

**SHENFIELD
HIGH SCHOOL**



Attendance Policy

School Staff were consulted on this document and it was accepted by the Standards and Performance committee on :	January 2020
It was ratified by the Governing Body on :	May 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Intent:

Shenfield High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all students and embraces equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parent/ carers should work closely with the school to overcome any issues that may affect their child's attendance.

For a student to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Research shows that *"in general, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS4."*
DfE publication: the link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 February 2015.

Essex statistics show that 95% attendance equates to 9.5 whole days of education lost and 47.5 learning hours lost for the student. This is why attainment tends to decline with absenteeism." Learning Hours Lost, Essex.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance, and to communicate with parents/carers about their child's attendance, and to explore with parents/carers any barriers that their child may be experiencing regards attendance.

School Attendance and the Law:

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school's Attendance Policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department of Education and Essex Local Authority. Each year the school will examine the attendance figures and set targets in accordance with the decision of Governors. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals, and will work with the Essex Attendance Compliance Team and the Essex Access Team to monitor improvements and ensure excellent collaboration between us and the appropriate outside agencies.

The Education Act 1996 clearly references parental responsibility for ensuring that a child attends school regularly. Based on The Missing Education and Child Employment Service Guidance for all Essex Schools and Academies, September 2017, the school bases our Attendance Policy on the following advice:

"The Department for Education (DfE) states that:

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- *Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;*
- *Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,*
- *Act early to address patterns of absence"*

Shenfield High School agrees that regular attendance is achieved if a student has an attendance rate of 95%+.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 clearly state that where a parent provides a reason for an absence, the school will decide whether or **not** the absence in question is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. The School will inform parents when and why such a decision is made if absences are to be unauthorised. The updated 2013 version of these regulations, also regards any request for leave of absence to be at the Headteacher's discretion, and indeed only granted, and therefore authorised, in exceptional circumstances. Where a family chooses to go on holiday in the term time, the absences will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and the school will apply for a penalty notice. This is clearly set out in The Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices, which can be found on the Essex info link website.

A student is deemed to be a Persistent Absentee where their attendance falls below 90%. This is explained in the Attendance Compliance Team Guidance September 2017. Students who fall into this category will be tracked carefully and discussed at regular meetings. If persistent absentee student's attendance does not improve with a fortnightly tracking timeframe, parents and the student will be invited to an Attendance Panel with a senior member of staff and /or a governor to discuss targets and actions designed to achieve those targets.

The school also has due regard for Essex guidance with regards Supporting Students with Medical Conditions and in the rare event that a part time timetable is authorised, will adhere to the Guidance for Schools on the use of Reduced Timetables (October 2016). A part time timetable would only ever be granted on a short temporary basis and the terms of such a timetable would be reviewed regularly to ensure that moving back to full time education is achieved as soon as possible. Any student who requires a part timetable will be monitored carefully by an identified key person in the school, have their case regularly reviewed, and have their details passed onto the Authority as required. This procedure will be shared and clarified with parents. Any absences recorded outside of this agreement will be subject to the usual procedures as explained in this document.

School Procedures

Registration in the morning begins at 8.40 am and ends at 9.00 am. Registration will be closed at 9.00am. Any student arriving after this time and before 10.00 am will be marked as late. Students registered after the start of school but before the end of the registration period (including up until 10.00 am in the morning), will be treated as present, but coded as 'late before the registers close'. An authorised absence will be recorded if the student has an authentic note from a parent detailing an appointment or other authorised absence, in which case the appropriate absence code will be entered.

Afternoon registration will take place at 12.20pm and register will be closed at 12.30pm during lesson 4. Staff are asked to ensure that all lesson registers are completed within ten minutes of the lesson starting. All students must be marked as either present or absent on all registers. Staff must take care to record the mark on SIMS carefully so that missing marks do not occur. All registers must be completed for both safeguarding and for data purposes.

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. If there is no known reason for the absence of registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. No other code apart from '/'

– present, or 'N' – absent, or L – 'late', or 'V' – 'visit' or 'P' – approved sporting activity must be used by teaching staff or tutors taking the register.

Punctuality must be recorded on Sims in right click comment boxes, staff must record the number of minutes late a student is. The Pastoral Team will analyse patterns and put in appropriate interventions to prevent persistent lateness to school, and to lessons.

Every effort will be taken by the school to ensure that students understand the expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. This includes knowing with whom they register and when and by what time. The procedures for late arrival when a student will enter the school by reception and if after 9.00am will sign in at student service or with the attendance officer as directed. If a student is late after registration begins (8.40am) but arrives before 9.00am they must go to their registration form and ensure that they have been entered on the register.

If any student has concerns about any issue in school that might affect their attendance or punctuality, they should talk to their Pastoral Manager to ensure that the issue has been raised. Within reason, The Pastoral Team will make every effort to solve issues that arise that may cause barriers to attendance,

Sims data will be analysed after each registration period has closed, first day absent contact made, and then the Pastoral Team will be made aware of all of that day's absences with reasons as known. Internal truancy will be tracked by The Attendance Officer using lesson monitor, and The Pastoral Team will be made aware immediately of any issues arising.

Parents are advised to contact the school via the school's absence line or by email direct to the Attendance Officer.

Attendance Officer Email: attendance@shenfield.essex.sch.uk

In the event that no contact is made and after the registers have been closed, the school will make contact with the named parent/carer as indicated by SIMs. This will be by voice call, but other methods of communication will attempted if the voice call is not successful. The Attendance Officer will update the registers with any received information. If no contact is made with the school during a student's absence, a note signed by the parent must be brought into school on the first day of the student's return.

Any student who is absent for 10 days without contact being made by parents/carers will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to The Education Compliance Team. Under certain circumstances, this may also require a referral to The Children and Families Hub so that Social Care can assess the reasons for such prolonged and uncommunicated absence. This is because, often, the common feature in Child Protection cases is absence from school. This will be filed in by the Attendance Officer. After 20 days of no notification absence, a student could be taken off roll by the school.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Form Tutor to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. This should be reported to the Pastoral Team, who will discuss it in fortnightly meetings with the Attendance Officer.

Following that discussion, the Attendance Officer will write to parent(s)/carer(s) alerting them of the pattern. After 2 weeks the Attendance Officer will then have a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s). Parents will be informed that medical evidence will be asked to be produced at each absence, until the attendance reaches at least 90%.

If attendance/punctuality does not improve after a further 2 weeks of monitoring, the Attendance Officer will arrange a School Attendance Panel meeting. The 'Attendance Panel' is overseen by a member of SLT or a Governor to and agree an 'Attendance Contract' between the student, parent and school. This contract will be reviewed every two weeks and

ended after one term if attendance has improved to acceptable levels. At that meeting, any further barriers to attendance will be discussed and the school will attempt to resolve difficulties and put available, relevant interventions in place.

Special attention is paid to the attendance of our Pupil Premium (PPG) students, and also our most vulnerable students. Persistent Absentees from these cohorts, (those with absence rates under 90%) are also closely monitored by The Attendance Officer in conjunction with the Year Pastoral Manager and also via the school Wellbeing Interventions Team. Letters will be sent home and meetings held with the purpose of engaging with families to try and remove any barriers that are preventing good attendance of the student at school. If necessary, families and staff may request that the Deputy Headteacher: Student Wellbeing and Support also attends the meeting to ensure that interventions designed to remove such barriers are reviewed and implemented.

The school will seek to prevent students becoming Persistent Absentees by operating an early warning system to parents/carers and their children when absence falls below 95%. This will include postcards home, discussions with appropriate Pastoral Manager and, where necessary early warning meetings with parents/carers to discuss potential barriers that may be arising. School based meetings will always be arranged where attendance patterns are causing concern. Where repeated illness is an issue, the school will not continue to authorise absences without medical evidence.

In the event that this intensive support does not secure a positive improvement in the young person's attendance, then the case will be referred to Attendance Compliance, who operate as legal enforcers of attendance. The trigger for referral to Attendance compliance is 10 unauthorised sessions of absence over a period of ten weeks.

Lateness to School procedures

Students who are persistently late to lessons may be detained in Senior Leaders' lunchtime detention to make up the time that has been lost to learning times. In this detention, students will be asked to reflect on the reasons why they are persistently late, and where appropriate, interventions will put in place to help the student be punctual.

Students may also be placed on a report card designed to monitor attendance and punctuality. If punctuality does not improve, the student will be subject to the School's Behaviour for Learning Policy, and further consequences will be applied as per the policy.

In the event of persistent lateness the following consequences will apply:

Lates	Consequences
3 lates over a half term	A warning letter home.
5 lates over a half term	A letter home and a 20 minute detention
10 lates over a half term	A letter home and a 30 minute detention
More than 10 lates over a half term	Parents in to meet with Attendance Officer and appropriate Pastoral Manager.

The school will also apply The Behaviour for Learning Policy to any internal or external truancy that occurs. This policy states that the consequence for truancy is that the student will spend the next day in The Blue Room (our internal isolation room), and that parents/carers will be required to attend a reintegration meeting after this day is completed with the appropriate staff. This is to consider the reasons why a student may have

truanted, and to implement any appropriate interventions so that this issue need not arise again.

A Welcome Back

It is the responsibility of the form tutor to welcome back all students in their forms after an absence. They must remind the student to catch up on missed work and must also bring the student up to date on any information that has been passed to other students. If a catch up programme is required due to the quantity of work missed, the appropriate Pastoral Manager will oversee a support plan that will enable students to be quickly back on track. This may require a referral to The Interventions Team. Any concerns will be discussed with parents/carers, and the student will be closely monitored until such time as there are no further concerns.

Absence Notes

These must be collected by the form tutor, used to amend SIMS and then returned to the Attendance Officer. They will then be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If a student has been highlighted as either a 'persistent absentee' - below 90% attendance, or other attendance concern, then their absence notes should be kept until they leave the school. In the event that our attendance team works with individuals to improve their attendance, case notes and minutes of meetings will also be kept until the student leaves the school, in which case they will be placed in the archived attendance files.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use as many opportunities as possible to remind students and parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure their children receive their education. For example, linking attendance to House Points, running termly attendance assemblies for all years, having a regular 'attendance matters' write up in the parent newsletter and celebrating attendance successes every half term. Rewards include positive postcards home, recognition in parent newsletters, Top Form prizes, end of year rewards trips and termly reward prizes chosen from a number of prizes provided by the pastoral team. In addition, the school will run a 'Promoting attendance challenge' once a term, the impact of which will be reported to Governors of the school termly.

