

Attendance Policy

Signhills Academy



Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: July 2025
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Next review due by:	Autumn 2025
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Purpose of Attendance Policy:

At Signhills Academy we believe that regular school attendance is important because

- It means your child can make the most of their education and improve their chances in adult life.
- School can help build your child's self-esteem and social skills, such as making and developing friendships.
- A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a pupil is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

This policy explains how, by working together, we can improve children's school attendance and the processes and procedures we follow in order to achieve this.

Expectations and routines

What is good attendance?

100% to 96% attendance less than 8 days absence per year

What we expect

All children of all ages (including early years) are expected to:

be here be on time be prepared for the day
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Why it's important

- When children attend school they thrive and they are safe
- Missing school leaves children at risk of falling behind socially and academically, harming their future life chances
- It is a legal requirement that all children attend school

This policy is intended to enhance teaching, learning, personal development and well-being. All staff and other adults working with pupils in school have a responsibility to implement this policy with regard to the Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Equality Policies. Printed copies are not controlled.

Our daily routines

- Breakfast Club from 7.45am - £2.00 per day. Please book through SCOPay (details from the school office).

Doors open at 8.45am and close promptly at 8.55am.

- When children arrive at school they are greeted outside their classroom entrance by a staff member

Registration

- Morning - Registers open at 8.55am and close at 9.15am
- Afternoon – Registers close 15 minutes after lunch finishes

Each day a child is to be absent, the school office must be informed no later than 9am

Please call 694811, use the Scholarpack app or email contact@signhillsacademy.co.uk

- Children arriving after the door closes at 8.55am must be brought into school via the school office and will be marked as late
- If a child is absent from school for the third consecutive day and is on targets, has an attendance of 90% or lower or we feel it is necessary, we may send EWO to do a home visit.

When a child arrives after 9.15am it counts as a half-day absence
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Types of Absence

By law, we must record the attendance of all pupils registered at our school. Children who are not in school are recorded as having an authorised or unauthorised absence.

- Unauthorised Absence - where no reason has been provided, where the absence is considered to be without valid reason, where a child's attendance is below 90% and no medical evidence has been provided or where a holiday is suspected or requested.
- Authorised Absence – where a pupil is absent from school for a reason that is considered to be valid,
- Approved Educational Activity - this covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. These include: educational visits, sporting activities, or approved education off site.

Following up unexplained absence

If the parent has not informed school, office staff will send a text requesting a reason for their child's absence from school. If a parent does not respond, attempts to make contact with the parent by telephone will be made. If contact is not made, the office may continue to try to contact other people named on the emergency contact list. If a phone call is not received by the end of the session this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and will only be altered following a suitable reason being provided by the parent.

Our Emotionally– Based School Avoidance Lead (EBSAL) Mr S Carr, a member of the academy's Wellbeing Team, or the Education Welfare Officer may visit homes as a welfare check if:

- a child is absent without an appropriate reason
- a child is absent and they have an attendance plan
- a child has been absent for 3 consecutive days

They will then be recorded as having an authorised or unauthorised absence.

Why?

- Keeping children safe is our most important duty
- Attendance is vital to keeping children safe and meeting their needs
- To keep children safe we need to know where they are, who is looking after them and the reason for their absence.

Engaging with external agencies

We have a duty to work with all professional services involved with our families. This includes notifying them of a child's absence, as well as any other concerns. These could include:

- Social Workers
- Family Support Workers
- Family First Practitioners
- Health visitors
- Education Welfare Officers
- The Police
- Health Professionals such as the School Nurse or GP
- Any other supporting agencies

Leave of absence

By law, Headteachers can only authorise leave of absence up to a maximum of 10 days in a school year in **exceptional** circumstances.

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Examples of exceptional reasons are:

- Service personnel returning from active deployment,
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be produced.

It is extremely unlikely that a family holiday will be deemed exceptional circumstances. A possible exception to this would be where the timing is recommended, in writing, by a medical professional.

Please complete a leave of absence form (available on our website or from the office) at least 14 days before the leave. If you choose to take your child out of school without requesting a leave of absence or if the leave of absence is not seen as exceptional, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

In the case of unauthorised leave, the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the academy and Local Authority may take action. These measures can include:

Issuing of a fixed penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine' – The Local Authority can give each parent a fine. If the fine is not paid after 28 days parents may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

Seeking of an Education Supervision Order from the family court – if the council thinks a parent needs support getting their child to go to school but they're not co-operating, a court for an Education Supervision Order can be applied for. A supervisor will be appointed to help get the child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecution.

Prosecution– This could result in a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also impose a Parenting Order.

For more details, see appendix B.

Our term dates may be different to other local schools so please look at our website or speak to the office before taking leave of absence.

Promoting attendance

- The attendance policy is easy to find on the school website
- It is included in the new starter pack
- Messages promoting attendance are included in
 - Assemblies
 - New starter induction meetings
- An attendance update text is sent to parents each half term
- Teachers and TAs will promote and recognise good and improving attendance in conversation with children and parents/carers
- Attendance is discussed with all parents and carers at meetings with teachers in the autumn term and the spring term, and is included in annual reports in the summer term.

