



**South Wonston Primary School  
Attendance Policy  
2025-2026**

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# 1. Aims

At South Wonston Primary School, we believe that **every day in school matters and every child belongs**. Regular attendance and good punctuality are essential for children to feel secure, build strong relationships and make the most of the learning opportunities available to them. Good attendance is also an important part of safeguarding. When children attend school regularly, we are better able to support their wellbeing, monitor their progress and ensure they are safe.

For children to reach their full potential, regular school attendance is essential. At South Wonston Primary School, we are committed to providing the highest quality education for every child in an environment where all pupils feel safe, valued and welcomed. Our school values — **Nurture, Challenge, Inspire, Achieve (I CAN)** — underpin everything we do. We want every child to feel supported to attend school confidently each day so they can fully engage in learning, develop positive relationships and experience success. We believe that strong partnerships between school and home are key to children thriving. Parents, carers and staff share a responsibility for supporting excellent attendance and punctuality, ensuring that every child is able to access the education to which they are entitled.

We aim for every child to attend school every day it is open and to arrive on time unless absence is unavoidable. We will always work with pupils and families to promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality, helping children to develop positive routines and habits that will support them throughout their education and beyond.

South Wonston Primary School is committed to meeting our obligations regarding school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values and promotes good attendance. We do this by:

- **Promoting good attendance** so children can maximise their educational and social achievements and develop the self-discipline and organisational skills that prepare them for later life and employment.
- **Reducing absence**, including persistent and severe absence.
- **Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education** to which they are entitled.
- **Acting early to address patterns of absence** and working with families where concerns arise.
- **Building strong relationships with families** to ensure pupils have the encouragement and support they need to attend school regularly.

Evidence shows a strong link between **attendance above 95%** and positive outcomes for children. Pupils who attend school regularly make stronger academic progress, develop positive relationships and find school routines easier to manage. Good attendance also helps children to build confidence and prepares them well for transition to secondary school and later education, employment or training. We recognise that some children may face barriers that affect their ability to attend school regularly, including health needs, anxiety, SEND, or family circumstances. Where this happens, we will work closely with families and, where appropriate, external professionals to understand and address these barriers so that every child is supported to attend and succeed.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school works collaboratively with families and, where appropriate, with other professionals such as **Education Welfare Services, health services, housing services and the police**. This helps ensure that attendance remains a shared priority and that families receive consistent support and guidance.

While the primary responsibility for ensuring that children attend school rests with parents and carers, South Wonston Primary School is committed to **working in partnership with families** to promote good attendance and to identify and address any barriers to attendance as early as possible.

We promote positive attendance through encouragement, clear expectations and strong partnerships with families so that every child feels supported to attend school, participate fully in learning and succeed.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the **Department for Education’s statutory guidance “Working Together to Improve School Attendance” (DfE, August 2024)** and refers to the DfE’s guidance on **school attendance parental responsibility measures**. This policy should be read alongside the school’s **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, as attendance can be an important indicator of safeguarding concerns.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- **Part 6 of the Education Act 1996**
- **Part 3 of the Education Act 2002**
- **Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, as amended
- **The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007**, as amended

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

# 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training on attendance.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance is also discussed as part of the Headteacher’s report at full Governing Body meetings.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy across the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting this to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of attendance strategies implemented across the school.

### 3.3 Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The senior leader responsible for attendance leads the school's strategic approach to improving attendance and ensuring that effective systems are in place to promote good attendance and address absence.

Responsibilities include:

- Leading attendance across the school and promoting a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance expectations and processes.
- Overseeing attendance data analysis and identifying areas of concern.
- Developing strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance concerns.
- Ensuring appropriate support is in place for pupils and families experiencing difficulties with attendance.

The **Senior Leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher, Jessica Lott**, who can be contacted via the school office:

01962 881311 / 882506

adminoffice@southwonston.hants.sch.uk

### 3.4 Safeguarding Oversight

Attendance is monitored as part of the school's safeguarding procedures. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs review attendance concerns as part of their regular safeguarding meetings**, particularly where absence may indicate wider welfare or safeguarding issues.

### 3.5 Pastoral Lead / ELSA

The Pastoral Lead / ELSA supports pupils whose attendance may be affected by emotional wellbeing, anxiety or other barriers to attending school.

