Attendance Policy
SEPTEMBER 2022

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SLT Lead	Phil Clackson
Policy last reviewed by	Phil Clackson
Policy Level	School Level

Signed:

Helen Cullen
Headteacher

Contents

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.

1. Aims

Sexey's School is committed to developing and maintaining a culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos where pupils consistently have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education and learning.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Promoting good attendance to achieve an overall attendance level of 97%
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence (90% attendance or below) and severe absence (50% attendance or below)
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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.

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.

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 may involve further help by referral to other professionals or outside agencies. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Safeguarding Service (ESS) for the Education Safeguarding Officer (ESO). The ESO 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 and Education Supervision Order on the child

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 working together to improve school attendance 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:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

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. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Meeting regularly with the attendance officer
- Attending 'triage' meetings concerning attendance
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Arranging targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Philip Clackson (Assistant Head) and can be contacted via email: pclackson@sexeys.somerset.sch.uk or telephone 01749 813393

4.4 The Head of Year

The head of year is responsible for:

- Attending regular 'Triage' Meetings concerning attendance.
- Monitoring and intervening where attendance is a concern.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

4.5 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording attendance for all students.
- Attending regular 'Triage' Meetings concerning attendance.

- Follow-up absences communicating with parents/carers to obtain reasons for absence etc.

- Liaise as required with Education Safeguarding Service regarding Penalty Notices, Elective Home Education, Children Missing Education etc.

The attendance officer can be contacted email: absence@sexeys.somerset.sch.uk or via telephone: 01749 813393 and selecting option 1 for absence.

4.6 Form Tutors and Class Teachers

Form Tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily for each morning and afternoon session using the correct codes

- Submitting attendance information via the school system at the beginning of each registration period.

- Monitoring their tutees attendance and being the first point of contact with parents for any issues around attendance.

- Working with Heads of Year to resolve any attendance issues concerning their tutees.

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for each lesson

- Submitting this information via the school system at the beginning of each lesson.

- Recording any lateness of pupils to their lessons and recording the number of minutes late via the school system.

4.7 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls regarding absences on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system when the Attendance Officer is not available
- Pass on messages from parents regarding absence to the Tutor/Head of Year/ Assistant Head (Pastoral) to provide them with more detailed support on attendance where needed.

4.8 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

  Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 08:40 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) advising when they are expected to return. For boarding students who usually return to school on a Sunday should contact the boarding house on Sunday evening before 20:00 if not returning.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

  Attend every session, timetabled, lesson and activity on time.

5. Recording Attendance and Procedures

5.1 Procedures

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

- Attendance Registers are required by law to be taken 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.
- 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 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 and regular 'Triage' meetings are held by the Pastoral Team to review and discuss attendance concerns the actions to be taken. This will always include students who are persistently absent (whose attendance 90% or less), severely (absent (whose attendance is 50% or less) or those with 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12-week period.
- 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 take registers on the school system. 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, parents/carers will be contacted. 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 will be returned to school as soon as possible.
- A meeting with a member of the Pastoral Team and parent/carer will be arranged.

- An SLT detention will be set if a single lesson is missed. If a student truants 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) Missing Student

When a student goes missing or runs away, they are at risk. Safeguarding Children therefore includes protecting them from this risk.
In the event of a student going missing procedures are followed as set out in The Missing Student Policy

iii) 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, stepparent, 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 can action the following once 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days have occurred).

- Refer the family to the Education Safeguarding Officer (ESO) with the Education Safeguarding Service (ESS).

- Request a penalty notice is served on the parents

5.2 Warning Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices

Information on penalty notices can be found in the school's Penalty Procedure Leaflet

Warning Penalty Notices may be issued for:

- 14 unexplained / unauthorised absences

- No improvement in attendance seen
- Meeting has been offered but unsuccessful or where there has been no engagement from the parent/carer.

Penalty Notices may be issued for:

- Unauthorised holiday
- Failure to engage with support offered
- Failure to achieve attendance contract targets
- Other significant attendance concerns
- Persistent unauthorised absence

5.3 Child Missing in Education

If a young person leaves Sexey's School to join another school or receive home education the parents/carers must inform the school in writing.

If a student leaves during 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 and a Child Missing Education Referral will be completed and submitted to the Education Safeguarding Service

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. The child will remain on school roll until the Local Authority notifies otherwise.

5.4 Reporting Absence

Parents/Carers should report unplanned absences and a brief reason for the absence before 8:40 am.

- As part of our Safeguarding Procedures parents/carers reporting periods of absence via voicemail/phone may receive a call from the Attendance Officer to confirm the identity of the caller. Parents/Carers may also be asked to follow up in their call, 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 each day their child is unwell.
- Absences will be marked as unauthorised until the Attendance Officer is satisfied that parents/carers have provided a valid explanation or evidence to authorise the absence.
- Medical absences: For medical absences over five days, the school requires medical evidence to continue to authorise the absence this can take the form of for example a copy of a prescription, doctor's appointment, or consultant's letter.
- 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.

6. Strategies for Rewarding and Improving Attendance

Sexey's will look to maintaining and improving attendance for all students by:

6.1 Rewarding Attendance

Sexey's rewards good attendance but also recognises that rewarding attendance by, for example, giving certificates for 100% attendance discriminates against those who are striving to attend school but may have been ill. We therefore will recognise good attendance or improvement in attendance in the following ways:

- Through the Sexey's Seven awards for e.g., Resilience, Courage etc.
- Letters or emails home
- Celebration Friday

6.2 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence 4-weekly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- The school will compare attendance data to the county and national averages and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to School Leaders, Heads of Years and the Pastoral Team to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify students who are likely need support at the beginning of the year so timely interventions can be made.
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Be mindful of the needs of particular students or cohorts and use support within its Pastoral Care System to provide early help and intervention *e.g. the graduated response for students with SEMH*
- Use an attendance graduated response approach as threshold points for attendance are reached.
  - Letter 1 – pattern or early concern regarding procedures or attendance
  - Letter 2 – continued concern where student is in danger of Persistent Absence
  - Letter 3 – meeting with Head of Year or Assistant Head to discuss barriers and support where Persistent Absence threshold has been breached or is about to be breached.
  - Meeting with Assistant Head and other parties to arrange formal support e.g. family intervention
  - Enforcement Procedures e.g. through statutory intervention where all other avenues have been exhausted or support is not working or has not been engaged with.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to:
- Behaviour, Rewards and Suspension Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child Missing Education Policy
- Missing Student Policy

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day