



South End Junior School	Page 1 of 5
	Issued: Summer 2025
Attendance policy	Review date: Summer 2026
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Approved by	FULL GOVERNING BODY/L & M COMMITTEE/ HEADTEACHER

This document has been agreed between schools in the Rushden and Higham Cluster of schools. This policy has been produced to ensure a consistent approach towards attendance throughout the cluster. Since agreement the policy has been updated by South End Junior School in line with new **NNC** absence rules.

Aim:

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people to improve their life chances. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement for those registered at a school. Without it, the efforts of the best teachers and schools will come to nothing.

Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines that educational process and leads to educational **disadvantages**. It places children at risk and in some cases, it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

School Organisation

The class register is to be completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers open at **8.40am** and close at **8.50am**. Pupils arriving between **8.50am** and **9.20am** will be marked as late.

Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately: -

L-late **8.50am up until 9.20am** classed as present

U-**after 9.20am** classed as unauthorised absence

Continued lateness will be reported and discussed with the parents. Adults must sign **in** latecomers **at the school office**.

Absences must be recorded by staff using the correct absences and attendance code as issued by the Department for Education.

Parents should report an absence either by telephone, via the **ParentMail** app, in person or in written form which is signed. (**See our missing child procedure**).

Unauthorised third day absences must be reported by the staff to the Headteacher immediately. Staff will use their knowledge of their pupil, known history and use their discretion in ascertaining whether action is needed in contacting the parents. As a first day response, the school office staff **will text parents** and **then** follow the absence procedure.

Leaving School during the School Day

No child will be allowed to leave the premises during school time unless collected by a parent or

responsible adult. All departures must be entered onto the electronic signing in/out system located near the School office. At special events school will organise individual class lists for parents to sign.

Responsibility

The overall responsibility of monitoring pupils' attendance lies with the Headteacher. The Headteacher's PA is responsible for the collection of attendance data and producing appropriate responses.

Points of Identification, Monitoring

At the beginning of each term the school will identify:

Children whose attendance has fallen below 95% for the previous term and for the current year.

The registers will be analysed to find the reasons and patterns. An initial letter will be sent out to set a target of between 95 - 100% for the next four weeks

Children who continue to have attendance below 90% (with no valid reason i.e. hospital admission or long term illness) and with no improvement over the next 4 weeks will be invited to meet the headteacher.

- We will discuss the barriers to the child's attendance improving.
- We will jointly set targets to help improve attendance.

If there is no improvement 4 weeks after the targets are set, parents are invited in again to set fresh targets. If there is still no improvement a letter is sent informing them that no more absences will be authorized unless medical evidence is provided, and when unauthorized absences reach 10 sessions, a referral will be made to the EIPT.

If no contact is made or a parent does not attend, another letter is sent, asking them again to make an appointment. If two requests have been ignored or there have been two failures to attend, a letter is sent informing them that no more absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided and when unauthorized absences reach 10 sessions, a referral will be made to the EIPT.

Children who have 10% unauthorised absence.

The parents of these children will be sent letters inviting them to meet the headteacher.

- We will discuss the barriers to the child's attendance improving and set targets.
- We will outline what the school can do/support to enable the child's attendance to improve.

If no improvement is made over, a letter will be sent home to explain that a referral will be made to the Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team at the local authority.

Records will be kept to ensure that we can check for improvements of deterioration in attendance.

** We review each case on its own merit to take into account any extenuating circumstances

Please note the timescales for issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school.

Leave and Holidays in Term Time

From 1st September 2013, clarification of there being no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time has been given to all parents. Any application for leave, during term time, will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Only the Head Teacher can make this decision. Parents can be fined by the local authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the

school.

Requests for any leave of absence must be given in writing to the Head Teacher and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the exceptional circumstance as necessary **or:**

- Request forms are completed by the school and returned to the parent, giving clear indication how the absence will be recorded and if taken, may be referred to the EIPT.
- All returned forms, if the intention is to refer to the EIPT are accompanied with letter of intent.
- If a form is not completed prior to absence, it will be completed by the school and sent to parent along with any letters if applicable.
- If a form is completed requesting less than 5 days, a letter is sent indicating that if the absence includes any sick/illness days that take the absence to 5 days, the sickness will be also unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.
- If a parent states a child is sick for 5 days and the school believe the family to be on holiday, we will send a letter informing the parents that we believed them to have been on holiday and that the sickness will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. This unauthorised absence will then be referred to the EIPT.

The Local Authority's decision to issue a fixed Penalty Notice is based on information submitted by the school.

Triggers for the fixed Notice Penalty will be

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a six-week period
- 5 continuous days of unauthorised absence
- If two Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued previously in the child's school career, this could result in court action.

NNC state that following the referral, parents and carers could be issued with a Penalty Notice. A PN can also be issued as a sanction for irregular attendance.

• The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

• A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

• A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

It's important that parents understand that the initial fixed penalty notice of £60 is issued to each parent for each child. A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240. Check this costing with LD

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Department for Education issued guidelines to all schools detailing the change in legislation on 15th April 2013. It came into force on 1st September 2013. Absence from school in term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Authorisation remains at the discretion of the Head Teacher and governors.

The Rushden and Higham cluster of schools agree to follow the law, in such that the provision for Head Teachers to authorise absence purely for the purpose of a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance. Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- A day to attend a funeral of a person close to the family.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside the above, Headteacher's must liaise with other schools where other siblings attend. It is essential for pupils to attend school regularly in order to maximise the opportunities available to them. The Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT) investigate cases of irregular attendance and instigate statutory intervention where appropriate.

This enforcement policy aims to promote good practice and the principals for good enforcement, summarising how to conduct enforcement with openness, **set** standards and consistency, to:

- to uphold the law fairly
- prevent and detect offending
- act with integrity, common sense and sound judgement

In doing so the EIPT will ensure that:

- when an allegation is reported or an offence suspected of being committed a thorough investigation will follow
- the exercise of legal powers should not be oppressive to the issue under investigation
- as far as operationally practical and with due regard to an individual's right to confidentiality, investigations should be as transparent as possible in keeping those involved up to date
- we will take reasonable steps to understand the individual's needs, e.g. culture, religion, belief, sexuality, lifestyle, disability etc. (Race Relations and Equality Acts), have regard for vulnerable adults and children and respect the professional ethics of others

Any consideration for a prosecution should meet both the evidential test and also the public interest test. All cases should have due regard to the Crown Prosecution Service code of conduct.

Guidance and Legislation

The EIPT is authorised to operate this code and must have regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Attendance and Enforcement Policy September 2020 review September 2021
- The Race Relations (Statutory Duties) Order
- 2001 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Data
- Protection Act 1998

- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Needs Code of Practice 2003
- Ensuring School Attendance: Guidance on the Legal Measures to Secure Regular School Attendance 2003
- Education Act 1996

The EIPT team supports NNC in carrying out their statutory duties with regards to promoting regular attendance at school.

Irregular attendance raises complex issues. Pupils may be failing to attend school for a variety of reasons. Some reasons may be outside the immediate control of the school, but good practice and appropriate responses within the school to identify the needs can help to improve attendance. It is therefore important that there are clearly defined criteria and procedures for referring non-attenders to the EIPT. The **importance** of early identification, assessment and intervention cannot be over emphasised.