Responsibilities include:

- Providing pastoral support and regular check-ins for pupils identified as being at risk of **emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)**.
- Working closely with the Headteacher and families to support pupils experiencing difficulties with attendance.
- Meeting with families where appropriate to explore barriers to attendance and identify supportive strategies.
- Liaising with the Attendance Officer to monitor attendance patterns and ensure early support is in place.
- Supporting pupils through targeted pastoral interventions to help them feel safe, confident and ready to attend school.

Where attendance difficulties are linked to emotional wellbeing, anxiety or SEND, the school will work with families and relevant professionals to identify appropriate support and reasonable adjustments so that pupils feel safe and able to attend school.

Where appropriate, the school may implement supportive strategies such as **gradual reintegration or personalised pastoral support plans** to help pupils rebuild confidence in attending school.

## 3.6 Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Section 7).
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff.
- Reporting attendance concerns to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
- Working with the **Hampshire Inclusion Team** to support pupils with persistent absence.
- Administering the issuing of penalty notices where appropriate.

The Attendance Officer is **Amy Hussain**, who can be contacted by telephone: 01962 881311 or by email: [adminoffice@southwonston.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@southwonston.hants.sch.uk)

## 3.7 Teaching and Support Staff

Teaching staff and support staff, including Learning Support Assistants, are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all pupils are registered accurately.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Liaising with the Attendance Officer regarding attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Recording attendance concerns on the school's monitoring system (**CPOMS**).
- Communicating any concerns or underlying issues that may contribute to absence to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or **Deputy DSL**.
- Creating a welcoming and supportive environment for pupils, particularly when they return after absence or arrive late, so that pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn.
- Responding to lateness or absence in a calm, supportive and non-judgemental way, avoiding language that could make pupils feel embarrassed or anxious about attending school.

## 3.8 School Administrative Staff

School administrative staff will:

- Receive calls from parents regarding absence and record this on the school system using the correct codes.
- Transfer calls from parents to a **DSL or DDSL** where further support may be required.
- Contact parents to discuss reasons for absence or lateness where appropriate.

## 3.9 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Contact the school before **9:00am** on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- Inform the school when their child is expected to return.
- Ensure that any absence is clearly explained by phone or email.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.
- Avoid booking routine medical or dental appointments during the school day where possible.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.

- Attend meetings arranged to support their child's attendance.

### 3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless they are unwell or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Report to the Reception Desk if they arrive late.
- Sign out at Reception if leaving the school site during school hours.
- Engage with any additional support provided to help improve their attendance.

## 4. Recording Attendance

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

### 4.1 Attendance Register (see Appendix 1)

The law requires all schools to maintain an **attendance register** and to take the register at the **start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session** each school day.

At South Wonston Primary School the registers are taken:

**Morning session: 8:45am**

- Pupils are expected to arrive in school by **8:45am** each day.
- The morning register closes at **9:00am**.

**Afternoon session: 1:00pm**

- The afternoon register closes at **1:15pm**.

The register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person making the amendment

See **Appendix 1** for the attendance codes used in accordance with Department for Education guidance.

Attendance registers are retained for a **minimum of six years from the date of entry** in accordance with statutory requirements.

## 4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents and carers must notify the school of the reason for absence **before 9:00am on the first day of absence** and on each subsequent day of absence.

Parents can contact the school by telephone or speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the gate between **8:30am and 8:45am**.

Absence due to illness will normally be authorised where parents or carers provide an explanation.

Where there are concerns about the authenticity of illness, the school may request medical evidence such as:

- a medical appointment card
- a prescription
- a doctor's note
- other appropriate evidence

Medical evidence will **not be requested unnecessarily**.

Where the school is not satisfied with the explanation provided, the absence may be recorded as **unauthorised**.

## 4.3 Planned Absence

Medical or dental appointments will be authorised provided the school is informed in advance.

Parents should inform the school office in person or by email and provide the appointment time so that the child is absent for the **minimum amount of time necessary**.

Parents are encouraged to make routine medical or dental appointments **outside of school hours wherever possible**.

Parents must apply in advance for any other type of **term-time absence**. Further information is provided in **Section 5** of this policy.

