



Attendance Policy: Southampton Hospital School

Prepared By:	Name: Nell Giles		
Approved By:	Name: LGB	Date:	Date: September 2022
Start Date:	Date: September 22	Review Date:	Date: October 2023

Attendance Policy

Attendance Lead: Nell Giles

Attendance Officer: Joe Connelly

This policy adheres to Department of Education guidance found here [School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/school-attendance-guidance.pdf). Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education as stated here [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/stat-guidance-template.pdf)

Statement of Intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents/ Carers and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive for the highest possible attendance for all of our children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Our pupils at Southampton Hospital School face greater barriers to attendance than their peers due to the high likelihood that they are suffering from long term medical conditions and/or have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same. However, due to the high level of need of many of our pupils, we remain mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access education during their hospital admission or referral to our outreach service. We understand that good school attendance is a protective factor for many vulnerable pupils and so we aim to support and build attendance both with us and back within their own schools

All pupils

- We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents, and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn. We monitor and record attendance through the completion of admission and attendance registers and use data to identify patterns of poor attendance at individual and cohort level to ensure that everyone is working together to identify barriers and resolve issues.

Inpatients

- We work closely with pupils, parents, medical professionals within the hospital and relevant external agencies to encourage full time attendance either at bedside or in one of our classrooms. Where part time timetables are necessary to allow for health needs, we will always treat this as temporary and increase the education offer as quickly as we can whilst remaining sensitive to their individual needs. We will work closely with pupils' home schools prior to discharge, to ensure attendance continues. This can include contributing to reintegration plans and the writing of IHCPs.

Outreach

- Our outreach pupils all carry a history of low attendance at their own schools, due to their medical condition. We work closely with the School Attendance Support Team and other external agencies around the child to promote regular attendance both with our teachers and with their own schools through carefully planned reintegration programmes.



Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Legal framework/ responsibilities

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take problems seriously which may lead to non-attendance.

As our inpatient pupils are dual registered with us, we do not issue Penalty Notices. We may, however, work with schools and Educational Welfare Services in individual cases to provide information, data and support.

Roles and responsibilities**Responsibilities of classroom staff**

- Follow the SHS Graduated Response to Supporting and Improving Attendance
- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in lessons on time whenever possible

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents/Carers will:

- inform the school on any occasion of absence (for outreach students this includes the home school and SHS)
- discuss with the headteacher / attendance officer/ teacher the reason for any absences and give as much notice as possible
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments

Recording Attendance

All inpatients who are referred to SHS will be dual registered with their home schools. SHS will keep accurate records of attendance during their admission. Attendance will be recorded for AM and PM registration, and for individual teaching sessions in line with the school timetable.



Outreach students are NOT dual registered with SHS; they remain fully on roll with their home school. SHS will keep accurate records of their attendance and this will be shared weekly with home schools via an email report. If a child fails to attend a session, the school will contact the home school to inform them within the same working day. Tutors will reinforce the parents' legal responsibility to inform the home school. If the tutor has a safeguarding concern relating to the absence, he/she will phone the home school immediately and also inform the Headteacher/DSL at SHS. This will be recorded in writing as a safeguarding concern on Bromcom. Home schools must decide on how an absence will be recorded for their setting; SHS can only advise on this.

We will record attendance twice using the following coding-

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip <u>organised</u> , or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<u>Authorised absence</u>		
C	<u>Authorised leave of absence</u>	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	<u>Authorised holiday</u>	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during <u>their public examinations</u>
T	Gypsy, Roma and <u>Traveller absence</u>	Pupil from a <u>Traveller community</u> is travelling, as agreed with the school

<u>Unauthorised absence</u>		
G	<u>Unauthorised holiday</u>	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	<u>Unauthorised absence</u>	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Other circumstances		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Absence Due to Illness

It is recognised that children can become more ill whilst in hospital, and may need to have time off school for therapies, procedures, recovery and general fatigue.

School staff will consult with medical professionals on a case-by-case basis but this will not automatically be seen as a reason to authorise an absence.

