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Author: Deputy Head (Pastoral)
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Attendance, Registration and Absence Policy and Procedure

2024-2025

ATTENDANCE

Sherborne Prep places great emphasis on pupils developing good patterns of attendance. In building a culture of good school attendance, we recognise:

- The importance of good and regular attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of our values and ethos in everyday life.
- The connections between attendance and pupil welfare, including fulfilling academic potential and attainment, developing good patterns of behaviour, and supporting pupils with particular needs (such as educational needs, medical conditions, disabilities and mental health).
- The importance of setting and communicating high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of wider welfare and safeguarding issues.

Whilst attendance is a whole school issue, the Deputy Head Pastoral (appointed by Governors) has overall responsibility for championing good attendance at school. This includes regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it and reviewing historic and emerging patterns across the School.

The School has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and pupils are made aware of these, included that:

- They are expected to be present in-person for the duration of the school day.
- They are expected to punctually arrive on time and attend all timetabled lesson and activities.
- They should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission or otherwise in accordance with school rules.
- Any unexplained absence will be followed up.
- Persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School
- If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff who will listen to and support them.

Furthermore, it is a condition of the contract between the School and parents that they will ensure that pupils attend each school day punctually. If pupils miss a school day, lesson, or other commitment without a valid reason, then there will be a sanction process. If parents remove pupils from school for a reason that Sherborne Prep deems not to be legitimate (e.g., an unagreed holiday) then the Deputy Head Pastoral would typically write to those parents and remind them of their contractual obligations. This would then be recorded as an unauthorized absence.

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The School must provide the Local Authority with names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where the absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorized.

Children Absent/and or from Education, Children Missing in Education are:

‘Children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalization and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.’ (DfE Children Missing in Education 2016)

Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for they this is needed, for example, the children having treatment or an operation.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be a satisfactory reason. This is different from a children being a ‘child missing in education’ (as described above) but is still a concern.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child’s development across all domains, not purely cognitive.

If a child’s absence continues despite interventions to identify and address the underlying cause with both the children and parents/carers, then consideration be given to seeking advice from the local authority in order to support the family.

Where pupils are regularly or persistently absent for reasons of mental or physical health, special educational needs and/or disabilities, the approach of the School is typically to work closely with the family to first understand the reasons for absence and the likely timescales involved, to work on a plan for returning to school of increasing attendance, and then to carefully monitor that attendance over time. Where there are particularly intractable issues of absence over a period of time, contact would usually be made with the Education Engagement Service (EES) at Dorset/Somerset Council. The School will inform the local authority where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days, and work with the family to provide educational provision whilst determining with the local authority whether alternative provision would be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 as outline in statutory guidance.

More information is available in DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance), DfE’s [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/summary-of-responsibilities-where-a-mental-health-issue-is-affecting-attendance), and [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

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REGISTRATION

Registration is required by law at the beginning of each morning session and at the beginning of the first afternoon session. The process of registration is combined with Registration in the morning and during the first lesson after lunch in the afternoon. The morning session allows form tutors and teachers to spend time with the pupils at the start of every day.

- Morning registration is at 8.15am in form rooms.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 1.30 (for junior and Pre-Prep pupils) and 2.00pm (senior pupils) in their initial lesson after the lunch break. On Wednesday's registration is taken by an appropriate adult prior to matches or sport for pupils in year 5 and above.
- Registration must be supervised by a member of staff; tutors are expected to attend each registration and should make appropriate cover arrangements if they are unable to be there.
- Registration is electronic and is completed on ISAMS. The office staff are responsible for producing the report of absences. This will contain both explained and unexplained absences. Office staff are also responsible for contacting parents to ascertain the reason for absence where possible.
- Pupils arriving later to school (after 8.25) should report to Reception to sign in. any pupil absence to form registration for any reason but who is on site must register with their form tutor or the office.
- Each morning, office staff make every effort to follow up pupils whose absence is unexplained.: they contact teachers, make phone calls to parents and/or guardians and follow up with an email if required. They liaise with the pastoral team regarding any as yet unexplained absences by morning break. The DHP is responsible for chasing up these unexplained absences as a priority.
- During registration periods form tutors will check that the pupils are ready for the day ahead and know of any additional lessons that may be occurring.
- Staff who are organizing trips, activities and fixtures which take pupils out of their normal timetabled lessons will register the pupils using the appropriate code on ISAMS. This is also used when the school has been notified of illness or medical appointment.

