



Attendance Policy

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1.0 Guiding Principles

- 1.1 Southern Academy Trust strives to ensure that all its pupils access a full-time education.
- 1.2 Each school will work with pupils and their families to ensure every pupil attends regularly and punctually.
- 1.3 Each school will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- 1.4 Each school has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- 1.5 Each school will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- 1.6 Each school will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

2.0 What you can expect from Southern Academy Trust and its schools:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support pupils to achieve good attendance and punctuality.

3.0 What Southern Academy Trust expects from Pupils:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place (age appropriate)

4.0 What Southern Academy Trust and its schools expect from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends regularly, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn
- To ensure their child attends every day the school is open unless they are too ill to do so
- To avoid keeping their child away from school for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To promptly inform the school if their child is unable to attend including the reason for absence and expected date of return (by 9 am on first day of absence)

- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence.

5.0 Registration

- 5.1 The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.
- 5.2 Pupils are expected to arrive on time in order to be ready for the start of the first lesson.
- 5.3 Registers close 10 minutes after the start of the session. After this, pupils will be marked as late, after 25 minutes of the start of the session; pupils will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- 5.4 The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).

6.0 Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

- 6.1 Authorised absence is where the school has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this.
- 6.2 Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:
- Significant illness
 - Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
 - Days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
 - Exclusion
 - Involvement in a public performance
- 6.3 Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
- Looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
 - Birthdays
 - Days out
 - Shopping trips
 - Family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved)
 - Special occasions, where the school does not agree that the absence should be granted
- 6.3 Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a child's absence, the school will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

6.4 Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised.

7.0 How we respond to Absence/Lateness

7.1 If a pupil is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their pupil's absence.

7.2 Where a pupil's absence is cause for concern, the school will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school or visit parents/carers at home.

8.0 Persistent Absence

8.1 A pupil becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any pupil whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a CAF and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant school staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed. Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority and Department for Education via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

9.0 Leave of Absence during Term Time

9.1 Any absence interrupts the continuity of pupil's learning. Government legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence; please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take pupils out of school for holidays during term time.

9.2 It is expected that a Request Form is submitted to the school at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form. The Academy has the right to serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their pupils out of school without authorisation. Fixed Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per pupil if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any pupil taking leave of absence without prior notification to the school.

10.0 Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- 10.1 Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- 10.2 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable education.
- 10.3 Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- 10.4 The Trust works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.
- 10.5 All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

11.0 Children Missing in Education

- 11.1 Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.
- 11.2 The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the schools should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the Inclusion / CME Officer and Education Welfare Officer in the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- 11.3 In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head Teacher should inform the CME Officer and Education Welfare Officer in the local authority of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools days without provision of a reasonable explanation. A referral form is annexed to this document (see Appendix 3).
- 11.4 Head teachers should inform the CME Officer and the child's social worker immediately if a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is missing.
- 11.5 In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and / or the police should always be made promptly:
 - The child may be the victim of a crime;

- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan;
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

11.6 Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

11.7 A pupil's name can only be removed from the admission register under regulation 8(1), subparagraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries.

11.8 The term 'reasonable enquiries' grants schools and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in a given case will vary. In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

11.9 When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- check local databases within the local authority;
- check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
- follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
- check with agencies known to be involved with family;
- check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
- check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
- check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;

- in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
- home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives

11.10 The school is required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools should complete the 'new admissions notification' (Appendix 4) and send to the local authority admissions team.

11.11 Schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This form is 'removal from school register notification (Appendix 5).

11.12 If there is any doubt about whether a child is deemed to be missing education, the school should seek advice from the CME Officer and Education Welfare Officer in the local authority.

Children Missing Education Administrator on 01305 225534

cme@dorsetcc.gov.uk

11.13 Further guidance on children missing in education can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Appendix 1

DfE Attendance Codes, Description and Meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Religious Observance

Authorised absence may be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the Academy to approve the absence or grant leave of absence.

Individual religions and their religious observance are too numerous to detail in this document.

Parents should contact the Academy to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

Appendix 3

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Referral Form for Child Missing Education

Section 1: Core information - please complete all sections

Name (include any alternatives / nicknames/AKA)

Date of Birth

UPN (unique pupil number)

School Last Attended

Last known address

Date Last Attended

Name(s) of parent/carer

Telephone No(s)

Home

Mobile

Work

Section 2: Referrer details

Referrer name:

Role:

School:

Phone number:

e-mail:

Section 3: Reason for referral

What has led you to believe the child/young person is missing education?

Section 4: Please answer yes or no to these questions then go to section 5

Are you aware of any other school aged children in the family home?	Yes / No
Do you have any other addresses for this child/young person?	Yes / No
Have you had any contact with any adults in the family or connected to the family regarding this child?	Yes / No
Are there any other agencies involved with the family e.g. Family Support, Social Care?	Yes / No
Have you or any other professional involved with the child/young person considered completing the child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool?	Yes / No

Section 5: Additional Information

If you have answered Yes to any questions in section 4, give details here. Also, please add ANYTHING else, no matter how small, that might help us to find a school place for this child.

Signed Designation Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: cme@dorsetcc.gov.uk or post to

CME Admin

Schools and Learning

Monkton Park

Winterborne Monkton

Dorchester

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TEAM
NEW ADMISSIONS NOTIFICATION *



Full name of student	
Date of Birth	
New/receiving school	
School address	
School telephone number	
School contact	
Start date	
Parent(s)	
Address(es)	
Previous school	
Address	
Any other information	
Date received (to be completed by School Attendance Team)	

**this form to be used to notify the local authority when a student's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.*

Please email to schoolattendance@dorsetcc.gov.uk

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TEAM
REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL REGISTER
NOTIFICATION *



Dorset County Council

Full name of student	
Date of Birth	
School	
School address	
School telephone number	
School contact	
Finish date	
Parent(s)	
Address(es)	
New school <i>(if known)</i>	
Address <i>(if known)</i>	

Any other information	
Date received <i>(to be completed by School Attendance Team)</i>	

**this form to be used to notify the local authority when a student's name is removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point.*

Please email to schoolattendance@dorsetcc.gov.uk