For parents of outreach students only:

What to do if my child is absent

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (before 9am). BOTH the Hospital School and your child's home school MUST be notified
- If contact is not made by the parent/carer, then the school will phone, text and/or email the contacts listed for this child to endeavor to make contact.
- The absence will be confirmed by the Hospital School by email or telephone call
- If we are unable to make contact or ascertain sufficient reason for absence, the home school will be contacted and we will recommend a welfare check is carried out
- Records of the above will be made available to social care in the event of any Missing in Education investigation.

If your child is absent, we will:

Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are unable to reach you and do not hear from you by 10am, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorized and we will-

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with your child's tutor
- Invite you to discuss the situation with your child's home school



Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. The school may also make a CME referral to the appropriate Local Authority if a child fails to return to their home school in the timescale expected, after discharge from our register.

Request for leave of absence

The DfE states: 'Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.'

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances only and this is not the norm. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable circumstances (which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time). There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and, in the majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised. For outreach pupils, this is the full responsibility of their home school. For inpatients, SHS will liaise with home schools if such a request is received.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for a leave of absence need to fill in an application form with their home schools in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and as such, we expect parents to help us by not arranging holidays during school time.

School work for pupils that are absent will only be provided during significant or long-term medical absences and not during shorter unauthorised absences.

Advice to Parents and Carers

My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

It is understandable that your child may feel reluctant to come to a new school during their hospital admission, and/or that their current mental and physical health condition may be causing a barrier to school attendance. Any stay in hospital, or spell of serious illness, can result in periods of absence from school, creating significant school related anxiety and sporadic attendance. This is where SHS can help. We provide a high-quality educational experience for every young person referred to us, one which is carefully tailored to meet the individual needs of each child and ensures they aren't disadvantaged by their medical status.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend School in the Hospital or on outreach?

Inpatients:

- Speak to your medical team about making a referral to SHS if this has not been suggested
- Contact the school office to gain more information on 02381206667
- Ask for a teacher to visit you on the ward to begin to establish a relationship with your child
- Visit the classrooms with your child to meet the teachers and familiarise your child with the environment



- Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.
- Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, their progress towards rewards and their new friendships

For many parents, the thought of being separated from your child in hospital is extremely worrying. This can seem daunting at first but thinking and speaking of it as a new and exciting adventure will help you both. The transition into a settled and happy school life on the wards can help children feel connected again to learning and the world of education and can provide much needed occupation and distraction during a difficult time.

Outreach:

- Encourage your child to meet their tutor in a place they feel safe – tutors will be happy to come to your home for an initial meeting, or meet in a neutral location such as a library or café
- Ask for photographs and social stories of your child’s new tutors and potential teaching environments
- Reassure your child that they will not be asked to take any tests or examinations in their early teaching sessions, and that work will be delivered at their pace and at an appropriate pitch. There will be no judgment for ‘being behind’ and no pressure to ‘catch up’ if these concepts are causing additional stress
- Inform the tutor of your child’s interests and hobbies to enable engagement through tailored activities and work plans
- Encourage your child to get back into a healthy sleep waking routine, if that has been lost through non-attendance. Discuss this with your tutor and decide upon a timetable that will help the routine to be realistically achieved
- Share contact details of any other involved agencies with your tutor (e.g., CAMHS, Family Engagement Workers, No Limits, Social Workers) to enable us to form a supportive team around your child’s school attendance

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

Criteria for success

- Improved attendance percentage for persistent absentees (**10% or higher of their possible sessions missed**)
- Improved attendance data across all areas of the school.
- Attendance rate increases
- Authorised absence rate decreases
- Unauthorised absence and persistent absence rate decreases
- Improvement in individuals' attendance
- The profile of good attendance within the school community is raised



SHS Graduated Response to Supporting and Improving Attendance:

Universal support: all pupils

- ✓ On admission or referral, adults quickly establish warm relationships with children and parents
- ✓ Teachers and leaders work closely with the medical teams or referring schools to gain information, including health status and attendance histories, to enable timetables and curriculum offers to be quickly and effectively tailored
- ✓ Children are welcomed every session to ensure they feel known and valued
- ✓ The classrooms provide a safe physical and emotional space for learning
- ✓ Where children are unable to access classrooms, the teaching is taken to bedside or to children's homes and safe spaces
- ✓ Strong relationships and open communication are formed with parents
- ✓ Incentives and rewards are given for attending the classroom or engaging with learning
- ✓ The Attendance Officer will scrutinise attendance data weekly to look for patterns, trends, and concerns. This information will be shared with the Headteacher.

