



# Attendance Policy

September 2020

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. Carter', written in a cursive style.

Headteacher

<b>Date of Policy</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
<b>SLT Lead</b>	Assistant Head – Personal development, attendance and behaviour
<b>Date of next review</b>	July 2021

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## **SCHOOL ETHOS AND VALUES**

Our Christian values are at the heart of the ethos of the school and through these we grow individually and as a community. The Story of the Good Samaritan underpins our 7 core values of:

- Honesty
- Forgiveness
- Empathy
- Courage
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Respect

These core values underpin our policies, procedures and the way we treat one another in our community.

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

During the period of time that schools are operating in a way that is different to pre-COVID-19 we will make certain adjustments to policies and procedures. Any adjustments will be made will have these key principles:-

- Reduce the risk posed to all members of the school community due to COVID-19.
- Focus on staff and students well-being.
- Maintain a strong focus on consistently high teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom.
- Students are not disadvantaged by experience, opportunity or resource.
- Commitment to embedding the 7 core values of the school.

This policy has been reviewed and aligned to the whole school response to COVID-19

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 all students must return to full time education and schools will return to following up on low attendance. In light of this, we will return to the systems and policies in place pre-lockdown.

The coding issued by the Department of Education will be used to identify and record when a students is self-isolating with or without COVID1-9 symptoms.

Students will be required to follow all Government Policy around self-isolation in the event of a positive test result for COVID 19 or being in contact with someone with a positive test result leading to the need to self-isolate.

### **1. Aims**

Sexey's School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Maximising attendance rates to achieve an overall attendance level above 97%.
- Reducing the number students persistently absent (less than 90% attendance).
- Acquainting parents/carers with their responsibility for ensuring regular attendance and consistency between school and home expectations of behaviour.
- Establishing the culture that unjustified absence and poor behaviour are not tolerated.
- Developing self-discipline raising individual standards in attendance.
- Supporting pupils through additional provision attendance issues are hindering inclusion.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## **2. Rationale**

At Sexey's we believe that good attendance is a crucial part of ensuring that students can achieve their potential and develop strong 'work-ready' habits, in preparation for life after school. We fully support Somerset LEAs Schools Attendance Policy. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is legitimate. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

***Our definition of 'Good Attendance' is 95% or above.***

All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child.

If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Attendance is recorded in sessions, with 2 sessions a day.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school with good reason such as illness or other legitimate cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given.

This includes:-

- **Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.**
- **Truancy before or during the school day.**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained.**
- **Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.**
- **Holidays in term time for which leave of absence has not been granted.**

A full list of attendance codes can be found in Appendix 1.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, this Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment, the court could also give a community order.

Further guidance on attendance can be found in the school’s [Attendance Leaflet](#) on our website.

### **3. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [School Attendance Guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [School Census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 4. School procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Attendance Registers are required by law to be called twice a day; once at the commencement of the morning session and once at the commencement of the afternoon session.
- Registers close 10 minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Arrival after these times must be supported with a parental note, or medical evidence if necessary, in order for the session to be authorised.
- Procedures for the marking of registers and associated administration along with the agreed rewards and sanctions are published and shared with staff.
- The Attendance Officer monitors attendance records and makes appropriate referrals.
- The school Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers via SchoolComms (Text), phone call or e-mail when a student is absent, and the school has not been informed. Parents/carers must provide a reasonable explanation for all absences or they will be coded as unauthorised.
- The school monitors attendance and rewards individual and group achievements in this area.
- Fortnightly meetings are held by the Pastoral Team to review and discuss attendance concerns the actions to be taken. This will always include students whose attendance is below 90% or those with 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12 week.
- Holiday during school time will not be granted unless it is due to exceptional circumstances. The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

### i) Truancy

Teachers are required to maintain electronic registers and use SIMS data to check absences. If a child truants from a single lesson, students will be expected to spend at least the equivalent time of the time missed in detention. The sanction for truancy for a whole day will be internal isolation.

