

# SOUTHFIELD SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers, parents and students with guidelines on what they should do and what procedures are in place regarding attendance.

This policy applies to all permanent staff, in addition to supply staff, volunteers or anyone working or volunteering on behalf of this school.

**Southfield is committed to the philosophy that excellent attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential and gain the appropriate qualifications and skills to equip them for their future. We aim to achieve excellent attendance by providing support for students and parents and having effective procedures and processes in place for monitoring and intervention which address attendance issues.**

## Relevant Government Instructions to Schools - Attendance and Parental Responsibility Measures for School Attendance and Behaviour Documents November 2013

'The government expects school and local authorities to:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;

and

- act early to address patterns of absence
- parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- all pupils to be punctual to lessons'

'Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home.) A child is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16. From September 2013 all 11-16 year olds will be required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From September 2015, they will be required to continue until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.' Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school without justifiable cause is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

It is the law that only schools can authorise an absence. Parents cannot authorise an absence for their child from school.

## 2. AIM:

In line with the government focus on attendance and the clear link between attendance and academic achievement, the school will ensure arrangements are in place to address attendance issues and promote the importance of good attendance. At 95% attendance over the academic year a student will have missed 2 weeks of school which is 50 missed hours of teaching and learning. Therefore, the school aims to improve attendance to 96% or more so that every student can maximise her/his teaching and learning opportunities.

## 3. OBJECTIVES:

- to systematically gather, monitor and analyse data relating to attendance

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- to create short and long term plans which address the needs of individuals and discrete groups
- to have measures which encourage and reward good attendance
- to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality with governors, staff, parents and students
- to communicate the attendance policy clearly to all staff, students and parents/carers
- to communicate to all staff parents/carers and students that the good attendance is valued
- to promote consistent and effective communication between home and school re: attendance
- to have effective and consistent systems for early intervention to promote the importance of good attendance
- to have effective and consistent monitoring and intervention for addressing continuing attendance issues
- to provide support and guidance for students and parents
- to promote effective partnerships with the local authority's Education and Entitlement Officer and other external agencies
- to have a clear and effective system in place for students to catch up with work when returning from a period of absence
- to have effective reintegration programmes for students who are returning after significant periods of absence

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- The head teacher has overall responsibility for attendance.
- The designated assistant head teacher responsible for oversight of attendance will:
  - ensure that all parents/carers, students, governors and teaching and non-teaching staff are fully aware of the policy and its contents
  - ensure staff receive appropriate training
  - ensure that the head teacher, governors and the leadership team are kept fully up to date with key issues
  - report to and liaise with the governors regarding attendance
  - provide the appropriate support for staff
  - oversee the monitoring and analysis of attendance data
  - review the policy and procedures annually
  - have responsibility for implementing and reviewing this policy
- It is the responsibility of all teaching and non-teaching staff to promote the value of good attendance and punctuality.
- It is the responsibility of the form tutor to monitor the attendance of her/his form group and support attendance measures in place for members of her/his form.
- It is the responsibility of all members of all staff to familiarise themselves with the appropriate documentation on attendance.
- It is the role of all teaching staff to register students promptly and accurately and, if a student is late to the lesson to enter the minutes late in the register.
- The Attendance Lead is responsible for oversight of all issues relating to attendance across the school.

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- The attendance support officer is responsible for:
  - collating information regarding attendance and keeping a record of letters and attendance plans
  - communicating with parents when appropriate
  - running regular attendance reports and disseminating the information to the relevant member of staff
  - supporting Attendance Lead, Progress Leaders and the Assistant Head with responsibility for attendance

## 5. PROCEDURES/PROCESSES

### 5.1 PUNCTUALITY

- All students are expected to be in school on time.
  - AM - the school bell goes at 8.25 for all students and staff to move to form rooms. Morning registration is at 8.30 and students will be marked as late if they arrive past this time.
  - Student Services staff will monitor lateness in the mornings
  - PM – the school bell goes at 1.45 for all students and staff to move to form rooms. Afternoon registration is at 1.50 and students will be marked late if they arrive past this time.
  - Any student who arrives past 8.35 and 1.55 for registration must go to student reception to sign in.
  - Any student arriving late for a lesson will have the minutes entered into the register and will receive a behaviour for learning mark on their card.
  - Persistent lateness will result in a detention

### 5.2 LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

**The government's current guidelines state:**

**'Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the leave. Where leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.'**

AUTHORISED	UNAUTHORISED (unexplained or unjustified)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ illness</li> <li>▪ emergency dental or medical appointments</li> <li>▪ days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ immediate family bereavement</li> <li>▪ family crisis</li> <li>▪ attending an interview</li> <li>▪ examinations or approved sporting activity</li> <li>▪ other exceptional circumstance approved by the headteacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ looking after a brother, sister or unwell family members</li> <li>▪ birthdays</li> <li>▪ general trips: concerts, shopping, matches etc.</li> <li>▪ truancy</li> <li>▪ persistent minor illnesses without the support of medical evidence</li> <li>▪ absence attributed to illness over an extended period of time without accompanying medical evidence.</li> <li>▪ visits to relatives</li> <li>▪ collecting relatives</li> </ul>

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ holidays</li><li>▪ moving house</li></ul> |
|--|---|

Any request for absence should be completed on the school's absence request form. Parents/carers will then receive a letter confirming whether the request is accepted or denied.

Absence noted as illness will not be authorised after 7 school days without medical evidence.

It should be noted that Parents are no longer allowed to remove their child from school for 10 days during term time so family holidays will never be accepted/counted as an authorised absence. Parents/carers who take students on holidays during term time have to be referred to the local authority (educational entitlement) and are at risk of receiving a penalty notice. Each person with parental responsibility is fined £60 for each child.

### 5.3 PARENT AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

If your daughter/son or young person is going to be absent, parents/carers must:

- inform the school office of an absence on the first day of absence
- give an expected date of return if the absence is likely to be more than one day and provide a note for when the student returns to school stating the reason for absence

Parents/carers will

- receive a first day of absence contact call if the school has not been informed of an absence
- be informed if their daughter has registered in either the morning or afternoon but is then missing from a lesson

Parents are reminded that, where possible, routine medical appointments should not be made during the school day. If this is unavoidable, whenever possible students should be either in school before the appointment or back in school after it.

### 5.4 ATTENDANCE:

If a student has 96% attendance for an academic year, it means that 8 days and 40 hours of teaching and learning have been missed. Students who reach 7 days significantly before the end of the academic year will not be able to achieve a 96% attendance if they have one more day off during that time. Our aim is, therefore, to initiate contact with parents before 7 days so that any potential issues can be addressed. Our system of contact is as follows:

- Letters are triggered automatically at 5 days of absence over any period of time. This applies to all students who do not have a long term medical condition which has been confirmed and accepted by the school.
- A second letter is triggered after 7 days absence over any period of time and the student placed on an attendance plan for a minimum of 4 weeks and a maximum of 1 term. Attendance plans are completed by the Attendance Support Officer
- A third letter is triggered if the attendance plan is not successful to arrange a meeting with parents and the Attendance Lead. If a student meets the target on the attendance plan, she

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will continue to be monitored and the appropriate letter and procedure will be triggered if there is further absence.

- Separate letters are triggered for 5 consecutive days of unauthorised or unexplained absence and for referral to educational entitlement.

The aim is to engage parents, students and the school in positive, pro-active dialogue about attendance and to provide support where appropriate for parents and students, particularly with regard to preventing any attendance issues becoming more serious. If parents are at all worried about their daughter's attendance at school, we encourage them to talk to the school about their concerns. Her form tutor, Attendance Lead, Progress Leader and our Attendance Support Officer are all points of contact. . **Please note that as from the start of the academic year 2015, the government changed the percentage attendance from 85% to 90% regarding persistent absence. This means that if a student has 90% or less attendance she will be classed as a persistent absentee.**

If there are issues which affect a student on this plan over the 4 weeks and mean that she cannot meet her target, parents/carers will be contacted and a meeting arranged. An EHA or a parent contract will be suggested at this point which is designed to support parents in getting their daughter into school.

Where it is felt that there would be an impact, students and their families may be seen by a Governor, usually from the Learning Committee. This would be before a referral to Education Entitlement.

Referrals will be made to the educational entitlement office of the local authority if attendance issues cannot be resolved at the GAP. Please note that any student who has 9 days off in a 6 week period has to be referred directly to the educational entitlement office of the local authority. In addition:

- any student who has 10 days absence which is unauthorised by the school has to be referred to the educational entitlement office.
- any student who has 10 days unexplained absence where the parents have not contacted the school is referred as a missing child to educational entitlement.

(Education (Pupil Registration) regulations in England 2006)

This referral may lead to a penalty notice or summons to court for your child's unauthorised absence.

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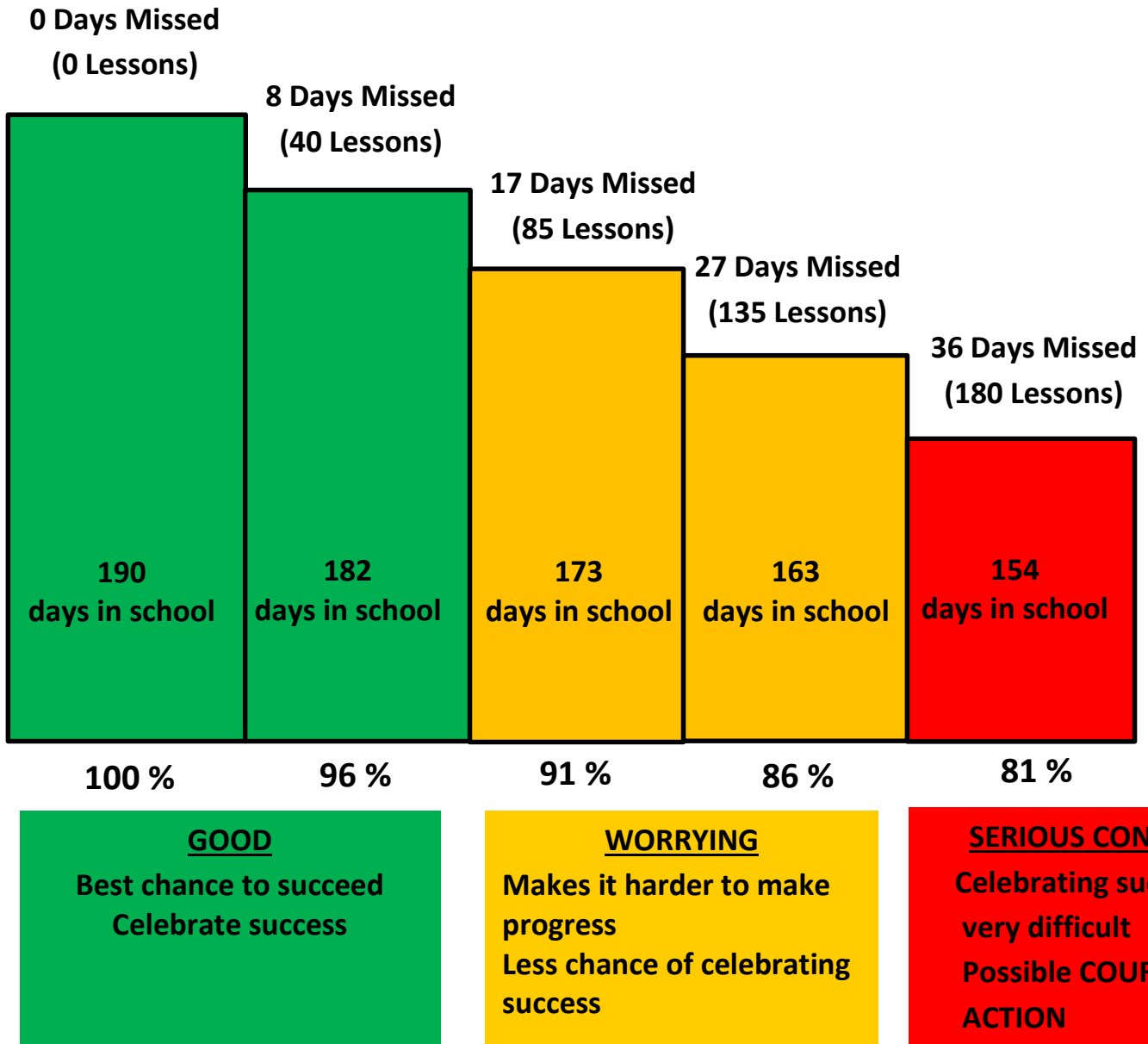
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Appendix 1

**190 School Days and 175 Non School Days Each Year**



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## Appendix 2

### ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

#### After 5 days of absence

Standard attendance Letter 1

This letter is not triggered for students who are absent for 5 continuous days either unauthorised or unexplained. Parents will receive a separate letter and a meeting will be arranged.



#### After 7 Days of Absence

Standard attendance letter 2 COMPLETED BY Attendance Support Officer - student placed on an attendance plan for 6 weeks with a review after 4. Aim for 96%/above 96% attendance. A copy of the plan sent to parents for comments and signature and returned to school. Students added to spreadsheet on the R drive.



#### Student not Achieving Target whilst on Attendance Plan

Standard attendance letter 3 - parents/carers invited in for an appointment with the Attendance Lead/AHT and EHA/parent contract suggested.



#### Continuing and Persistent Issues with Attendance

Referral to the Governors' Attendance Panel - parents/carers and daughter/young person invited in to discuss issues.



#### Attendance Issues Unresolved

Referral to the local authority - educational entitlement  
Fixed penalty notices

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Appendix 3
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## Attendance Plan

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Tutor Group:</b>
<b>% attendance for year to date:</b>	<b>Best/worst days(s)</b>
<b>% attendance in the last 6 weeks:</b>	<b>Best/worst week (A or B)</b>
	<b>No. of minutes late:</b>
<b>Parents' reason for absence:</b>	<b>Student's reason for absence:</b>
<b>What will parents do to support improved attendance?</b>	<b>What will student do to improve attendance?</b>
<b>What can school do to support improved attendance?</b>	
<b>Target for the next ...weeks is 96%</b>	
<b>Start date:</b>	<b>End date:</b>
<b>Signature of parent:</b>	
<b>Signature of student:</b>	
<b>Signature of school representative:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
<b>Date of Review:</b>	
<b>Copies to: form tutor, Attendance Lead, Mrs Dutton, and parent</b>	

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Appendix 4
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## Southfield School Parent Contract Attendance

<b>Student Name:</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Attendance this Year:</b>		<b>Attendance this Term:</b>
<b>Parent/Carer Name</b>		<b>Parent/Carer Name</b>
<b>Member of staff Name</b>		<b>Designation</b>
<b>Member of staff Name</b>		<b>Designation</b>
<b>Date and time of meeting:</b>		
<b>Overview of issues:</b>		
<b>Action agreed parents:</b>		<b>Action agreed Southfield:</b>
<b>Action agreed student:</b>		
<b>Review Meeting day/date:</b>		<b>MeetingTime:</b>

**Signed:**.....**Parent/Carer**

**Signed:**.....**Parent/Carer**

**Signed:**.....**Staff**

**Signed:**.....**Staff**

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Appendix 5 – please follow link to access all the EHA documents

[Early Help Assessment \(EHA\) - Northamptonshire County Council](#)

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## Southfield School Parent Guidelines for Parent Contract Attendance and EHA (Early Help Assessment Form)

### 1. What is a parent contract/EHA and how it help me?

- Both processes are designed to assess the situation and provide you and your daughter with the appropriate support to ensure she attends school. Southfield may offer a choice of one of these if your daughter/young person has gone through the normal attendance processes but there are still significant problems with her attendance.
- A **parenting contract** is an agreement between a parent or carer and the school. This is an internal process which provides an opportunity to discuss the issues which are affecting attendance and agree some actions which will help your daughter/young person attend school.
- An EHA is directly linked to the local authority and outside agencies. It is an assessment of the needs of your daughter/young person and yourselves so that you can access the support you need to improve your daughter's attendance.
- These processes are NOT a punishment but a way for you to work together with the school to help improve your daughter's/young person's attendance and for you to get some practical support from the school and/or other agencies.
- We will usually try to involve all the parents and carers of the student in the processes where appropriate in order to provide the student with as much consistent and targeted support as possible.
- Southfield believes that a parenting contract or an EHA is an opportunity for everyone to work together to address and tackle any problems your daughter/young person is having attending school and make a real difference to her progress and future life. Attendance is one of the key reasons why students do not make progress and is something employers and further education institutions are very interested in. Helping your daughter/young person attend and maximise her potential, will provide her with real career opportunities in the future.

### 2. What is involved?

- **Parent Contract:** A meeting will be arranged to discuss the issues affecting your daughter's attendance. This will involve relevant members of staff e.g. your daughter's/young person's year head and progress leader, yourselves and your daughter/young person.
  - From the discussion, you and your daughter/young person will agree to do certain things to ensure improved and regular attendance at school by your daughter/young person and the school will agree ways in which we will provide particular support so that you and your daughter can do the things you have agreed to do. These agreements will be put on a parent contract form.

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- The length of time that a parenting contract lasts will be discussed between you and the school but the minimum amount of time is likely to be one term and will usually be more than that.
- **EHA:** An EHA is sent to the local authority once you have agreed the process and meeting will be arranged as with the parent contract.
  - A form is completed with agreed actions and targets from both you and the school and sent to the local authority. Following on from this another meeting is arranged with yourselves, your daughter/young person and the relevant outside agencies e.g. school nurse, CAMHS etc. You will be supported at this meeting by the same member of staff who attended the first one.
  - The length of time an EHA lasts depends on the level of need and support but there is an initial review meeting after 6 to 8 weeks.

### 3. Do I have to agree to a contract or an EHA form if it is offered to me?

- No –parent contracts and EHAs are a voluntary arrangement.
- However, both processes provide you with an opportunity to get the support you need to improve your daughter's/young person's attendance and integrate her back into school. If you decide that you do not want to go through either of the processes then you will need to try to find other ways to improve your daughter's/young person's attendance and we would encourage you to talk to the school about what you intend to do.
- If there is no improvement in your daughter's/young person's attendance, the school will have to consider what further action should be taken. Normally, this will involve referring the matter to the LEA's educational entitlement office who may then issue penalty notices or prosecute you for your daughter's/young person's irregular attendance.

### 4. How do I prepare for the meeting?

- Before you attend the meeting it is important that you think about what you think the issues are and what would like to get out of it:
  - What do you think about your daughter's/young person's attendance and why hasn't previous support helped?
  - Are there any things which you think would help to improve your daughter's/young person's attendance e.g. regular meetings with a key member of staff, transport to school etc.
  - Are you experiencing particular difficulties at the moment and if so, how can the school/outside agencies help you?
  - What might you realistically be able to do to improve your daughter's/young person's attendance.
- If you are anxious about the meeting, ask the school if you can bring a friend or family member along for moral support.

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