



# Attendance Matters

Information for Students, Parents and  
Carers on Punctuality and Attendance

September 2020-2021



# How do we encourage good attendance?

- ✓ Creating a positive environment where young people feel safe and secure.
- ✓ Making our Academy a lively, rewarding and interesting place to be.
- ✓ Developing a system of rewards for good attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Being sympathetic and supportive to pupils who experience problems in school.
- ✓ Ensuring careful monitoring of attendance data regularly takes place.
- ✓ Reminding parents/carers of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Offering help and advice to resolve any difficulties the pupil or parents may have in fulfilling these responsibilities.
- ✓ Establish a mechanism for working with those parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- ✓ Involving the Education Welfare Officer or relevant professional in tackling attendance issues.
- ✓ Having strict policies to keep your child safe.
- ✓ Operating clear boundaries and sanctions to prevent young people from truanting.
- ✓ Interviewing students who have unauthorised absences.
- ✓ Giving you strategies to promote good attendance.
- ✓ Celebrating good attendance with a range of rewards such as trips, gifts and special acknowledgement.



# If you're running late...

**School starts at 8.40 am.**

**Doors open at 8.20 am.**

If your child is going to be late, please telephone us on **01623 980055**.

If your child arrives after 8.40am they will need to sign in at the attendance window and be marked as late. Your child will be asked to give the reason that they are late.

If a student is late three times within a week they will have to stay behind for an hour payback. We will contact you to raise concerns and to see if there is any way we can support you to ensure punctuality. If your child arrives later than 30 minutes after the close of register this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

A good start to the day is essential for young people and is an important habit to learn whilst they are young. It is a key skill employers look for in candidates for jobs.

## Monitoring Attendance

We have a legal requirement to monitor children's attendance at school and we do this on a day to day basis. If your child's attendance causes concern we will contact you by letter, telephone or home visit by the **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**. Your child may be placed on a **School Attendance Panel (SAP)**.

## Concerns

All parents/carers will receive a letter if their child's attendance is **below 97%**. If attendance continues to be below 97% we will talk to you and may involve outside agencies to support you and your child, e.g. Family Support Service or School Nurse.

## Leaving Site

It is not the policy of Sutton Community Academy to allow our students to leave site at break or lunch, unless they are signed out by a parent/carer personally.

In the interest of safeguarding we will not allow any young person to leave site unless they are signed out or have a valid medical appointment card. Should your child refuse to adhere to this policy then they will be subject to sanctions in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour Pathway.

# Absence during Term Time

All planned absences should be requested at least two weeks in advance.

A holiday form is available from the attendance office.

Please note that parents/carers are **not entitled** to take their child out of school during term time. Government regulations state that **only the Academy can authorise absences**, parents/carers cannot do this.

The Principal will examine all requests for extenuating circumstances. If there is not sufficient reason then a leave of absence will be declined and recorded as unauthorised in the register. A holiday during term time without authorisation when the level of absence is in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) in total over a 6 week rolling period, can result in a request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to each parent for each child.

## Potential Legal Action

Legal Proceedings may be taken by the Academy or Local Education Authority against parents where young people have a high level of unauthorised absence. This may be in the form of:

- ◆ Legal Action through a Magistrates Court in accordance with the Education Act 1996.
- ◆ Fixed Penalty Notices.
- ◆ Education Supervision Orders.

Research suggests that 17 missed school days a year =  
A GCSE grade DROP in achievement. (DfE)

If your child is ill, please ring the office **before 10am**.

Contact Number **01623 980055 ext: 5135**.



# Supporting your child's attendance

- ✓ Find out your child's absence regularly and check this matches with your own record.
- ✓ Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to attend if they feel supported and anxieties are listened to.
- ✓ Phone us as soon as possible to tell us why your child is absent, and when you expect them to return. Putting the school number in your phone can save you time. Know the Academy routine for alerting you to absence.
- ✓ Only grant days at home for genuine illness- you'll know the difference!
- ✓ Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- ✓ Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. have they got their PE kit?
- ✓ If you have concerns, phone us – we will check attendance and be discreet.
- ✓ Praise and reward good attendance: even small successes such as going in to the Academy promptly even if they are not fond of their first lesson.
- ✓ If there is a problem with your child's attendance, talk calmly to your child and listen to the explanation. There is always an explanation; it may not impress you, but it counted enough with your child to make them truant. Pursuing the reason for non attendance is important.
- ✓ Talk to us to resolve issues. We maybe able to help and support you and your child. You are not alone.
- ✓ Be particularly watchful and supportive in the run up to tests and aware of coursework deadlines.
- ✓ Check the homework diary regularly for gaps as well as completed activities. Help them catch up with missed work.
- ✓ Remember to give **praise** for good attendance!