## 4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

The school day begins at **8:45am** and pupils are expected to arrive on time.

Pupils arriving:

- **before the register closes** will be marked as late (**Code L**)  
**after the register closes** will be marked as an unauthorised absence (**Code U**) in line with Department for Education guidance

All lateness is recorded and monitored.

Where patterns of lateness occur, parents may be contacted to discuss ways to support improved punctuality.

Where lateness persists, parents may be invited to attend a meeting with the school to agree strategies to improve punctuality.

In line with **Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct**, a **penalty notice may be issued** where there are repeated sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness.

## 4.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where a pupil is expected to attend school but does not attend, or stops attending without explanation, the school will:

- Contact parents or carers on the **first day of absence** if no reason has been provided
- Make reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for absence and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil
- Invite parents to discuss the situation if absences persist
- Work with families to identify barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support

If a child is absent without explanation for **10 consecutive school days**, the school has a legal duty to notify the **Local Authority**, who may begin **Child Missing Education (CME)** procedures.

Attendance below **90%** is classed as **persistent absence**.

Where attendance falls below this threshold, the school will work with families to identify barriers to attendance and agree an **attendance support plan** where appropriate.

Where absence remains a concern and support strategies have not been successful, the school may seek advice or support from the **Local Authority's attendance services**.

## 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

## 5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence (see Appendix 2)

The Headteacher may only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be **exceptional circumstances**.

Requests for leave of absence **must be made in advance** and will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of the request and the impact of the absence on the pupil's education.

The Headteacher may request evidence to support an application for leave of absence.

Examples of circumstances where absence may be authorised include:

- Illness or medical or dental appointments (see Sections 4.2 and 4.3).
- Religious observance, where the day is set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes, where the family has agreed this with the school.

Leave of absence will **not normally be granted for holidays taken during term time**.

If leave of absence is taken without prior approval from the school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** and may result in a **penalty notice being issued**, in line with Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct (see Section 6).

## 5.2 Legal Sanctions

Under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, parents or carers commit an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised.

The school will always seek to **work in partnership with families to support improved attendance before considering legal action**.

Where there are repeated instances of unauthorised absence, the school may refer the matter to the **Local Authority**, who may consider issuing a **penalty notice** or taking further legal action.

A penalty notice may be issued where there are **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**.

Penalty notices are issued in accordance with **Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct**.

The current penalty notice charges are:

- **£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days**
- **£160 if paid within 28 days**
- If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a **three-year period**, the fine will be **£160 with no reduced rate available**.

In line with the national penalty notice framework, a maximum of **two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year period**. If further unauthorised absence occurs, the Local Authority may consider other legal action.

If a penalty notice is not paid within the required time period, the Local Authority may consider further legal action, including prosecution.

Further information can be found on the **Hampshire County Council website**.

## 6. Promoting Good Attendance

At South Wonston Primary School we believe that children attend school regularly when they feel **safe, valued and excited about learning**. Promoting good attendance is therefore closely linked to the nurturing, inclusive culture we aim to create throughout the school.

We recognise that strong attendance is supported by pupils feeling a sense of **belonging, wellbeing and engagement with school life**. As part of this approach, we place a strong emphasis on supporting children's emotional wellbeing and helping them develop the confidence and resilience needed to attend school regularly.

We support pupils' wellbeing through a range of approaches, including:

- **Kit Messenger empowerment approach**, which helps children develop self-awareness, resilience and confidence.
- The use of **Thrive** strategies to support emotional development.
- Support from trained **ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants)** who provide targeted pastoral support where needed.
- Participation in the **myHappymind programme**, helping children develop positive mental health habits and understand how their brain works.
- Opportunities for **outdoor learning**, which take place regularly and support engagement, wellbeing and a connection with the natural environment.
- Our **OPAL play approach**, which promotes creativity, independence and joyful play during break and lunchtime.

Alongside this focus on wellbeing, we provide a **broad, rich and engaging curriculum** which inspires children to learn and succeed. High-quality teaching in core subjects such as English and mathematics is complemented by a wide range of learning experiences across the wider curriculum, ensuring pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about attending school.

