

SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

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Review Date	Cycle	Reviewer	Adopted	Committee
June 2025	Annually	J Henderson	June 2025	Full Governors

Attendance Policy

Seaham High School recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring that all students can fulfil their potential. This is a widely held assumption but it is insufficiently stated. Students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. We expect all students to attend regularly and punctually in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The continuity of regular attendance will enable a student to progress in a structured and progressive manner and so achieve their individual goals. We must encourage good attendance and discourage poor attendance. This policy reflects the updated expectations of the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance (effective August 2024).

This policy complies with:

- *Education Act 1996 and 2002*
- *School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*
- *Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024*

- *Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014*

AIMS

1. To improve upon levels of attendance to exceed national expectations.
2. To reduce levels of Persistence and Severely Absence to below national expectations.
3. To focus on groups of students e.g. Pupil Premium that fall below national expectations.
4. To involve parents and other agencies in order to improve attendance and to provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
5. To recognise needs of individuals following significant periods of absence.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a clearly defined system of rewards and sanctions.
8. To define clearly roles and responsibilities in monitoring attendance.
9. To have a system whereby data is gathered and analysed regularly.
10. To promote a positive school culture where students want to attend.

PRINCIPLES

Seaham High school defines good attendance as 96% or better. Good attendance will be promoted by:

- Providing a welcoming and caring ethos, characterised by positive relationships and mutual respect.
- Applying Whole School Attendance Policy consistently
- Establishing and maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Inspiring and motivating teaching.
- An appropriate and relevant curriculum which includes all students.
- All parties to have an understanding of legal requirements, school expectations and roles and responsibilities.

- An emphasis on working in partnership with students, their families, the One Point Service and other support agencies.
- An acceptance by all members of the school community that there is a shared responsibility for promoting good attendance.
- Frequent positive reinforcement of the importance of good attendance.
- Effective registration and response to absence procedures.
- Effective procedures for the early identification, communication and action on attendance problems.

Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

THE LAW

The law states that parents need to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents are responsible for this duty in law and are **breaking the law** if they do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help if there are any problems** affecting school attendance. If attendance does not get better or help and support offered is not accepted the Council may issue a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask a parent to attend an interview asking questions about whether the law has been broken.

If a parent goes to court or is found guilty of an offence, a fine may be issued of up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison**

PROCEDURES

1. Electronic registers are to be completed every morning by tutors during registration.
2. Teaching staff complete registration of **every** class taught, using SIMS Lesson Monitor as early as possible in that period. Where the electronic system is not available, a paper copy should be taken and entered as soon as the electronic system becomes available.
3. Seaham High School staff covering for absence should take the class register electronically.
4. Where possible regular Supply staff will be given Log-in codes to enable them to complete electronic registers. Casual supply staff are given a class list and they should complete this and send to Student Guidance to be entered on the system.

5. Any student arriving after 8:30am is given a late mark and a 30 minute afterschool detention. Any student arriving after 9.10 a.m. is given a U after the register has closed. All Late students must go directly to their form class if before 9:10am and Student Guidance if after this time. Letters are sent to parents for persistent offenders. These will be identified by Student Guidance.
6. If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will contact home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.
7. Doctors and dentists' appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, a child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.
8. A safeguarding text is sent during Period 1 each day if a student is absent and the reason is unknown. Absence text messages are sent in the morning and followed up with phone calls and letters where needed.
9. If the school receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).
10. The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to coronavirus/frequent hospital appointments and/or long-term medical needs). If we have concerns regarding a child's attendance then parents may be contacted by phone, letter, to invite parents to a meeting or make a visit home.
11. If, following the school's attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or a parent has not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.
12. The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If a child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean the child could miss school a lot, the school may ask for medical evidence to authorise absences.
13. We are committed to supporting students, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

EXPECTATIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Attendance Champion

The Deputy Headteacher (Mr J. Henderson) is the designated Senior Attendance Champion, responsible for setting a clear vision, overseeing attendance strategy, and coordinating support.

Staff

All staff share responsibility for promoting good attendance. Attendance Officers, Year Managers, tutors and pastoral staff play key roles in monitoring and intervention.

- Absences can only be authorised by a teacher or authorised representative of the school. A satisfactory explanation from parent/carer by telephone notifying us on the day of absence will be acceptable.
- Any attendance below 96% is unsatisfactory and when this occurs, Student Guidance will check for any particular patterns and adopt strategies to work with families to improve attendance.
- Details of the school's expectations concerning attendance are included on the School's website.

Governors

The governing body will:

- Monitor attendance trends termly.
- Review the attendance strategy annually.
- Support and challenge leaders to reduce absence.

Parents/Carers and students

- Students are expected to attend school every day, unless absence is unavoidable.
- Where absence is known in advance, parents are asked to advise us in writing. For all other absences, parents/carers are asked to contact school by telephone, before 8:20a.m. on the first day of absence.
- Students are reminded of expectations and their own responsibility for their attendance at regular intervals by form tutors and senior members of staff.

Leave of Absence/Holidays in term-time

- The school implements national guidelines with regard to granting leave of absence during term time.
- Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the student's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.
- An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.
- **Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments, such as Mock exams.**

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Each member of staff has a role in the consistent and thorough monitoring of attendance and acting on information received. The school is committed to regular and systematic monitoring and review of its attendance policy. The emphasis is on the ongoing analysis of attendance and punctuality patterns and regular review of procedures is an essential part of this process.

1. Close liaison between the school, home and other external agencies
2. Attendance Issues to feature in discussions regarding attainment within Departments and within regular Cabinet meetings. Concerns about particular students to be passed to Student Guidance and the School Attendance Officer.
3. All staff are required to inform Student Guidance of concerns about attendance.
4. When appropriate concerns about a student's attendance will be referred to the Senior Leader in charge of attendance. Consequently, an attendance panel may be convened to address with parents a particular student's attendance issues. This panel will decide on the way forward, either further time to improve with a timescale or court proceedings.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

We aim to actively promote good attendance and associated rewards and effective sanctions. It is also important to ensure there is fair and consistent implementation of this. The importance of good attendance and punctuality is emphasised in a number of different ways:

Rewards

1. Details of attendance and punctuality are included in reports to parents/carers.
2. Regular Attendance adverts are broadcast using the digital signage in the school.
3. Students are given reward points for every day that they attend. These go towards whole school reward system.

Sanctions

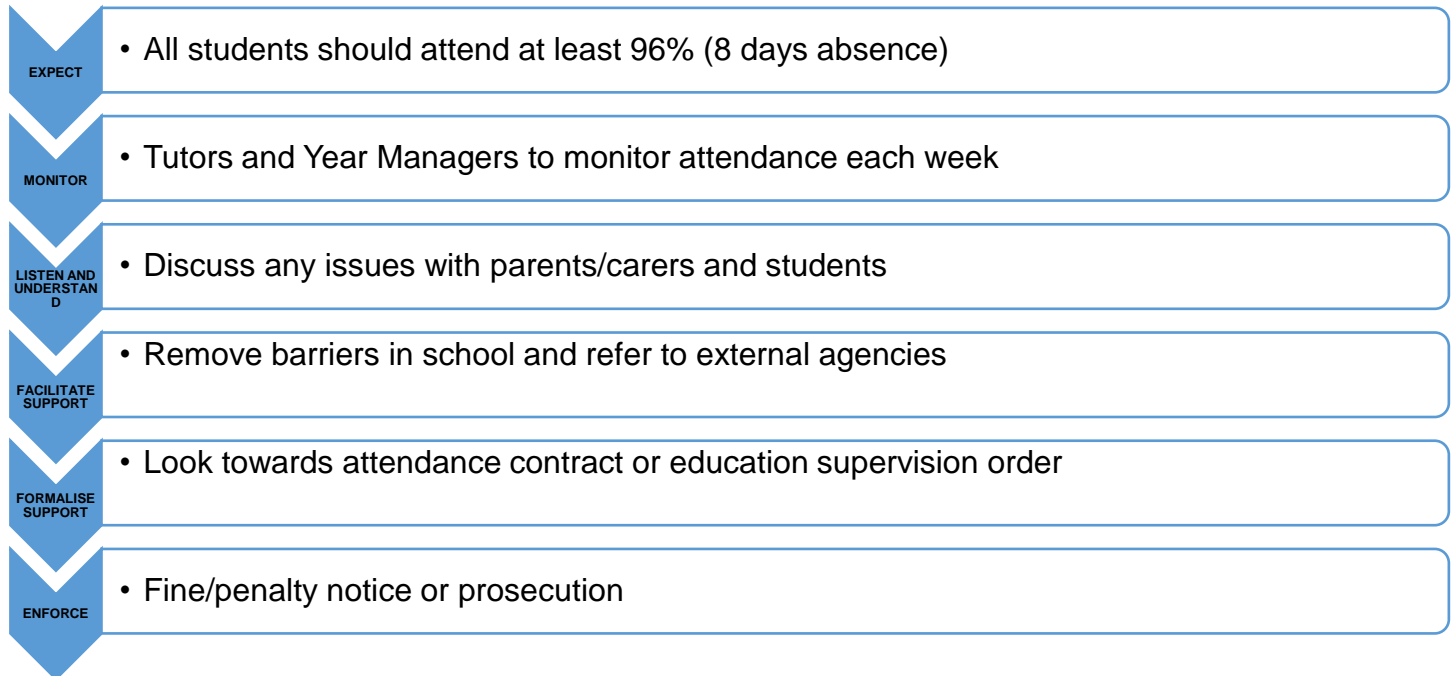
1. Students who truant are given appropriate sanctions. If a student truants, they will receive one-hour detention for every lesson they miss.
2. Repeat offenders for truancy are placed on a behaviour/truancy contract and further sanctions can be issued.
3. Students will be monitored to ensure that they attend school and lessons punctually.

SUPPORT

Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible if they have concerns about their child's welfare. Within school, a range of support strategies are utilised to remove barriers and improve attendance in individual cases. These include:

- Personalised timetables - Used only in exceptional, time-limited cases with parental consent and regular review.
- In-school Support from staff, in particular, the School Attendance Officer and Year Managers.

- Opportunities for counselling and mentoring.
- One Point Service Support.
- A welcoming ethos and a school which is safe and secure.
- Close working relationships with external agencies to provide extra support for students and their families.
- A sensitive approach to the individual needs of all students.
- Involving all staff when reintegrating students.
- Involving parents as much as possible.
- Alternative provision where appropriate



Children Missing from Education:

- If a family moves from the area and the whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove a child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that school is kept informed of any change of details**. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if the whereabouts are not known.
- It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date. If this is not done and the school is unable to trace a child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

CODES TO USE ON SIMS

- / ** Present
- B** Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- C** Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
- D** Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
- E** Excluded (No alternative provision made)
- F** Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
- G** Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H** Family Holiday (agreed)
- I** Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
- J** Interview
- L** Late (before registers closed)
- M** Medical/Dental appointments
- N** No reason yet provided for absence
- O** Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)
- P** Approved sporting activity
- R** Religious observance
- S** Study leave
- T** Traveller absence
- U** Late (after registration closed)
- V** Educational visit or trip
- W** Work experience
- X** Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students
- Y** Enforced closure
- Z** Student not on roll
- #** School closed to students