

Attendance Policy

Author: Matthew White

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1. Aims

Children are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have, and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance (September 2025)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The board of trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all academy leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the academy records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the academy works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of academy attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure the academy's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the academy has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping academy leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with academy leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the academy's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the academy is struggling with attendance, working with academy leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The academy's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The academy's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
    - Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the academy
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorizing the Deputy Headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where academy transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-academy barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the academy
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Matthew White and can be contacted via 01403 733254, or m.white@southwaterinfants.co.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The academy attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue penalty notices

The attendance officer is Matthew White and can be contacted via 01403 733254, or m.white@southwaterinfants.co.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the academy office in the morning by 9:00 and in the afternoon by 13:10.

3.6 Academy office staff

Academy office staff will:

- Take calls from parents / guardians about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Pass on details from parents / guardians to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the academy and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the academy and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Matthew White (Deputy Headteacher), who can be contacted via 01403733254 or m.white@southwaterinfants.co.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend the academy every day on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The academy day starts at 8:45 and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in academy between 8:45am and 9:00am on each academy day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00.

A late mark will be taken if a pupil arrives after 9:00am. An unauthorised absence mark will be taken if a pupil arrives after 9:10am.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the academy office staff, who can be contacted via 01403 733254 or office@southwaterinfants.co.uk.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The academy will normally accept a parent/carer's explanation that their child is too ill to attend. Medical evidence will not routinely be requested. Where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason for absence, or where absence due to illness is prolonged or repeatedly occurring, the academy may request reasonable supporting evidence to help determine the appropriate attendance code and identify any support or reasonable adjustments required. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

Parents / carers should contact the academy office in order to request leaves of absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate L code after 9am-9:10am
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate U code - 9:10am onwards

- Where there are concerns about punctuality, the academy will make verbal contact with parents/carers, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the academy on time. If the concerns persist, the Attendance Officer will write to the parents / carers, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.
- If there is no improvement, the Headteacher or Attendance Officer will arrange a meeting with the parent / carer.
- In the event of persistent lateness, this may lead to an escalation involving West Sussex.
- We monitor late collection from the academy premises at the end of the academy day. Names of such pupils are recorded in the Office and a reason for the late collection must be recorded on each occasion. The academy will invite you to meet with them to discuss late collection of pupils if it becomes frequent and regular or a pattern emerges and letters will be sent home once a child is collected late from the academy on three or more occasions.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend academy does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts the academy may contact other agencies, including the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the academy will consider involving an education welfare officer
- If the academy has safeguarding concerns regarding the unexplained absence of a child, an immediate referral to the IFD or Police may be made.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, or where there are safeguarding concerns about an unexplained absence, the academy will take prompt and proportionate action and may make an immediate referral to the appropriate local authority or police service. Where a pupil has been continuously absent for 10 school days and the academy has been unable to establish their whereabouts despite reasonable enquiries, the academy will refer the matter in accordance with West Sussex children missing education procedures.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels every year via a class teacher report and during parent / teacher conferences twice a year.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the academy site for certain educational activities, or to attend other academies or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances
- A major family event such as the wedding of an immediate relative
- Serious or terminal illness, or funeral of a close relative
- Significant family trauma has occurred and it is believed that a break is in the child's best interests.

Requests for leave of absence will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context of each request. The academy will not operate blanket policies under which leave is automatically granted for particular circumstances. Please check with a member of SLT or the office team if you are unsure whether your request would fall under 'exceptional circumstances'

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the academy office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from academy (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the academy may allow a pupil to be absent from the academy site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the academy. Where a pupil attends an approved off-site educational or sporting activity during a registered session, the academy will only record the appropriate attendance code where the activity meets the requirements of the DfE attendance guidance. This includes the activity being educational in nature, approved by the academy and appropriately supervised. The academy will ensure that appropriate safeguarding and welfare arrangements are in place.
- Attending another academy at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend academy, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the academy premises are closed

Where a pupil has responsibilities as a young carer which may be affecting their attendance, the academy will work with the pupil and their family to understand the barriers and identify appropriate support, including referrals to wider services where appropriate.

5.2 Support and Formal Attendance Measures

We understand that there can be many different reasons why a child's attendance may become a concern. Our first priority will always be to understand what may be affecting attendance and to work positively with families to find ways to help.

