



Southwark Inclusive Learning Services

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Policy Aims:

At Southwark Inclusive Learning Services (SILS), we are committed to providing high quality education that informs, engages and supports the development of our students into active, confident and responsible citizens; and to achieve this vision, **we expect every student to attend school daily and on time.**

We recognise that many of our students may have been out of education for a period of time or may have experienced difficulties accessing education in a mainstream setting. As a result, provision at SILS may be personalised to meet individual needs and circumstances of our students, in consultation with parents and with multi-agency support.

We believe that regular school attendance is essential for students to take full advantage of opportunities offered at SILS, with failure to **attend school regularly and on time**, increasing risks and vulnerabilities that may result in underachievement, anti-social behaviour, criminal exploitation, or other forms of social exclusion, including students becoming NEET (not in education, employment and training).

We therefore **promote and celebrate high expectations of regular school attendance and punctuality** and our expectations are communicated through simple direct messages to students and parents.

At SILS, the protocols for addressing concerns, is shared with parents and illustrated in the table below:

Attendance Rate:	School Action:	Long term impact/consequences:
95-100% is acceptable (up to 9 days off school or 18 half-days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good attendance is celebrated in assemblies and rewarded weekly • Students participate in half-termly prize draw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students take advantage of educational offer and interventions, with positive outcomes • Personalised planning, ensures gaps are narrowed and student achieves age appropriate educational levels
81- 94% is deemed unacceptable (up to 35 days off school 70 half-days)	Stage 1 – Inclusion Team/Attendance Officer Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily phone calls • For students who have been absent for three days, home visits will be arranged • Letter of concern sent to parents • Close monitoring by Inclusion team • Welfare home visits are arranged where parents cannot be reached after two days, possible referral to MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) - this could trigger Child Social Care involvement • Meeting with parents arranged to discuss concerns and offer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student miss on up to 20% of learning, which directly impacts on students’ attainment and post 16 choices • Student have inconsistent access to interventions, which reduces the impact of interventions • Learning gaps are forming which affect student’s confidence and self-esteem • Inconsistent participation in wider school activities with their peer group adversely affects student sense of belonging

<p>70-80% Is deemed very concerning</p> <p>(up to 57 days off school or 114 half-days)</p>	<p>Stage 2 – Attendance Officer/SLT Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily phone calls • For students who have been absent for two days, home visits are arranged • Letter of concern sent to parents • Close monitoring by senior staff Meeting with parents arranged to discuss concerns & support • Welfare home visits are arranged where parents cannot be reached after two days, possible referral to MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) - this could trigger Child Social Care involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student miss on up to 30% of learning, which has significant effect on students' attainment and post 16 choices • Student have inconsistent access to interventions, which drastically reduces the impact of interventions • Learning gaps are forming which affect student's confidence and self-esteem • Inconsistent participation in wider school activities with their peer group adversely affects student sense of belonging • Increased risks of anti-social behaviour and criminal exploitation
<p>51-69% significant concern with detrimental long-term consequences on young person's life chances</p> <p>(up to 93 days off school or 186 half-days)</p>	<p>Stage 3 – EWO (Education Welfare Officer) Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily phone calls • Multi-agency meetings (where applicable) to address concerns • School Attendance Panel (SAP) meetings arranged • Parental Contract drafted • 2 week monitoring cycle, if no improvements court warnings are issued • Referral to Southwark inclusion team which could assist families with access to services and facilitate voluntary early help assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student miss up to 50% of learning, which has detrimental effect on attainment and post 16 choices • Student have inconsistent access to interventions, which drastically reduces the impact of interventions • Significant learning gaps are forming which affect student's confidence, self-esteem and morale • Inconsistent participation in wider school activities with peer group detrimentally affect their sense of belonging and purpose • Increased risks of anti-social behaviour, criminal exploitation • Increased safety risks in the community • Increased risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment and training) • Increased risks of poverty, poor health and social exclusion
<p>Below 50%</p> <p>(More than 93 days off school, more than 186 half-days)</p> <p>significant and persistent concerns with detrimental long-term impact on young person's life chances</p>	<p>Stage 4 – Southwark Family Early Help Inclusion Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily phone calls • Legal Planning meeting • Court proceeding (could result in up to £2500 fine, and /or parental community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student miss more than half of their learning, which has detrimental effects on attainment and post 16 choices • Student have inconsistent or little access to interventions • Significant learning gaps are forming which affect student's confidence, self-esteem, morale and purpose within school environment • Inconsistent participation in wider school activities and peer groups with detrimental effect on sense of belonging and purpose • Increased risks of anti-social behaviour, criminal exploitation • Increased safety risks in the community • Increased risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment and training) • Increased risks of poverty, poor health and social exclusion

1. Legislation and guidance – that applies to school attendance

As a maintained school, SILS observes DFE statutory guidance on school attendance and all other guidance related to the education of students in a maintained alternative provision.

