresses		
		Make arrangements for the home to be visited (school staff/Police Liaison officer/ESBAS practitioner)		
Weeks 3 - 4	Day 10	Complete a CME referral providing as much information as possible so further investigations can take place		
	Days 11 - 19	Continue to make efforts to locate the whereabouts of the family		
	Day 20	If after all enquiries the pupil's whereabouts are still unknown, then with the agreement of the CME officer, the pupil can be removed from roll and an Off Roll form can be submitted		

Appendix 2:

Sickness Policy

While it is extremely important to maintain good attendance, sickness is unavoidable on occasion. In cases where a child has a contagious illness, strict infection control procedures must be followed in order to minimise spread. Below is an overview of some of the most common illnesses children will succumb to, and the procedure that should be followed in each case.

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Vomiting and diarrhoea are most commonly caused by viruses such as norovirus and rotavirus. For vomiting and diarrhoea, a 48-hour rule must be adhered to, in order to prevent transmission to other students, as people with sickness bugs can still be contagious for a time after symptoms have ceased. Therefore, if a child is suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea, they must remain off school until 48 hours after the last episode, unless parents are certain that the symptoms were caused by a non-infectious factor (for example pre existing metabolic disorders, food intolerances or anxiety).

Conjunctivitis

Although conjunctivitis is highly contagious, it is not necessary for a child to remain off school once they are receiving treatment for the condition.

Chickenpox (Herpes Zoster)

Chickenpox is a viral illness that is infectious in the few days before the spots appear, then highly contagious once the child develops spots. The contagious phase lasts until the spots have all scabbed over. Due to the potential severity of contracting chickenpox for immunocompromised, pregnant or elderly people, it is necessary to remain in isolation until all spots have developed a scab. This process normally takes around 5 days.

As the control of infection falls under Health and Safety (COSHH) legislation, it is important that appropriate infection control procedures are followed for whatever illness a child is suffering from. Parents who are unsure of the length of time their child will remain contagious

should contact their GP in the first instance, and also speak to the school to check procedure.

Further information on common illnesses in schoolchildren and the necessary measures to take can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-9-managing-specific-infectious-diseases>