We want all families to feel able to talk to us if there are difficulties with attendance. We will listen to individual circumstances, offer appropriate support and work together with parents and carers to help children attend school regularly and benefit fully from their education.

Where attendance remains a concern, we will continue to work with the family and consider the most appropriate next steps. Any action taken will be proportionate to the circumstances and considered on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Where appropriate support has been offered but attendance does not improve, or where the circumstances require formal action, the academy may use the attendance measures available to it. These measures are intended to support improved attendance and will be used in accordance with legislation and West Sussex County Council's procedures.

Penalty notices

A penalty notice may be issued by the headteacher (or someone authorised by them), the local authority or the police where a child of compulsory school age has unauthorised absences from school.

Before a penalty notice is considered, the academy will look carefully at the individual circumstances and consider whether it is the most appropriate way of helping to improve attendance.

This will include considering:

- Whether the national threshold has been met. This is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**.**
- The reasons for the absences and the individual circumstances of the child and family.
- Whether further support from the academy would be appropriate.
- Whether a notice to improve or another form of intervention would be more helpful.
- Whether any duties under the Equality Act 2010 mean that issuing a penalty notice would be inappropriate.

West Sussex County Council may, in some circumstances, consider issuing a penalty notice before the national threshold has been reached, in accordance with its local Code of Conduct. This may include circumstances where there are concerns that the threshold is being deliberately avoided.

A penalty notice may also be issued where a parent allows their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a suspension or exclusion, where the school has notified the parent that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence may receive a penalty notice, although this will normally apply to the parent or parents who allowed the absence to take place.

Payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of which organisation issued the notice. If payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority may decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The current penalty notice arrangements are:

- **First penalty notice:** £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- **Second penalty notice:** £160 if paid within 28 days, where the same parent receives a second notice in relation to the same pupil.
- **Third penalty notice:** A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the first notice. If the national threshold is met for a third time during this period, alternative action will be considered.

Notices to improve

Where the national threshold has been met and support is considered appropriate, but a family has not engaged with the support offered, the academy may issue a notice to improve**.**

A notice to improve is intended to provide a further opportunity for families to work with the academy and make positive changes to attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

The academy will use this opportunity to make sure that parents and carers are clear about:

- Their child's current attendance and the reasons for concern.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' legal responsibilities under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996**.**
- The support that has already been offered.
- Any further support that may be available.
- How parents can re-engage with support that may previously have been offered.
- What improvement in attendance would look like in the individual circumstances.
- The period available to demonstrate improvement, which will normally be between 3 and 6 weeks**.**
- The circumstances in which a penalty notice may be considered if attendance does not improve.

The academy will aim to make the expectations clear and ensure that families understand what support is available and what they can do to help improve attendance.

We recognise that improving attendance can sometimes take time, particularly where there are wider circumstances affecting a child or family. Our approach will therefore remain supportive, respectful and focused on finding solutions**,** while also ensuring that children receive the education to which they are entitled.

Our shared aim is for every child to attend school regularly, feel happy and secure at school, and have the best possible opportunity to learn, develop and thrive.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the academy is a place to which the children want to come: that the academy is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.
- It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at the academy. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the academy and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.
- All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.
- Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of the End of Year written reports and at Parent Consultations. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with the academy
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to the academy

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where there are complex barriers to attendance, the academy will work on an individual basis to support with academy attendance and work alongside families to remove in-school barriers.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where there are issues relating to mental or physical ill health or SEND barriers to attendance, the academy will work on an individual basis to support with academy attendance and work alongside families to make adjustments or offer additional support.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the academy becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the academy will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to the academy after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When a child returns to the academy after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, a personalized approach will be taken to support the child back in to full time education.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The academy will:

- The academy follows West Sussex policy for managing attendance of the children at the academy. We work in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Team at West Sussex to monitor and, where appropriate, support families in improving levels of attendance for their child.
- The academy will log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The academy will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.
- To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the academy may request additional information or evidence, eg. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

- Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Office Staff.
- All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Office Staff check the messages and operate ‘first day calling’ for those pupils absent with no reason given.
- Attendance data is held electronically on separate Arbor Management Information System, accessible by the Headteacher and Office Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.
- The attendance monitors the attendance of pupils each half term. The staged approach appended outlines the academy’s approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.
- Returns of academy data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our academy within local and national contexts.
- The academy sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Trustees at the first Full Board meeting of the academy year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's academy absence national statistics releases. The underlying academy-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the board of trustees.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and academy leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and the pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil’s absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the academy's strategy for improving attendance. The academy will not wait until a pupil reaches the persistent absence threshold before providing support. Emerging patterns of absence, repeated lateness or particular patterns of absence will be considered so that appropriate support can be offered at an early stage.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the academy will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- The escalation process as outlined in Appendix A, will be followed.
- In the event of persistent lateness, the academy may make a formal referral to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team at West Sussex and a FPN may be issued.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum two years by Matthew White (attendance officer). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

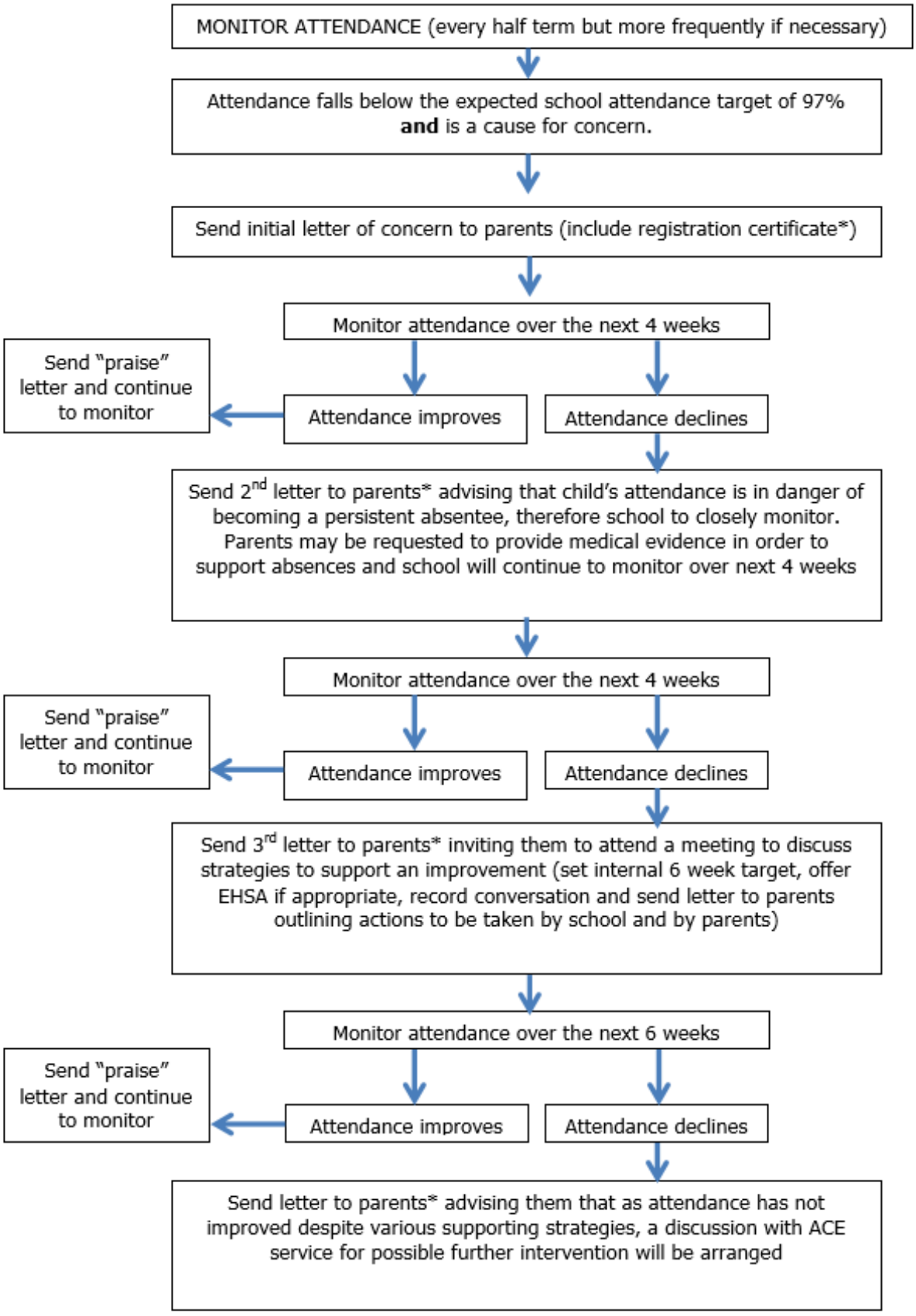
9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix A

