



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

First Issue:	February 2022
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Committee Responsible:	SPC

## **Introduction**

1.1. Context - Simon Balle All-through School is proud to be an inclusive school. We want the very best educational experiences, academic and social, for all of our young people. We set the very highest expectations for all of our students, from their entry into reception to when they leave in the sixth form. Our school values are essential in enabling students and adults to flourish and succeed, regardless of background or circumstance.

1.2 Rationale - Simon Balle All-through School is committed to raising levels of attendance for individual students and the school as a whole. Our belief is that good attendance and punctuality are vital, if our students are to take advantage of the many educational opportunities available to them. We set aspirational targets in terms of attendance and have an expectation that all students have a minimum attendance of 97%. We know from empirical evidence that High Attendance leads to Excellent Achievement and Positive Wellbeing.

This policy exists to provide a framework to support our vision of “creating tomorrow’s citizens today”, enabling our students to develop character and form positive habits.

### **1.3 Aims/Expectations**

1.31 - To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone’s business and embed a ‘support first’ approach.

1.32 - To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities regarding the attendance and punctuality of their children. (The Education Act 1996)

1.33 - To promote and model good attendance ensuring students, parents and teachers are aware of the impact good attendance has on student outcomes.

1.34 - To work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships

## **Key roles and responsibilities**

The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Simon Balle All-through School. The governing body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Attendance Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaints Policy.

## 2.1 - The Co-Headteachers and Designated SLT Responsibilities

Responsible for:

- 2.11 - The day to day implementation of the Attendance Policy
- 2.12 - Ensuring that all stakeholders know and understand their responsibilities in relation to attendance including the links to safeguarding
- 2.13 - Ensuring compliance with statutory guidance
- 2.14 - Ensuring that pastoral leaders monitor attendance closely and plan to support students and families
- 2.15 - Monitoring and analysing data for patterns and trends to guide support
- 2.16 - Ensuring high quality communication to all parties regarding attendance
- 2.17 - Promoting positive attendance across the whole school
- 2.18 - Ensuring that the school attendance policy is applied fairly

## 2.2 - Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Responsible for:

- 2.21 - Ensuring that their children arrive at school by 8:35am in the secondary phase and by 8:50am in the primary phase daily during term time
- 2.22 - Instilling in their children an understanding of why attendance is important
- 2.23 - Taking an active interest in their children's school life and supporting and encouraging them as well as attending school events such as parents evenings.
- 2.24 - Proactively engaging with any school support to avoid the need for more formal support
- 2.25 - Informing the school if their child/children are absent from school and providing a reason for absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence and any subsequent days
- 2.26 - Avoiding arranging non-urgent medical/dental appointments during term time
- 2.27 - Not booking holidays during term time
- 2.28 - Providing up to date contact details so that the school can establish and maintain quality lines of communication

If a student fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the school fail to secure the student's return to regular attendance, the County Council may take legal action. A complaint may be made against the parents, in the Magistrates' Court (under section 44 of the Children's Act 1996). Any exceptional mitigating circumstances are taken into account, when considering legal action.

## 2.3 - Pastoral Leaders - Heads of Year and Phase Leaders

Responsible for:

2.31 - Regularly reviewing and monitoring attendance data across their cohort of students

2.32 - Providing tutors with support and guidance to raise attendance within their form groups

2.33 - Providing pastoral support for those with low attendance and offering wider interventions in line with HCC attendance guidance

2.34 - Being the primary point of contact for students and parents/guardians within the cohort of students

2.35 - Liaising with the designated SLT in charge of attendance as well as the Attendance Improvement Officer regarding any students with persistently low attendance who are not responding positively to tutor or pastoral leader intervention

2.36 - Promoting attendance within their cohort of students by actively rewarding those with high or improved attendance through various initiatives

## 2.4 - Tutors/Class Teachers

Responsible for:

2.41 - Regularly reviewing and monitoring attendance within their class/form group

2.42 - Providing students with rewards and recognition for high or improved attendance through various initiatives

2.43 - Being the primary point of contact for parents within their class/form

2.44 - Providing low attending students with pastoral support to remove barriers to attendance

2.45 - Communicating with the pastoral leader to raise attendance concerns and provide further support for students and families

## 2.5 - Students

Responsible for:

2.51 - Ensuring that they attend school unless there are exceptional circumstances

2.52 - Ensuring that they arrive to school on time, at 8:35am in the secondary phase and 8:50am in the primary phase

2.53 - Signing in at main reception if they have arrived after the gate has closed at 8:40am

2.54 - Catching up on any missed work if they have been absent

## Attendance Procedures

The Headteacher and Senior Leader in charge of attendance will decide whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the student to be away, or when an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory.