# The A-Z of Academy Attendance:

**A** **Appointments**- Nearly all surgeries are open late and at weekends. Try to arrange appointments after school.

**Being Bullied?**- Don't keep your child out of school. There are many trained people who want to help. Check out [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) for more information.

**B**

**C** **Casual Absence**- This means children being taken out of school when they don't need to be; for example, to go shopping for birthday treats, or pretend sickness.

**Dinner Money**- Prepare your child's lunch or add money to their SchoolMoney account on Sunday evenings. It'll save time the following morning.

**D**

**E** **Encourage**- Encourage your child to take part in out of school activities such as breakfast clubs. It allows them to take part in new activities and meet new friends.

**Friendships**- Friendships at school can stay with your child for the rest of their life. Days off school make it harder for your child to fit back into friendship groups.

**F**

**G** **Good Attendance**- This is the secret to your child achieving success. Good attendance is anything above 97%.

**Happy Times**- School days can be the best time of your child's life. Don't let them miss out on formative experiences and spending time with friends.

**H**

**I** **INSET Days**- Your child is not at school during INSET (Teacher Training) Days. They are not the same for every school, so make sure you find out when they are.

**Jump for Joy!**- Celebrate your child's attendance achievements when they are rewarded for good attendance at school.

**J**

**K** **Keep Fit**- A healthy lifestyle means a healthy mind. A nutritious breakfast and plenty of water will give your child energy and concentration for the rest of the day.

**Lateness**- Being late to school is better than staying off all day, but always try your best to be punctual. Being late disrupts lessons and worries your child's friends.

**L**

**M** **Missed Minutes**- As little as 15 minutes late every day is equal to losing out on two whole weeks of learning every year!



# A guide for Parents/Carers

**New Starters-** It's very important to try to get children into good patterns of attendance from an early age so they can carry these skills through to later life.

**N**

**O Opportunities-** School isn't just about maths and English, but also about learning all kinds of life skills. Children can take part in many trips, clubs and teams.

**Praise-** Always look for the positives in testing situations rather than the negatives. Have a system at home to reward and praise good behaviour.

**P**

**Q Question-** Ask your child about what rewards they may receive from the school for good attendance.

**Ring in!-** Ring the school as soon as you know your child is going to be late or absent, on every day of their absence. It stops teachers and friends worrying.

**R**

**S Summative tests-** These are very important tests your child will sit throughout the year. Absence leading up to the tests puts your child at a significant disadvantage.

**Term Time Holidays-** Children are out of school 175 days each year- plenty of time for holidays. Taking your child out of school for holidays is illegal and disrupts learning.

**T**

**U Unauthorised Absence-** This means time off that is not endorsed by the school, for example significant lateness, term time holidays or unexplained absence.

**Volunteer-** Why not volunteer your help to other nearby parents if you know they are struggling to get their children to school on time?

**V**

**W Website-** Visit the school website throughout the year for useful information on holidays, school opening and closing times and tips on school attendance.

**'X-planation'-** Make sure you take time to discuss with your child the reasons that it is so important for them to attend school punctually every day.

**X**

**Y You-** You are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school. Your child will be grateful in the future for encouraging good attendance and results.

**Zzzzz-** Early bedtimes make for early mornings and a better start to the school day!

**Z**

# Attendance Intervention Guide

## 98% and below

Tutor chat with student about concerns

## 97% and below

EWO will meet with student and complete attendance plan together, record on SIMS, and EWO to send below 97% text to parents/carer.

## 94% and below

Attendance concern letter sent by Attendance Officer and record on SIMS. Copy to EWO. Student interviews to be completed and recorded on CPOMS by EWO for unauthorised absence.

## 92% and below

LoLA telephone call home and recorded on CPOMS. EWO visit or letter to warn of consequences of continued poor attendance and offer support.

## 90%

Persistent Absentee. EWO involved. Case notes recorded on CPOMS.

The above is a **guide** only. EWO intervention and medical evidence can reasonably be requested at any point below the target of **97%**.