The Southwater Infant Academy Attendance Monitoring (Escalation process)



*registration certificate to be available / included with all correspondence and communication with parents (and minutes late report if appropriate)

Appendix B – Example Attendance Letter 1

The Southwater Infant Academy

"Growing, Learning and Succeeding Together"

3rd February 2026

Attendance: xxx, xxx Class

Dear Mr & Mrs xxx,

At Southwater Infant Academy, we place a strong emphasis on the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, as outlined in our Attendance Policy.

We have noted that xxx current attendance is 94.6% which includes 3 days unauthorised absences. Our academy aims for a target attendance rate of 97%, which accommodates up to 5 days of absence over an academic year, typically sufficient to cover illnesses. Regular attendance is vital as pupils often fall behind when they miss school, regardless of the reason for absence.

We hope to see xxx attendance improve, should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

XX

Mr Matthew White
Deputy Headteacher

Please note: This letter has been generated automatically due to your child's attendance record. Responses to this letter may not be routinely monitored.

Worthing Road, Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9JH Tel: (01403) 733254
Email: office@southwaterinfants.co.uk | Website: www.southwaterinfantacademy.co.uk
Headteacher: Mrs Christie Cavallo BSc Hons QTS

Appendix C – Absence Request Form

The Southwater Infant Academy

Request for Absence in School Time

Please note that Headteachers have been directed by the Government not to authorise any absence from school unless there is an 'exceptional' circumstance. Absence requests will only be approved for compassionate, medical or religious reasons. In line with these regulations, holidays during term time **will not** be authorised. However, if there are 'exceptional circumstances' surrounding your request, complete the form below giving full details for the Headteacher's consideration.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are generally issued where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10 school week period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria. FPNs are issued **per parent, per child** and are an alternative to prosecution. This gives the parent an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying **a fine of £160, which must be paid within 28 days. If you pay the FPN within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £80.** When a parent has received two FPNs in a three-year period, the offer of a FPN will not be available. Instead, the matter will either be allocated to an Investigating Officer or referred to the Magistrates' court. Please note if the absence is related to holidays in term time, the case is likely to go before the Magistrates' court.

When FPNs have not been paid within the 28 days WSCC will consider prosecuting for the original non-attendance, not for the non-payment of the FPN. Further information on legal action that can be taken can be found on GOV.UK. Alternatively, they may transfer the case to an Investigating Officer.

Please note: should the period of unauthorised absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, a FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead the matter may be brought directly before the court.

Please remember; pupils are in school for 190 days each year. **There are 175 other days for holidays and other activities.** 80% attendance represents **1 day off a week.** 90% attendance represents **1 day off per fortnight.**

How to use this form

- Use for **all absence** other than sickness
- Return to the school **before** the date of requested absence
- Use a **separate** form for each child and each absence

Parent/Guardian/Carer to complete this section

Name of child:	Class:

Is this the first request for absence this academic year? Yes ☐ No ☐

Dates requested:	Do you have a child(ren) at **SJA** for whom you are making the same request? Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you have a child(ren) at **another school(s)** for whom you are making the same request? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please name the school(s) below:
Number of school days requested:	

Reason:

Parent/Carer please sign to confirm request and that the information above has been read

Name: Dated:

School Office to complete this section

Attendance (Previous Year) %	**Green**	**More than 96%**	**Satisfactory**
Attendance (Current) %	**Amber**	**90% to 96%**	**Needs improvement**
	Red	**Less than 90%**	**Unsatisfactory**

Head Teacher to complete this section

The code placed in the register will be:

Religious Observance	R		Participating in a regulated performance	C1
Educational Visit	V		Other Authorised Circumstance	C
Medical/Dental Appointment	M		Other Unauthorised Circumstance	O
Participating in a sporting activity	P		Unauthorised Holiday	G
Pupil of non-compulsory school age	X			

Your request for absence, as set out above:

☐ is authorised

☐ is not authorised *(as it does not meet the authorised absence criteria, explained at the top of this form)*

Signed: Date: