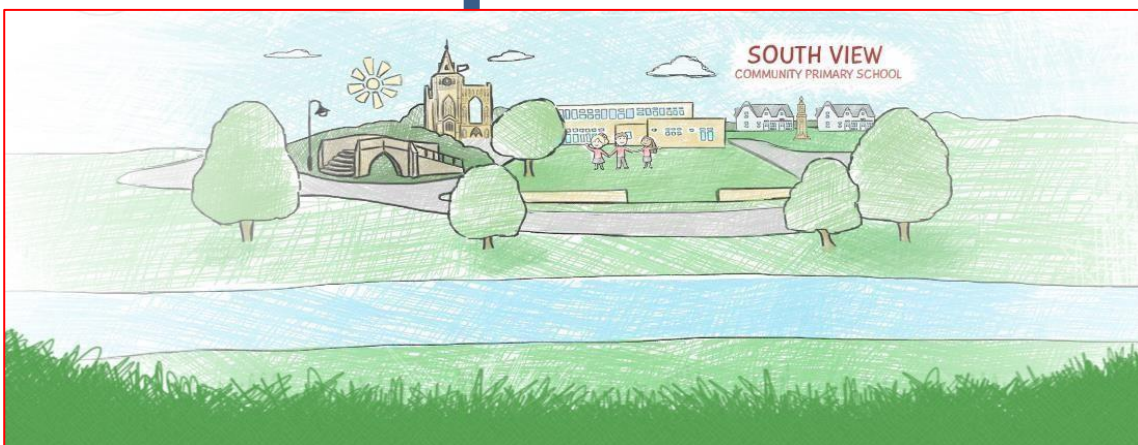




South View Community Primary School
Attendance Policy

Last reviewed: July 2024
Reviewed by: Standards/FGB
Next review due: October 2025
Advisory
School Policy



1. MISSION STATEMENT

South View Community Primary School is committed to providing a high quality and effective education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. Pupils with the highest attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance than those with the lowest attainment. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all its pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

2. THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy is reviewed every two years or earlier if required. Please note this policy considers the following government documents:

- Working together to improve school attendance - February 2024, Applies from 19 August 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance - February 2024, Applies from 19 August 2024
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

4. AIMS

- That all students achieve excellent attendance.
- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure attendance at school.
- Many pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported at some stage to meet their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. The School will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

5. EXPECTATIONS

South View Community Primary School expects its pupils to:

- Attend school daily.
- Arrive on time. To be in class by 8:45 am.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

South View Community Primary School expects its parents to:

- Ensure that their children attend school every day the school is open.
- Ensure that their children arrive on time. Doors are opened at 08.40am and parents can drop off EYFS and KS1 children at their classroom doors via the KS1 playground. KS2 children enter school via the gates that lead on to the KS2 Playground (to the left of Reception). Registration commences at 08:45am and a child is considered late if he/she arrives after 08.45am when registers have closed. A child arriving after 09.20 will be marked with a U code as absent from the morning session
- To contact the School as soon as possible, or before 8.30am, whenever their child is absent giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away. A phone call needs to be made EVERYDAY of a child's absence. Parents should call 01733210361, select the correct option and leave a message for school staff.

- Help their children prepare for the school day by ensuring that any homework has been done and that their children have everything required for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect their children.
- Notify school office of changes in contact details including mobile phone numbers, email addresses, home and work phone numbers. Ensure that there are multiple contacts, wherever possible, in case of an emergency.
- Contact the School if problems arise which may keep their children away from school, work with the school to identify barriers and positively engage with any support offered.
- Avoid taking family holidays in term-time. Only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Holidays are not deemed exceptional circumstances.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Provide appointment cards, hospital letters or other evidence of GP/dentist appointments.

South View Community Primary School will:

- Ensure that a member of the School's Leadership Team is identified as the Senior Attendance Champion – this is our Deputy Head Teacher – Mrs Carrie Henderson
- Ensure the school attendance policy, this document, is shared on the school website.
- Maintain an attendance register on which pupils are marked present, absent or late.
- Ensure that its staff adhere to the rules regarding the registration period which is 5 minutes in length at the beginning of the morning session and 5 minutes in length at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Ensure that absences are left blank in the register by the teacher.
- Ensure that absences are checked daily by a member of the office staff. Those parents who have not provided a reason for absence will be contacted. At that point the registers will be updated so that every child has an attendance or absence mark against them for both sessions daily.
- Analyse absence and attendance data to identify pupils and families who may need support to ensure poor attendance does not become habitual.
- Work with families to identify barriers to learning and identify ways to remove barriers, signpost support and attend multi-agency meetings as needed.
- Review absence and attendance data of pupils joining the school, as a mid-year admission, to ensure early intervention can take place if attendance is already a concern.

- Work collaboratively with other schools, the local authority and other partner agencies to improve attendance within the local community.
- Ensure that attendance registers are kept, on our Management Information System, for a minimum of 6 years from the date that the last entries were made.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used to support vulnerable pupils with poor attendance if this becomes a barrier to their achievement in school. It may also be used to support them academically and/or socially.
- Follow the protocol established for maintaining the confidentiality of data under the Data Protection Act which places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. The School has a Data Protection Policy which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in legislation prevents the School sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

6. ATTENDANCE SYSTEMS

Only the School, in the context of the law, can authorise absence. A note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher or member of the office staff does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the HT/DHT.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following reasons may be considered as authorised absences:

- Illness; which does not include minor coughs, colds, headaches, stomach aches, toothache and period pains.
- Family bereavements.
- Medical and dental appointments.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or reinstated.