Early Intervention Support: Pupils who display initial reluctance to attend**Inpatients:**

- ✓ If children are initially reluctant to access teaching in the hospital, teachers will return regularly with incentives (games, rewards etc) to encourage attendance. Teachers will also work alongside hospital staff (OT, SALT, Play Specialists) to create learning conditions that enable children to feel happy and comfortable
- ✓ Timetables will be created to ensure medical needs and planned procedures are taken fully into account (e.g. poor sleep patterns, pain, medication side effects, regular medical and therapeutic interventions). Medical professionals and parents will always be consulted.
- ✓ Lesson times will be altered and amended as necessary to allow for the maximum number of teaching hours to be achieved
- ✓ ELSA and TIS Practitioner support
- ✓ Teachers will exercise professional curiosity at all times and share all relevant information as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. This will be in accordance with the SHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Outreach:

- ✓ If children at home are initially reluctant to engage with teaching sessions, teachers will continue to arrive at the agreed times, unless a health or social care professional advises that this is not in the child's best interests
- ✓ Teachers will exercise professional curiosity at all times and share all relevant information as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. This will be in accordance with the SHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- ✓ Lesson times and durations may be altered and amended as necessary to allow for the maximum number of teaching hours to be achieved
- ✓ A graduated exposure plan will be created in agreement with the pupil, their family, school and any relevant external services
- ✓ A change in teaching environment will be considered to encourage attendance and engagement
- ✓ Temporary offer of remote or blended learning
- ✓ Providing social stories
- ✓ ELSA and TIS Practitioner support



Targeted additional support: pupils who continue not to attend or whose attendance with SHS falls or remains irregular during admission

Inpatients:

- ✓ Liaising closely with children's schools to share information pertaining to possible barriers to attendance
- ✓ SENDCO led assessment to identify any previously unidentified educational needs that might be negatively affecting attendance and engagement
- ✓ Teachers will invite parents into teaching spaces alongside their child for early teaching sessions
- ✓ Liaison with the medical team around the child to discuss attendance and formulate plans to encourage and support young people and their families
- ✓ Teaching staff and leaders attend MDT meetings and ward rounds to discuss strategies to increase attendance
- ✓ Inviting parents to meet with teaching staff to identify barriers and encourage attendance
- ✓ Inviting trusted adults from pupils' own schools to visit pupils and support them in the learning environment

Outreach:

- ✓ Liaising closely with children's schools to share information pertaining to possible barriers to attendance, previous patterns of attendance, previous school safeguarding concerns etc
- ✓ SENDCO led assessment to identify any previously unidentified educational needs that might be negatively affecting attendance and engagement
- ✓ Concerns shared with Local Authority Medical Needs Inclusion Officers and a plan agreed
- ✓ Concerns shared with Educational Welfare Services

Targeted intensive additional support: pupils who do not attend

Outreach:

- ✓ Continue to liaise closely with children's schools to share information pertaining to possible barriers to attendance, previous patterns of attendance, previous school safeguarding concerns etc.
- ✓ SENDCO led assessment to identify any previously unidentified educational needs that might be negatively affecting attendance and engagement
- ✓ Concerns shared with Local Authority Medical Needs Inclusion Officers and a plan agreed
- ✓ Concerns shared with Educational Welfare Services
- ✓ Referral to Child Missing Education Services

Possible Exceptions

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work and modelling.

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence approved by the Headteacher as being part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level in sport.

Parents/carers of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this. They will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Absence through religious observance

Absence due to days set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents or carers / the child belongs will be authorised by the school. These days must be universally recognised to be authorised.

Service Families

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) issue additional guidance to schools with regards to term time absences for the children of service families. This is provided because it is acknowledged that the operational needs of the Armed Forces may legitimately prevent a service family from taking holidays within the school holidays. Ultimately the decision on whether to authorise leave in term time still lies with the Headteacher, however further clarification regarding the exact circumstances may be sought from Unit Commanding Officers and their welfare staff. When deciding whether to authorise an application for a leave of absence from a service family, the Headteacher will take into account the circumstances, the child's attendance record and the school year which the child is in.

Gypsy Roma and Traveller families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