Unauthorised Absences

No holidays during term time will be authorised. In the event of a parent taking a student out of school for a holiday, it will almost always result in a penalty notice being applied for by the school to Attendance Compliance. Only in very exceptional circumstances would a holiday be authorised, and this only by application in writing to the Headteacher, who shall have the final say in the matter. In event that a parent makes a written request for an exceptional leave of absence to the Headteacher, a written response will be received back.

Government legislation states that NO holidays will be authorised during term time for students. Any holiday taken will be marked on the register as unauthorised. If the student has an attendance of below 90% or another holiday is taken during the school year, a referral will be made to Attendance Compliance, who will issue a penalty notice.

If the holiday is longer than 20 sessions (10 days), a letter will be sent informing the parent of intention to remove the child from school roll. This will happen if the holiday or absence continues for a further 20 sessions. This procedure is in line with Local Authority guidelines.

Attendance Targets

Our school targets are 5% absence rate for 2019 – 2020, and a P.A. rate of 11.5% based on 10% absences. This sits favourably against Essex and national data for attendance across all Secondary Schools. The progress towards our targets will be analysed weekly by The Deputy Headteacher: Wellbeing and Support, in conjunction with the Attendance Officer. Data will also be analysed by group, specifically by year group, boys, girls, Children in Care, Pupil Premium students, SEND students, Oasis students and EAL students; and patterns showing lower attendance in any specific group will be discussed with relevant personnel so that appropriate strategies for tackling lower attendance of said group can be implemented and monitored for impact.

The progress towards our targets will be noted by the whole staff weekly via our staff bulletin; and updates on our progress towards our targets will be made once a term to Governors at the Standards and Performance Committee and on monitoring visits as required. Our targets will also be discussed regularly at SLT and also in briefing meetings between the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher: Student Wellbeing and Support.

The Registration System

The school registers students using Sims electronic registration during AM registration, and thereafter in every lesson. Form Tutors and Teachers are asked to ensure that the register is completed within ten minutes of the session starting, and that lateness after the register is taken is recorded on SIMs so that persistent lateness can be dealt with by department teams, or in the case of more widespread misdemeanour, by The Behaviour and Standards Team.

National codes as issued by the Attendance Compliance are used to record attendance information. The registers are kept for 3 years after a cohort have left the school.

Staff taking registers are expected to take every care and attention to ensure that the mark entered is accurate, and in the event that an error is made, can expect to have communication with the Deputy Headteacher: Wellbeing and Support about safeguarding issues that may have arisen due to this error.

Fire Drill

SIMS fire drill register proformas are printed at the start of every week and immediately a fire bell is sounded. Designated support staff collect year group folders in the event of the fire bell sounding and take them to the designated Assembly points, where they are distributed to Form Tutors. Once the registers are taken, they are returned to the designated support staff, who then returns them with information about any student missing to the Attendance Officer.

Students educated offsite

Any student educated offsite will be monitored by The Interventions/Pastoral Team. They will liaise with the agency providing education to that student so that attendance data is returned daily to the Attendance Officer, and any concerns regarding attendance are dealt with according to the policy for frequent absences above. Each student educated offsite will have a key mentor who will liaise regularly, and will have fortnightly meetings with The Attendance Officer to discuss and action any attendance concerns. The key mentor will also be responsible for liaising with parent/carers at the start of any attendance concerns and to attend meetings between the parent and Attendance Compliance/Essex Provision Team should these be required. This is part of our commitment to safeguarding such students who are not expected to be seen onsite every school day.

Safeguarding

The Attendance Officer will have weekly meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to discuss the data and any concerns around persistent absentees. All minutes of fortnightly meetings held on attendance with the appropriate pastoral manager will also be sent to the DSL so that students discussed can be cross referenced with the Child Protection (CP) monitoring register. All children for whom a CME (Child Missing in Education) referral is made will be placed on the CP monitoring register, which is reviewed regularly by the Safeguarding Team. Particular notice will be given to additional signs and symptoms of safeguarding concerns like Child Sexual Exploitation, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation. Any such concerns arising will be referred to the appropriate outside agency such as the police, the Child Sexual Exploitation unit and Social Services. The Attendance officer also sits on the weekly Safeguarding Board and the fortnightly Interventions Team meetings, so that any safeguarding concerns can be cross matched with attendance data.

In the event that safeguarding concerns arise for a child due to attendance issues the school will work closely with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (2019), and where necessary, make referrals to the appropriate outside agencies.

Personnel

The Governor who supports the development of policy and procedure with regards to attendance is Mr Julian Beard

This policy has been developed by Deputy Headteacher: Student Support and Wellbeing & Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Attendance Officer.

This policy was presented to Governors: S & P in January 2020

This policy will be reviewed in September 2020