1.1 Right to full time education

As the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have, we note that, it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school (***Working together to improve school attendance, DFE statutory guidance, May 2022***)

1.2 Responsibilities of a Parent/Carer:

The law also states that ‘when parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school (***Working together to improve school attendance, DFE statutory guidance, May 2022***)

If a child/young person is persistently absent or persistently late after the registers have closed, the adult with parental responsibility can be prosecuted under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act (***Education Act, 1996***)

1.3 Children Missing Education

The law states that, children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are therefore at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life (***Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance, 2016***)

The law states that, schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity (***Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance, 2016***)

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. (***Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance, 2016***)

Once a school has completed these checks, or within 10 days, whichever is earlier, if the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not made contact, schools must report the child as missing from education to the local authority. (***Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance, 2016***)

1.4 Granting leaves of absence

The law states that, only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence, and schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is **unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.** (***Working together to improve school attendance, DFE statutory guidance, May 2022***)

2. Attendance as responsibilities of the whole school community

At SILS, attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the whole school community, i.e. students, parents, teaching and support staff, school admin team, attendance officer, senior leaders and members of the management committee.

The SILS attendance and punctuality strategy document (Appendix 1), outlines the roles of each and responsibilities of all members of our school community.

3. Recording Attendance

3.1 Attendance register

When students join SILS, they are placed on school register from the agreed date. Their attendance is recorded daily, and attendance marks are entered for the morning (am) session and the afternoon (pm) session. Pupils must arrive in school by 9.30 am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken between 9.00-9.30 am and kept open until 10.00 am (KS4) and 9.45 (KS3). Any arrivals between 9.30 and 9.45 am (KS3) or 10.00 am (KS4) are marked as **Lateness**. Arrivals after 9.45 am (KS3) 10.00 am (KS4) are marked as U, and if there is no justifiable reason it will be counted as **unauthorised half-a-day absence** (student's attendance is recorded on SIMS - School Information Management System).

At the start of the first session (by 9.30 am) of each school day the school register will record whether a pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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 on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on **0207 525 0370 (KS4 site)** and **0207 525 1150 (KS3 site)**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent /carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, by providing a letter/text notification from the dentist/surgery with information about the appointment details.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Go to the section **4 (Authorised and unauthorised absence)** below to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

In order to take a full advantage of our school offer, all students must be on time. We encourage students to arrive to school by 9.00 am, as hot breakfast is served daily between 9.00-9.30 am.

Students who arrive to school late will remain after school to make up for lost learning.

If a student is persistently late, the issue will be addressed by:

- arranging a meeting with a parent/carers
- student being placed on Tutor, HOY or SLT report
- through Attendance Officer or EWO involvement

Please note, persistent lateness to school may trigger concerns around child's wellbeing, safeguarding or safety in the community and be a subject of multi-agency liaison.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, following two consecutive attempts, an un-announced welfare home visit will be conducted.
- We will continue to call the parent/carers on each day that the absence without explanation continues to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer, or raise referral to MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) team

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels:

- weekly – you will receive a call from a tutor informing you of your child's weekly attendance
- half-termly – you will receive a letter from the Attendance officer informing you of your child's half-termly attendance

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school.

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday

- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests

4.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. When do I keep my child off school?

In exceptional circumstances of illness, you may keep your child at home. Public Health Agency has published a guidance to parents on when to keep children at home (see Appendix 3)

6. Links with Other Policies:

This attendance and punctuality policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

1. Working together to improve school attendance, DFE statutory guidance, May 2022
2. Keeping children safe in education, DFE statutory guidance, September 2023
3. Working Together to Safeguard Children, DFE statutory guidance, July 2018

4. Children missing education, DFE statutory Guidance, September 2016

As well as, the following SILS Policies:

5. SILS Safeguarding Policy
6. Teaching and Learning Policy
7. Accessibility Policy
8. Remote Learning Policy
9. Home Visit Policy
10. SILS SEND Offer

