ATTENDANCE POLICY

Created: March 2018

Reviewed: March 2022

Reviewed: March 2024

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Saracens High School

Corner Mead, NW9 4AS

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Attendance Policy

Principles:

- Attendance is strongly linked to achievement. Good attendance is therefore necessary if pupils are to fulfil their academic and social potential at Saracens High School
- Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all staff, pupils and parents/carers
- For high levels of attendance to be achieved:
  - good relationships are needed between home and school
  - a safe environment where pupils can enjoy attend and achieve success
- Strategies for dealing with both excellent and poor rates of attendance should be applied fairly and consistently to all pupils regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and religion
- Wherever possible there should be early intervention to deal positively with high levels of attendance and appropriately with low levels of attendance. This intervention will involve working with external agencies if appropriate
- Pupils with long-term medical needs or disabilities will be considered on a case by case basis, and will not be bound by the systems and procedures in this policy

Definition of Terms:

Authorised absence – It is the decision of the school to determine whether a pupil's absence is authorised or not. Authorised absence is absence that the school has approved. The school may approve absence for any reason that it deems appropriate.

Unauthorised absence – This relates to pupil absence that the school has decided not to approve. Absence is also unauthorised if a reason for pupil absence is not provided to the school by parents/carers. This can also include when a parent/carer has not provided evidence for an absence when requested by the school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Local Governing Body will work with the school to set an attendance target for each academic year. They will ensure that it is communicated to all stakeholders and that it is applied fairly and consistently. They will also ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed
- The Principal is responsible for the day to day implementation and management of the policy and procedures
- All staff will support pupils to ensure they attend regularly and will address problems that may lead to non-attendance. All staff will recognise and reward exemplary attendance. Staff will take registers twice daily and in all lessons. They will record incidents of lateness. Staff will share with pupils their attendance figures and work with them to improve.
- The attendance co-ordinator will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence and record reasons for absence if a phone call is not received. Attendance figures will be monitored on a weekly and half-termly basis by the attendance co-ordinator, pastoral leaders, and SLT, and any concerns will be shared with relevant staff, pupils, parents/carers, and external agencies, including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

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- The EWO will support the school in implementing procedures to raise the attendance and punctuality of pupils. The EWO will also work with the school, families and individual pupils whose attendance and punctuality is a concern to ensure they attend school regularly. If this intervention and support does not lead to sufficient improvement in the pupil's attendance or punctuality the local authority may consider issuing parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or court action.
- Parents will ensure that their children attend school regularly, and on time. They will also inform the school if their child is unable to attend for any reason by contacting the school as early as possible on the first day of absence. Parents will work with the school and other agencies to address any issues leading to non-attendance. Parents will endeavour to avoid medical appointments during school hours
- Pupils will be aware of their attendance figures and should strive to improve
- Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 removed all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. Therefore, the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where parents feel there are exceptional circumstances, they should apply in writing to the Principal before making any travel arrangements. They will receive a written response to their request. It is for the Principal to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Absence for holiday which is not considered 'exceptional circumstances' will be marked as unauthorised absence and may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)

- Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies, or other maintained or alternative provision. A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Fixed Penalty Notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by Barnet and the school can recommend a fixed penalty notice.
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term or at least 6 unauthorised late arrivfals in a 4-week period
- A fixed penalty notice can be issued if a pupil has at least 10% unauthorised absence.
- The educational welfare officer can independently decide to issue a penalty notice.
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent/carer
- The school or Educational Welfare Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent/carer within any twelve-month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of Year 11

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- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Barnet Education Welfare Officer

Children missing in education

Government guidelines state that 'where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or 'unavoidable cause'.

The document Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) states that a child missing from education could act as a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Consequently, the attendance co-ordinator or Year Lead (YL) will refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), as well as the local authority, before considering taking a pupil off role. All staff will be aware of the risk, and may alert the Year Lead and/or attendance co-ordinator to an unusual absence.

To aid the tracking of pupils who are 'missing', the pupil registration form requires that we have at least two emergency contacts on the management information system (MIS).

Attendance Procedures:

Pupils will be placed into four groups based on their attendance. These groups are as follows:
1. Attendance greater than 97%
2. Attendance ranging from 95%–96%
3. Attendance ranging from 91%–94%
4. Attendance less than 90%

As a school we will carry out strategies to raise pupils' attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly, and termly level. These link with the school's rewards and sanctions policies.

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The strategies that the school will be using are outlined in the table below:

Time period for action	Action Taken	Responsibility (may also include the SENDCO where appropriate)
Daily/ongoing	First day response phone calls or SMS, registers kept up to date. Lesson registration using Arbor Pupils late to lessons and school monitored	Attendance co-ordinator Learning Coaches/teachers to take accurate registers
	Two and three-day absence & unauthorised absence letters Phone calls and/or SMS home regarding pupils who have had two or three days unauthorised absence Home School Liaison to complete home visits	Attendance co-ordinator
Weekly	Attendance analysis Attendance figures shared with Principal in line management Targeted pupils tracked	Attendance co-ordinator and Year Lead
	Pupils to receive positive reward entries on Arbor for 100% attendance and punctuality Update attendance display and Learning Group Celebration	Year Lead or Assistant Year Lead Year Lead or Assistant Year Lead
	EWO checks attendance and manages all pupils below 90% attendance. EWO will write to families and have regular meetings to help improve attendance. Where attendance does not improve, fixed penalty notices and court action can be used.	Educational Welfare Officer
Fortnightly	Any pupils with attendance dropping lower than 93% to receive calls and/or letter home outlining the importance of good attendance Pupils with attendance dropping to 91% to receive a letter home regarding persistent absenteeism	Attendance co-ordinator to co-ordinate letters and check with Year Lead before sending.
Half Termly	Gold (100%), Silver (98-99%) and Bronze (96-97%) rewards awarded to KS3 and KS4 pupils	Attendance co-ordinator to co-ordinate letters/certificates

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	Pupils with 100% attendance for the half term will receive a congratulatory letter The best Learning Coach group in each Year will be recognised in assembly	Year Lead
	Regular articles in the newsletter highlighting importance of good attendance and recognising pupils/ Learning Coach groups with high attendance	
	100% attenders for the half term to be recognised in the newsletter	Attendance co-ordinator
	Pupils who have more than 4% unauthorised absence receive a letter outlining school policy	Attendance co-ordinator
	Attendance tracking documents for individual pupils collected, analysed and updated on centralised attendance document	Attendance co-ordinator/ Year Lead
	Review progress of pupils on attendance contracts Penalty notice warning letters to be considered	Attendance co-ordinator/ Year Lead
	Central communication to all parents regarding the importance of attendance -	Attendance co-ordinator
Termly	In addition to the half termly: Pupils with a 100% attendance or improvement of 10% for the term to receive a certificate Pupils in each attendance category will receive a letter either praising and recognising high attendance or reminding of the school policy and the need to improve	Attendance co-ordinator

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Punctuality Procedures:

AM registration

- Any pupil late to line up in the morning will be considered late and will need to complete the 'reason for lateness' form during break time.
- Registers will close at 9.00am. Any pupil arriving in school after this time will be marked absent and a note explaining the absence will be required
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am can be marked as late after the register closes. A note explaining the absence will be required.
- Two lates will trigger a meeting with parent/carer and the pupil will be placed on a punctuality report, which will aim to support the pupil to arrive on time

PM registration

Registers taken in the afternoon will be used for PM registration.
Start of lessons:
- All pupils are to move from lesson to lesson in an orderly and prompt manner
- Any pupil who arrives to a lesson after the register has been taken will be deemed late. There will need to be a degree of professional judgement from staff as to whether a pupil is late with a genuine reason or not
- If there is no genuine reason the lateness is also considered to be truancy.
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Saracens High School Attendance Reward Ladder

97%+

- 100% attenders for the half-term to have their names in the school newsletter
- Pupils with a 100% attendance or improvement of 10% for the term to receive a certificate
- Termly Gold (100%), Silver (98-99%) and Bronze (96-97%) rewards awarded to KS3 and KS4 pupils
- Pupils with 100% attendance for the previous fortnight to receive entries on Arbor

93%-97%

- Three-day absence letter & unauthorised absence letters sent home
- Learning Coaches, Year Lead, Learning Mentor, SENDCO or attendance co-ordinator contact home

91%-93%

- Learning Coaches, Year Lead, Learning Mentor, SENDCO or attendance co-ordinator contact home regarding attendance concerns
- Attendance reports by Year Lead and Learning Mentor, to be issued for pupils causing concern
- Attendance contracts completed for pupils causing concern by Year Lead
- Persistent Absentee warning letter sent

Below 91%

Actions overseen by attendance co-ordinator

- Pupils with less than 91% attendance to receive a letter outlining the danger of Persistent Absence
- Attendance reports to be issued by Year Lead and Learning Mentor, for pupils causing concern
- Pupils with less than 90% attendance are to attend a meeting to complete an attendance contract with Year Lead, attendance co-ordinator, and SENDCO (if necessary)
- Attendance co-ordinator to refer any pupils for external agency support
- Pupils are to attend attendance clinics with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Principal to meet parents/carers
- Refer to the Governing Body Attendance Panel
- School to issue Fixed Penalty Notice

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Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

> **Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm** Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools. The consortia schools however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

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This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive

day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend. **Codes for recording non-attendance due to Covid (January 2022)**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1045090/Recording_non-attendance_related_to_coronavirus__COVID_19_.pdf

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

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- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

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