Attendance and register symbols and commentary for ISAMS registration.

See [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) for more information.

Absence and Attendance Codes

Detailed guidance on the codes is available in Chapter 8 of [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) which should be consulted in case of uncertainty.

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Reason	Code	Status
Present (morning)	/	Attendance
Present (afternoon)	\	Attendance
No reason Yet provided for Absence	N	Unauthorized Absence
Late (before registers closed)	L	Attendance
Medical/Dental Appointments	M	Unauthorized Absence
Illness	I	Authorized Absence
Other authorized absence	C	Authorized Absence
Other unauthorized absence	O	Unauthorized Absence
Education off site	B	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)
Approved Sporting activity or match	P	Authorized Absence
Educational visit or trip	V	Attendance (attending an approved educational activity)
Religious Observance	R	Authorized Absence
Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	G	Unauthorized Absence
Family holiday (Agreed)	H	Authorized Absence
Suspended or Excluded	E	Authorized Absence
Interview	J	Authorized Absence

Staff are required to input further detail using the + drop down section in the registration module of ISAMS. For further codes, please see ISAMS Registration module.

General notes

- The master copy of the electronic register is kept centrally in the office.
- All master copies are held centrally for 6 years.
- An electronic back up copy of the register is made at least once a month by the School Administrator
- Letters informing the School of future absence or explaining absence should be kept in a file by the office staff and logged on CPOMS. Symbols may be inserted in ISAMS in preparation for known future absences.
- If pupils are present during registration but are leaving school anytime afterwards, they are still marked as present. The children must sign out in the sign out book in the school office. Lists of pupils on trips or matches should always be with office staff.
- School holidays should be clearly marked.
- The DHP will review attendance rates weekly and will follow up possible issues with attendance with the form tutors, and to be aware of a potential school refusal or safeguarding concerns which may be affecting a pupil's attendance. Issues are flagged to the DSL via CPOMS.

Process for requesting leave of absence and informing the School of the reason for an unexpected absence.

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To request leave in advance, parents' guardians should write to their child's form tutor.

It is not normal procedure to sanction absence for holidays in term time. If parents remove their child without permission of the School, this absence is unauthorized and the pupil's place in the School may not be secure. Parents wishing to take their children out of school to depart early for holidays or return to school late afterwards, should write to the Head requesting permission to do so. This is also expected should parents wish to take their children out of school for longer periods.

Responsibilities of Form tutors

- To complete registers as early as is possible every morning.
- To check email messages or notes from pupils and amend the register as soon as possible to reduce wasted time by office staff making unnecessary calls.
- To keep up to date contact information in ISAMS by passing any changes to the School Administrator as soon as possible.
- To respond to emails from parents regarding requests for Leave of Absence.
- To raise concerns over pupil attendance with the DHP.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Head Pastoral

In line with Government guidance, the Deputy Head Pastoral is the designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed. The DHP sits on the School's SLT and as the School's 'Senior Attendance Champion' is tasked to:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, making sure they are followed by all staff;
- Ensure school staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the School's policies and procedures;
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus on the collective efforts of the School; and
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the progress, including efficacy of the School's strategies and processes.

In addition, the DHP will:

Liaise with form tutors' levels of absence and necessary follow up action; if a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, consideration as to next steps will be made, taking in to account possible safeguarding implications, as well as the pastoral, parental and disciplinary possibilities, and the Schools Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will be notified.

Inform the Local Authority of pupils leaving the school roll, (delegated to the School Administrator) in accordance with the government guidance on the regulations which can be found her: [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/children-missing-education). In particular, the DHP would ensure that a pupil is not deleted from

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the school roll until the School and Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupils whereabouts.

Liaise with Head of Admissions wherever there are attendance concerns relating to overseas pupils whose visas are sponsored by the School, for consideration of sponsor reporting responsibilities to UKVI.

Should any parent of pupil have any queries about attendance they should contact their child's tutor in the first instance, escalating to the DHP.