### 3.1 - Absence - Authorised - Unauthorised - Persistent Absenteeism - Severely Absent

The following definitions apply at Simon Balle All-through School:

#### 3.11 - Absence:

- Arrival at school after lesson one has started unless a valid reason (then a late and reason given)
- Not attending school for any reason

#### 3.12 - Authorised absence:

- Sickness (may require medical evidence)
- Medical or dental appointments - we would emphasise that where possible appointments are to be made outside of school hours.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- Exceptional family circumstances - e.g. bereavement

#### 3.13 - Unauthorised absence:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy for part or all of the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school, after the register has closed, without reason.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been authorised.
- Leaving school without an authorised reason during the school day.

#### 3.14 - Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

- PA is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee if their attendance is less than 90%, regardless of whether the absences have been authorised or not.

#### 3.15 - Severely Absent (SA):

- Attendance below 50%, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

## Absence procedures

4.1 - If a child is absent from school the following should apply:

4.11 - Parents should notify the school of any absence on the first day and on each subsequent day of absence unless agreed otherwise and should do so before the start of the school day by calling the school telephone number or emailing the admin email address.

4.12 - For any student who is absent from school without a satisfactory explanation, the school will contact the primary carers by telephone call on the morning of the absence and any subsequent days of absence. The school may ask for medical evidence to support reasons for absence in order to authorise.

4.13 - Where a student has been absent for 3 or more days without satisfactory explanation, the form tutor should notify the Head of Year and further inquiries should be made.

4.14 - If there are safeguarding concerns regarding the absence then the safeguarding team will be notified and inquiries will be made with relevant stakeholders.

4.15 - If a child is persistently absent for a period of time without satisfactory explanation then arrangements will be made for the parents to meet with the Head of Year or the SLT Attendance Lead.

4.16 - If a student or family are struggling with attendance then the school will offer a vast range of interventions and supports. Parents are expected to work with staff to help raise attendance by complying with these interventions

4.17 - For any student who is looked after (CLA), the school will report attendance data to the virtual school weekly.

## **Working with the Local Authority**

Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.

5.1 - The SLT staff member in charge of attendance will meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to devise in-school strategies to improve attendance for PA or SA students which may include the use of outside agencies.

5.2 - Actions plans will be developed for PA and SA students and the school may request support from the LAAO in implementing these

5.3 - If parents do not engage in this support and/or attendance does not increase a referral may be made to the LAAO for formal intervention

5.4 - If there is a further lack of engagement then the school may request statutory intervention from the local authority which may include the following:

- Parenting Contract
- Fixed Penalty Notices

- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

## **Punctuality & Attendance**

6.1 - All students are expected to arrive at school by 8:35am in the secondary phase and by 8:50am in the primary phase.

6.2 - If secondary students arrive late in the morning then they should enter through the electronic gate near the coffee shop and their name will be recorded by a senior member of staff. They should then attend the late session in the lecture theatre on the same day immediately at the start of lunchtime.

6.3 - If secondary students arrive after the SLT member has finished their morning duty then the student should use the bell on the electronic gate and speak with reception. Upon being let in through the gate the student should arrive into reception and complete the 'signing in book'. Students should then have a conversation about their lateness with an office staff member who will advise on next steps

6.4 - Any lateness will be recorded on registers along with the number of minutes

## **Term Time Leave**

7.1 - Leave of absence from school is not normally permitted and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

7.2 - Parents are strongly advised to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

7.3 - Any leave of absence requests should be applied for by using the google form on the attendance page on the school website. The SLT Attendance lead will decide, along with the Headteachers, whether or not the leave of absence is authorised or not.

7.4 - Should unauthorised leaves of absence occur, parents may be liable to Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in line with guidance from the local authority. The school will be following the local authority guidance and will apply for FPNs for term time holidays, details of which can be found on the Hertfordshire Grid.

## **Part-time Timetables**

8.1 - In some circumstances it may be necessary and/or appropriate for a student to undertake a part-time timetable, for example if a child is not medically well enough to attend school full time

8.2 - The school will coordinate part-time timetables in agreement with parents

8.3 - The local authority will be informed of any part-time timetable

8.4 - Where a student's timetable involves alternative provision, the register codes will reflect this and a B code (Educated off site) will apply

### **Celebrating Positive Attendance**

9.1 - School staff will celebrate positive and improved attendance periodically throughout the year

9.2 - Pastoral leaders will send positive attendance postcards as well as rewarding students with prizes and incentives on an individual basis and as a class/form group

9.3 - The school is aware that not all children are able to ensure 100% attendance but for those that do manage this, their achievements will be celebrated and rewarded