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Celebrating attendance

The EBSA lead will create and implement bespoke reward systems for identified children.

The EBSA lead will acknowledge and celebrate improvements in attendance through certificates and letters to parents / carers.

Data and monitoring

Sharing attendance data with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the governing body is a key part of our strategy for improving attendance.

Sharing information with the Local Authority and Department for Education (DfE) is part of the national strategy for improving attendance.

Attendance data is used to:

- support strategies to improve attendance and
- celebrate good and improving attendance

Responsibilities

School Admin staff:

- Follows up non-attendance with a text or phone call on the first day of absence.
- Shares attendance with parents via text message half termly, weekly for those below 90%

Emotionally– based school avoidance lead (EBSA):

- Monitors daily attendance - follows up unexplained absences and absences of children on an attendance plan
- Reports data to the Senior Leadership Team half-termly and supports strategic decision making to improve attendance
- Work with children, parents/carers and outside agencies to identify and overcome barriers to high levels of attendance

Class teachers share attendance data:

- Termly - with parents/carers - individual pupil data at parent/carer meetings and in annual reports

The headteacher shares attendance data:

- Weekly - Local Authority – whole school and individual pupil data, leavers, new pupils
- Daily – Department for Education
- As required – Social Workers, Police, Health Professionals – individual pupils

The governing body:

- Termly - scrutinises attendance data at governing body meetings

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How we track attendance

- Daily – Registers – individual pupil absence, attendance, punctuality
- Weekly – Scholar Pack (Computerised Attendance Data Programme) - attendance patterns – days of the week, families, classes, year groups
- Weekly – Local Authority – whole school and individual pupil attendance
- Weekly – DfE

Escalation of procedures - How we improve absence together

98% -100%	Excellent attendance. Little impact on learning. Positive attendance in school is celebrated.
96% 98%	Absence begins to impact on learning. Every effort must be made to minimise future absences. Absences will be discussed at Parent's Evening.
94% -96%	
90% -94%	Absence has a definite impact on learning, progress and friendships. Intervention is necessary, this may include: a phone call, letter, meeting in school or home visit.
Below 90%	Children are classed by the department of Education as 'Persistently Absent'. Severe risk of underachievement. Absence has significant impact on learning, progress, friendships and wellbeing. Parents/carers invited to a School Attendance Panel (SAP) with the EBSAL, EWO and any other supporting agencies. New attendance targets set and support considered. All absence whilst on targets or below 90% attendance must be supported by evidence from a medical professional. Absence will be unauthorised without evidence. Parents/carers who fail to respond to the invitation within 15 school days, legal proceedings begin. If targets are not achieved parents/carers invited to a Governor Attendance Panel Meeting (GAP meeting) with Attendance Governor, PSM, EWO, and other support agencies. New attendance targets set and support considered. If targets are not achieved and any absence is not supported by evidence from the GP or otherwise, the case will be referred to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

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The Magistrates may issue a fine of up to £1,000 or community service order, a Parenting Order, or an Education Supervision Order.

Second offence

The case will be referred to the Magistrate's Court for prosecution under section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996.

The Magistrates may issue a fine of up to £2,500, a curfew or community service order, a Parenting Order, an Education Supervision Order or a custodial sentence.

Or a Penalty Notice may be requested (a fine of up to £1,000 per parent).

Statutory Framework

There are laws that govern school attendance and how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- *eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act*
- *advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it*
- *foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.*

In the development of this policy due regard has been given to achieving these objectives.

Appendix A

SIGNHILLS ACADEMY AND SIGNHILLS INFANT ACADEMY LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the academy office

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence. No absence will be authorised retrospectively.

Name of Pupil

Class

Leave of absence from to

Number of school days requested

For the purpose of.....

.....

If you believe this absence is due to exceptional circumstances please outline details below. Supporting evidence MUST be attached to this form when submitted.

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In the case of unauthorised absence, the Education Welfare Service will be notified and the academy and Local Authority may take action. Please see the Attendance Policy for further details.

Name of Parent/Carer Signature

For Academy Use only:

To be coded as:

Letter required: Yes/No

Phone call required: Yes/No

Appendix B

Summary of potential action.

First offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or low attendance the amount will be:

£80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

£160 per parent per child when paid within 28 days.

Second offence

(within a rolling 3-year period)

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days.

Third offence (and any further offences within rolling 3 years)

The 3rd time a Penalty Notice is issued the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Fines of up to £2500 per parent per child can be issued.

Note: Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show up on parents future DBS certificates as a failure to safeguard a child's education

5 consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days if there was intent to be absent for term time.

The LA can issue fines for less than 5 days, under certain circumstances.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 - week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. This can go over school holidays.

Per parent per child

Penalty notice fines will be issued to each parent (including step parents) for each absent child.

For example, 3 siblings absent for leave during term time will result in each parent receiving three separate fines.