We believe that strong partnerships with families are essential in supporting good attendance. The school works closely with parents and carers to identify and address any barriers that may affect attendance and to ensure that pupils feel supported to attend school regularly.

Where pupils experience difficulties attending school, the school will work with families to provide **early support**, including pastoral interventions, wellbeing support and, where appropriate, involvement from external professionals.

Through these approaches we aim to create a school environment where pupils feel **ready to attend, ready to learn and proud to be part of the South Wonston community**.

# 7. Attendance Monitoring

## 7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school monitors attendance regularly to ensure that any emerging concerns are identified and addressed at an early stage.

Attendance is monitored:

- **Daily** by the Attendance Officer and school leaders.
- **Weekly** through safeguarding discussions, where the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs review attendance concerns as part of their regular safeguarding meetings**, particularly where absence may indicate wider welfare or safeguarding issues.
- **Half-termly** by senior leaders to identify patterns and trends and review the attendance of individual pupils and key groups.
- **Half-termly** by the Governing Board through the Headteacher's report.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data at both **whole-school and individual pupil level**.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of pupils whose absence may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor the attendance of key groups, including **disadvantaged pupils, pupils eligible for free school meals, and pupils with SEND**.
- Compare school attendance data with **local and national benchmarks**.

Attendance data is collected and published by the Department for Education as part of the **school absence national statistics**.

## 7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will analyse attendance and absence data regularly in order to:

- Identify pupils or groups of pupils who may require additional support with their attendance.
- Identify emerging patterns of absence or lateness.
- Inform targeted support strategies for pupils and families.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of attendance interventions and adjust strategies where necessary.

## 7.3 Using Data to Support Attendance

The school will use attendance data to support pupils and families by:

- Providing regular attendance reports to class teachers and school leaders.
- Discussing attendance with pupils and parents where concerns arise.
- Identifying barriers to attendance and offering appropriate support.
- Monitoring the impact of attendance interventions and adapting support where needed.

## 7.4 Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is considered to be a **persistent absentee** when they miss **10% or more of school sessions**.

A pupil is considered to be **severely absent** when they miss **50% or more of school sessions**.

The school will:

- Closely monitor pupils whose attendance is approaching or has fallen below **90%**.
- Contact parents or carers when attendance concerns arise.
- Invite parents to meet with school leaders to discuss barriers to attendance and agree supportive actions.
- Provide access to appropriate support services to help remove barriers to attendance.

Where appropriate, support may include involvement from:

- the **Pastoral Lead / ELSA**
- the **Inclusion Lead**
- external services such as the **Mental Health Support Team (MHST)**.

Where attendance concerns do not improve despite school-based support, the school may seek advice and support from the **Local Authority's attendance services**.

In cases where unauthorised absence persists, the school may request that the Local Authority consider issuing a **penalty notice** in line with Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

## 8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in line with guidance from the **Department for Education and Hampshire County Council**.

- As a minimum, the policy will be reviewed **annually** by the **Senior Leader responsible for attendance**.
- Following review, the policy will be presented to the **Governing Board for approval**.

## 9. Children Missing Education (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

South Wonston Primary School recognises that children who are **missing education or who have prolonged unexplained absence** may be at increased risk of harm. Attendance is therefore closely monitored and treated as an important safeguarding responsibility.

Where a pupil has an unexplained absence, the school will take appropriate steps to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. This may include contacting parents or carers, making enquiries with known contacts, and, where appropriate, making home visits.

If a pupil is absent without explanation for **10 consecutive school days**, the school is required to notify the **Local Authority**, in line with statutory guidance.

Where a pupil leaves the school roll, the school will notify the Local Authority of the pupil's destination where known, in accordance with the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations**.

The school will work closely with the **Local Authority and other relevant agencies** to ensure that children who may be missing education are identified and supported as quickly as possible.

## **10. Links with Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies that support pupil wellbeing, safeguarding and inclusion. These include:

- **Relational Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**
- **Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy**

Together, these policies support the school's approach to promoting pupil wellbeing, removing barriers to attendance and ensuring that all pupils are supported to access their education.

## APPENDIX 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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 organised, or approved, by the school
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
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	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	Authorised holiday	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
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised holiday	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	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

**Appendix 2 - Absence request form**

[Hampshire County Council Absence Request Form](#)