If a child does not arrive at school and a parent/carer does not call in on their behalf, a text message will be sent using SchoolComms using the contact numbers held on SIMS. If a parent/carer responds to this message stating that the child left for school, but has not arrived, it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to contact the police. However, the school will support initial investigations as necessary (for example speaking to any student in school about student's whereabouts).

If a young person is found to be absent from a lesson, the class teacher should alert all staff. A thorough search of site will be made for the young person. If the child is not found on school site, it will be established by the Attendance Officer when the student was last seen.

In the event of a student truanting school the following procedure will take place:

- Parents/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- Student to be returned to school as soon as possible.
- Meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team and parent/carer to be arranged.
- An SLT detention will be set if a single lesson is missed. In the event that a student truant 2 or more lessons they will be placed in isolation for a day.
- If a student does not return to school or return home by the end of the day. Parents/carers will need to contact the police

## ii) **Holidays during term time**

- Sexey's School follows the DFE and Local Authority guidelines with reference to holidays during term time.

The guidance issued in 2013 set out that holidays during school time can no longer be authorised by schools; unless there are exceptional circumstances. Sexey's School will therefore not authorise any absence during term time unless the application meets the exceptional circumstances criteria set out below:-

- One or more parents is a member of the armed forces and has been or is due to be deployed overseas within the last or next 6 months and evidence can be provided to support this.
- One or more parents is a member of the police, fire or medical NHS staff who has restricted leave due to their job and evidence can be provided to support this.
- Death of a parent, grandparent, step parent, sibling, or step sibling who is living overseas and whose funeral will be overseas.
- Terminal illness of immediate family member (this includes parent, step parent and siblings who have less than 3 months anticipated left to live).

If an unauthorised absence holiday is taken during term time the school is able to action the following once 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days have occurred).

- Refer the family to the Education and Attendance Officer with the Local Authority.
- Request a penalty notice is served on the parents.

## **5. Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences**

Information on penalty notices can be found in the school's [Penalty Procedure Leaflet](#).

## **6 Child Missing in Education**

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If a young person leaves Sexey's School the parents/carers are expected to inform the school in writing.

If a student leaves during the course of the academic year and staff are not informed of their next school or, if Sexey's School is unable to establish that the young person has started, the child will remain on roll at Sexey's until it is established where he/she is receiving education.

Once a new school placement has been confirmed and the student has started, a CTF (Common Transfer File) will be sent electronically and paper files will be sent via recorded delivery to the new school.

If a school placement has not been confirmed, Attendance Officer will complete a missing in education form and will send to the Local Authority Missing in Education Team. The child will remain on school roll until the Local Authority notifies otherwise.

## **7, Procedure for Reporting Absence**

Parents/Carers should report unplanned absences before 8:40 am as follows:

- Telephone 01749 813393 and press number 1 for attendance to report their son/daughter absent from School. Leave their son/daughter's name, their tutor group, and a brief description of why they are absent.
- Alternatively email [absence@sexeys.somerset.sch.uk](mailto:absence@sexeys.somerset.sch.uk) or complete the illness certification form <http://www.sexey.somerset.sch.uk/parentalinfo/sickness-notification>
- Periods of absence via voicemail/phone call must be followed up in writing either by an email or a letter from a parent/carer on their child's return.
- It is vital that parents/carers notify the School before 10:00am each day their child is unwell, before. Absence will be marked as unauthorised until parents/carers have provided their child with a written note explaining their absence. (A sickness absence cannot be authorised until an explanatory letter has been received).
- For planned absences from school or lessons, such as dental/medical appointments or other legitimate reasons, parents/carers should provide an appointment card from the dentist/hospital etc. If a note or a card is not produced, then the absence will not be authorised.
- All absences will be marked as unauthorised if no communication from parents/carers has been received.
- The School is required to inform the Local Authority if a student fails to attend school for 10 sessions in any 12-week period (for lower school only).
- To request permission for a child to be absent for any other reason than illness or medical the term-time leave form (available on the school's website) should be completed).

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child Missing Education Policy

## **9. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually unless the Government Policy or COVID 19 requires an earlier review.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. **Code**

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>I</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement