



Attendance Policy



PRINCIPLES

SHS strongly believes that regular school attendance is of fundamental importance to the social, academic and moral development of every child. Attendance in education or training is a legal requirement between the ages of 5 -18 years. Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives.

Pupils attending Southampton Hospital School have medical conditions, either long or short term, that will affect their attendance at their main educational setting. Therefore, they are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social needs than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance whilst they are facing the challenge of ill health. Our provision, both within the hospital and through outreach, exists to provide children with the opportunity to sustain school attendance whilst they are unable to access mainstream settings.

One of our core purposes is to support children back into their mainstream settings as soon as their health allows. We aim to help ensure that the reintegration process encourages maximum attendance to be resumed as quickly as possible. This includes working with families, ensuring that they understand how important regular attendance is to their child's development and health. We give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance. We adopt the same approach with children's main educational settings.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils, alongside the main educational setting, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

All pupils are dual registered with SHS following the acceptance of a referral made by a medical professional or school. While registered with us, attendance is recorded by teachers using the Teacher App & Lesson Monitor module of SIMS.net. The school day is separated into 4 periods however, teachers are able to record an attendance mark for a pupil every 30 minutes. This is to allow for accurate record keeping when pupils leave lessons to attend therapy, or to record shorter lessons such as at bedside. The school office manages official attendance marks for AM/PM sessions & should be contacted for support or clarification.

Recording & Managing Absences

Due to the nature of education within a hospital environment, SHS implements a unique system of absence codes. Guidance on these codes is stipulated below & further support is available from the school office. Teachers will use these codes to record absences for pupils.

Due to therapy & treatment timetables, pupils within our school often have higher levels of planned and unplanned absence however, full-time attendance is still expected wherever a child's health allows.

Present in Class - /

Where pupils are present in a classroom, the usual code "/" is used. This includes lessons such as P.E which might take place in a different venue to the classroom.

Present 1:1 Lesson - 1

Where pupils are present for a 1:1 lesson at bedside or in the home this is recorded with the “1” code to show the pupil received 1:1 support. This includes all bedside teaching, such as on Haemo.

Lateness - L

In the event that a pupil is late for a pre-arranged lesson teachers will use the “L” code and record the number of minutes the pupil was late. Where possible, teachers will also use the “comments” section to record the reason given. It is understood that some pupils will be late due to therapy or treatment and in these instances lateness is rarely challenged. However, in Bursledon House & on Outreach persistent lateness will be challenged by the Headteacher.

Medical Appointments - M

Pupils who are unable to attend school or take part in a bedside lesson because of an appointment away from the hospital with a Dr or Dentist should be recorded as absent with reason “M” – medical. This code should not be used for absences where the pupil remains on the hospital site.

Therapy Appointments - Q

Pupils who are unable to attend school or take part in a bedside lesson because they are engaging in therapy within the hospital are marked as “Q”. Examples include pupils attending Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, and Psychiatry. Therapy appointments are predominantly planned in advance and Teachers should familiarise themselves with their pupils’ therapy timetables.

Part-time Pupils - A

Where a pupil’s medical needs prevent full-time education the Headteacher may utilise a part-time timetable. This will outline how many sessions the pupil is expected to attend, and the date this will be reviewed. For the periods a pupil is not expected to attend the “A” code is used to show the reason for the authorised absence.

Pupil Refusal - K

Where a pupil is physically present for a lesson but refuses to engage with the teacher to the extent that the lesson cannot happen the “K” code is used to show that the pupil was present but refused to engage.

Present at Home School - D

SHS pupils are dual-registered meaning they are on roll at two schools simultaneous. The main school will be the school the pupil is usually on roll at, and when pupils visit or attend lessons at their home school the “D” code is used. This code is also used when pupils are not currently attending the hospital for treatment but cannot be removed from roll because they are scheduled to return for treatment later in the school year.

Study Leave

SHS will not usually use study leave for pupils in year 11 as these pupils will need to remain on site in the hospital to access their treatment. Year 11 pupils will benefit from individual teaching timetables.

Unauthorised Absences

Absence is recorded as unauthorised unless it is taken with the permission of the school or is for some unavoidable reason.

An absence is deemed to be unauthorised if:

- no reason for the absence has been provided by the parent – “N” code;
- a request for authorisation of absence has been made and refused by the school – “O” code;
- an unauthorised holiday is taken in term time – “G” code;

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING ATTENDANCE

Penalty Notices

SHS upholds that all pupils should attend school as often as their medical needs allow, and levels of attendance over 90% are expected in Bursledon House & on Outreach. However, all pupils are dual-rolled and the issue of penalty notices should be dealt with by the pupil's main or usual school.

Truancy

Due to the nature of our provision, issues of truancy are very uncommon and will be dealt with alongside medical staff. Comparison of teacher register records with the formal attendance register allows the school to detect truancy (pupils missing school sessions or parts of school sessions without the permission of the school). Issues of truancy are reported to and dealt with by the Headteacher.

Following Up Absences

Where possible, teachers are expected to follow up absences by speaking to the relevant medical staff & the pupil. Teachers are not expected to call parents to confirm reasons for absence or to request evidence as this is managed by the school office.

In the event that the school office cannot determine the reason for absence, the matter is escalated to the Headteacher who may call the parents, invite the parents to a meeting at the school, or contact the EWO.

In addition, where a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern, teachers can nominate them for 'first response'. Such pupils are telephoned as a priority by the school office on the first day of all absences to establish whether the absence is legitimate.

Requests for Authorised Absence for Family Holidays

SHS upholds that parents/carers should not take pupils on holiday during term time. However, if there is no alternative, and in conjunction with the home school, the school may authorise a maximum of 10 school days in any school year to enable a student to go on one family holiday. A holiday request form is available from school and parents/carers are asked to make sure that such requests reach the school at least a week before the holiday starts.

The school will not authorise holiday absence:

- when a formal exam is taking place, or in the 2 weeks preceding the exam
- for pupils whose attendance is already causing concern
- for more than one family holiday in an academic year

Attendance Incentives and Sanctions

Pupils who achieve high levels of attendance are rewarded. Teachers will identify and highlight pupils who have made progress with their attendance and where appropriate pupils will be rewarded by the Headteacher.

There are no sanctions for poor attendance. However, there are sanctions for truancy. These would range from detentions up to internal exclusion; they would not include exclusion.

ATTENDANCE DATA

Data Sharing

SHS shares the attendance data of its pupils through a B2B arrangement with the local authority. This assists the Local Authority with meeting its statutory duties with regards to safeguarding children, including those who are at risk of becoming "Children Missing from Education". This data sharing also ensures that pupils leaving our school are

confirmed to have returned to their home schools as soon as medically possible and that action is promptly taken to support school attendance where this is not the case.

Monitoring of Attendance Data

Attendance statistics are monitored by the Headteacher and the Governing Body and reported to the local authority as appropriate. Individual pupils' attendance is regularly monitored, if key teachers have any concerns regarding the pupils' absence these will be reported to the pupils' home school and a meeting arranged to discuss further. For all Outreach pupils the attendance figures are included in the interim and discharge reports which go to parents/carers and the home school. Consistent attendance is necessary in order to maximise the learning and re engagement opportunities for pupils. If there is no satisfactory reason given for absence it may be necessary for Outreach Education to withdraw support until the situation can be discussed.

ROLES

Families will:

- Notify the school of any absences on the day of that absence
- Keep close contact with the school if a pupil is on extended leave due to ill health

Ward Teachers will:

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their pupils.
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register.
- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- Follow up any absences as outlined above (see "Following Up Absences")
- Liaise with the Headteacher about attendance concerns.
- Inform office if a pupil will not be attending as expected for non-medical reasons.
- Notify the safeguarding lead of absences of pupils on the Child protection register.

Outreach Teachers will:

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their pupils.
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register.
- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- Liaise with the Headteacher about attendance concerns.
- Inform the pupil's home school each week on attendance (by email).

Headteacher will:

- As and when the need arises, enable attendance and lateness to be discussed with parent/carers and the home school and appropriate action to be taken.

Administration staff will:

- Liaise with Teachers to complete the statutory AM/PM register.
- Telephone pupils' home schools as necessary re attendance
- Pass on information re attendance to the relevant teaching staff.