7. Attendance and Punctuality contacts and enquiries:

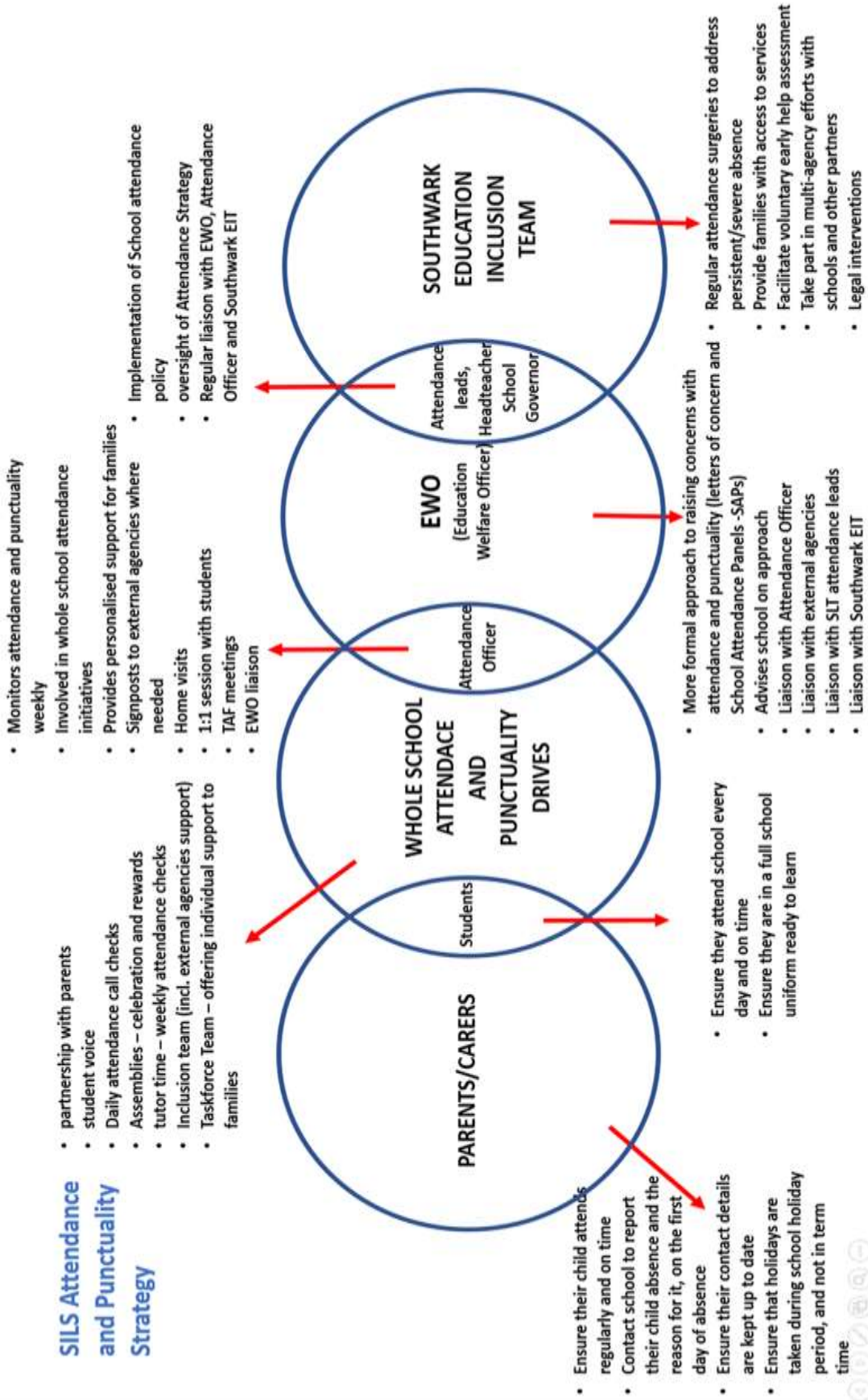
- Azemina Miftaroska, SLT in charge of KS4 attendance and punctuality, amiftaroska@sils.southwark.sch.uk
- Jonathan Furlong, SLT in charge of KS3 attendance and punctuality jfurlong@sils.southwark.sch.uk
- tbc, Attendance Officer, admin@[sils.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:admin@sils.southwark.sch.uk)
- Paulette Williams, Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Paulette.Williams@lewisham.gov.uk
- Link Governor: Ron St Louis
- Headteacher: Yomi Adewoye

Shared and discussed with staff – 4 September 2023

To be approved by governors – 14 November 2023

To be reviewed in two years – September 2025

SILS Attendance and Punctuality Strategy



Appendix 2: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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

Do I need to keep my child off school?



Chicken Pox	Until all spots have crusted over	Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics	Whooping Cough	48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Measles or German Measles	4 days from onset of rash	Hand, foot & mouth	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Slapped Cheek	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Conjunctivitis	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Glandular Fever	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Scarlet Fever	24 hours after commencing antibiotics
Diarrhoea & Vomiting	48 hours from last episode	Threadworms	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	Tonsillitis	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Mumps	5 days from onset of swelling	Scabies	Until after first treatment	Head Lice	No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed
Flu	Until recovered				