Absences will **not** be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips.
- Holidays in term time.
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Oversleeping/tiredness.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified or are for another person.
- No reason given.
- School have cause to believe that the information provided is not genuine or valid.

Family Holidays

Parents should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. Parents have 14 weeks each year when their children are not required to be in school. Holidays during term time can significantly disrupt both the academic and social development of the child. The School will not endorse and therefore not authorise holidays during term time. The absence will be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the education Act 1996.

Penalty Fines

10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in any 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines may be issued for any term-time absences that are unauthorised (for example, a 5-day term time holiday) - whether these absences are taken consecutively or cumulatively over a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school day has 2 sessions: 1 morning and 1 afternoon session per day.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 6 sessions of holiday plus 4 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, from August 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. Any further offences will result in criminal prosecution.

The law is clear when a Penalty Notice threshold is met.

Penalty Notice fines are issued Per Parent, Per child. This means that penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child who is absent. For example: If 2 siblings are absent for a term-time holiday this will result in each parent receiving 2 separate penalty notices. There are circumstances within split families where school have the discretion to name only the parent that is going on the holiday. When a child is taken on holiday by another family member, the parent that is consenting to the absence will be named on the fixed penalty notice.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days) Reduced to: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (in a 3-year rolling period)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance to the same parent for the same child the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days) There is no reduction in the amount.

Third Offence or Any Further Offences (in a 3-year rolling period)

The third time an offence is committed for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance by the same parent for the same child (including those by other Local Authorities) a Penalty Notice will NOT be issued but will be referred to Lincolnshire Local Authority for Prosecution which may result in fines of up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a Magistrate's Court can show on a parent's future DBS certificate.

Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the School and the Local Education Authority (LEA) as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way, but the children are counted as present. To avoid confusion in emergency situations, pupils who are off-site for field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas should not be marked as present. Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head Teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfES Circular No. 10/99.

Lateness

The school will actively discourage late arrival by asking parents whose children arrive late to sign in on the inventory system and provide a reason for the lateness. Parents whose children are consistently late will be contacted by a member of staff and invited to an attendance meeting. A child entering school after 8.45am and prior to 9:20am will have an L code entered into the register, indicating they are late for the start of learning. 9:20am onwards will be marked with a U this indicates that the child is on the school site but has an unauthorised absence recorded for that session.

Removal from the School Roll

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.

- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the School and the parents have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service (EWS), to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the School has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil has not returned to the school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Ensuring Pupil Information Is Up To Date

The School will ensure, as far as possible, that the information it holds on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be implemented effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

Pupils Who Are Missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National 'Children Missing in Education' Database.

7. WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

8. PUPILS WHO FAIL TO ATTEND

When a pupil does not attend, the School needs to respond effectively:

- If a telephone call, note or email is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted EVERY day of absence by telephone.
- Where there is no response, the register is marked as unauthorised.
- Parents will be contacted on every day the child is still not in school, until the day the child returns. Parents will be asked to explain the absence at every point of contact.
- Attendance will be monitored by the school and if attendance does not improve within two weeks of receipt of a School Attendance letter, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending the School. An action plan to improve attendance will be drawn up at this meeting.
- The case will continue to be monitored and if there is no improvement, a penalty warning letter will be issued. Failure to improve attendance will result in a Penalty Fine from the local authority under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996. If it is felt that the student's attendance is not improving due to lack of support or engagement with either the parent/carer or the student, consideration will be taken as to submitting a file to the Local Authority to initiate proceedings before a Magistrates Court.
- Penalty notices, as previously described, can be issued to parents where the parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered.
- If a child is absent from school and no response is made to the attempts to contact the family, Children's Services and the Police may be contacted and could be asked to make a 'Safe and Well' check on the family. If no contact is made within 5 days, the school will contact Children Missing Education at Lincolnshire County Council. If no contact is made within 20 days from the date of the first absence, the school is entitled to withdraw that pupil's place from the school roll. If any pupil is absent for a period of 10 days (particularly where we have had no contact from parents/carers), the absence will be unauthorised and notified to Lincolnshire County Council's Pupils Not Attending Regularly Service.

Reintegration

The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE document "Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)".

Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.

All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.

Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SENDCo may be required.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendance is everyone's business. In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there are specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff:

Head Teacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence

Attendance Lead:

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To direct Pupil Premium funding to support attendance, where this becomes a barrier to reaching potential for those children in vulnerable groups.

Teachers:

- To report attendance issues and discussions with parents regarding attendance to the administration staff and LBP.
- To hold initial discussions with parents about attendance concerns, look for solutions where possible, and signpost support and services where necessary.
- To provide catch-up work and ongoing support for the pupil to be educated at home in the case of long term authorised absence and known medical conditions that impact on regular attendance. (The school will not support holidays taken during term time by providing homework.)

Governors:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement through supporting school to prioritise attendance and create a whole school culture of high expectations around attendance.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory details
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.

Local Authority:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
- Hold a regular (termly) conversations with school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or are at risk of becoming so.
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services.
- Take an active part in multi-agency efforts to improve attendance.

Office Staff:

Office staff will:

- Maintain registers with updated absence information.
- Ensure pupil signing-in/out on Inentry is recorded for when pupils arrive after registers have closed and/or for when pupils leave before the end of the school day.
- Update Attendance Lead about day-to-day issues around attendance.

10. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Other agencies may be used where appropriate in individual cases:

- Early Help Workers
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police/PCSO.