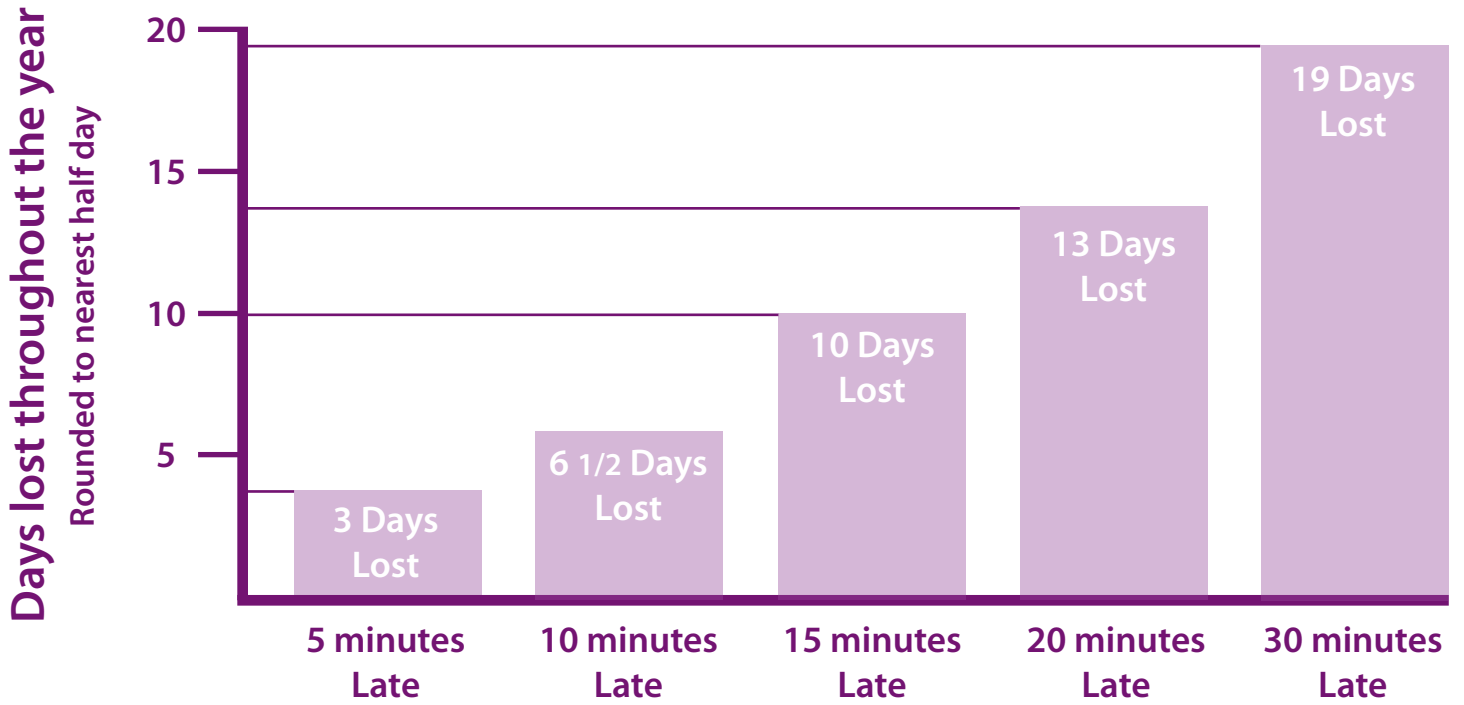




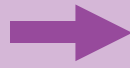
# Being late adds up to a loss of learning.

If you are 5 minutes late every day that adds up to over 3 days lost each year.

15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.



**175 NON SCHOOL DAYS EACH YEAR**



175 days spent on family time visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and appointments.

**365 days each year**

<b>190 School days each year</b> 190 days for your child's education	<b>10 days absence</b>	<b>19 days absence</b>	<b>29 days absence</b>	<b>38 days absence</b>	<b>47 days absence</b>
	<b>180 days of education</b>	<b>171 days of education</b>	<b>161 days of education</b>	<b>152 days of education</b>	<b>143 days of education</b>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>
	<b>GOOD</b> Best chance of success Gives your child a flying start!	<b>WORRYING</b> Less chance of success, harder to make progress	<b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b> Not fair to your child; seriously impedes their education and their future. Court action will be taken.		

# Legal Consequences

## What is the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Education Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

### What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a student's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

### Why is school attendance important?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a student vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

### How are Penalty Notices issued?

By post to your home.

### What are the costs?

The payment is £60 if paid within 21 days of issue, rising to £120 after this if paid within 28 days.

### How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.



## How do I pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child. If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of other measures such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences depending upon circumstances.

## Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.

## Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance:

**Children & Young People's Services,  
Lawn View House,  
40 Station Road,  
Sutton in Ashfield,  
Nottinghamshire,  
NG17 5GA.**

**Telephone: 01623 434201.**

It is very important that you speak with us at Sutton Community Academy at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

If your child is ill, please ring the office before 10am.

Contact Number 01623 980055  
Option 1.

# Good Attendance Means 97% or Above

**We need your help in improving your child's attendance.**

Below is a collection of hints and tips to help. Please note that we legally cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time, except under truly exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Principal.

Remember to let your child know how being ready for school on time helps the whole family.

Talk to your child about school and any problems they might have.

Ensure your child is awake in plenty of time for school every morning.

Arrange your child's doctor's, dentists and hospital appointments after school whenever possible.

Teach your child how to set their own alarm clock.

Encourage your child to prepare their school uniform the night before.

Limit the amount of mornings that your child watches TV or plays games before school.

Take family holidays during school holiday periods.

