



Seamer and Irton CP School Attendance Policy



Policy name	Attendance Policy
Frequency of review	Biennial
Governor lead	Helen Mallory
Lead member of staff	Robert Webb
Reviewed on	March 2025
Reviewed by	Governing Board
Next review	March 2027

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Seamer and Irton CP School aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually. It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have the highest rates of attendance over the key stage, compared to those with the lowest attainment.

This policy is written inline with the latest guidance from the DfE and local authority.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, on the first morning of absence and thereafter until they return to school. This may be done by phone, by email or in person. If your child is ill, they should not attend school. This is an authorised absence.
- The school follows NHS advice around infection control and asks that parents keep their child off school for 48 hours after symptoms of vomiting & diarrhoea have stopped. If your child is ill, they should not attend school. This is an authorised absence.
- Dental, Optician and doctor's appointments should be arranged out of school hours, evidence of appointments may be required if necessary. All appointments are logged on your child's record.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this based on the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.
- If a pupil has been reported absent with illness lasting for 5 school days or more a member of the Safeguarding team may carry out a home visit or request a parent/carer attends school to ascertain any additional support which may be needed for the pupil. Medical evidence will also be requested.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration 8.55am. If a child arrives after 8.55am his/her parent should report directly to the school office.
- Parents should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. If this is unavoidable, parents should arrange to discuss the matter with the school and complete a leave of absence

form available from the school office. Permission for such absences is not given automatically and unauthorised absences may be referred to the Local Authority and result in a fixed penalty notice.

Children with SEND

The same expectations apply to children and families of SEND children. The expectations of all local authorities are the same regardless of whether a pupil is in receipt of SEN support. Where a pupil has an EHCP, the School will alert the local authority which maintains the EHCP about any significant issues emerging over attendance so that the local authority can consider whether needs continue to be adequately supported through the existing plan. In all cases, the school will be proactive in supporting the attendance of all pupils.

School responsibilities

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- Registers will be called twice daily (at 8.55 and at 1.10), Registers will close at 9.25 and at 1.40.
- Teachers will complete registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance officer will alert the headteacher of any attendance discrepancies.
- Short holidays with illnesses either side, which take the absence to 10 sessions or more will be investigated, and a penalty may still be issued if it is believed parents are being dishonest.
- Should a class teacher have concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality, they should bring this to the attention of the headteacher and log the concern on CPOMs.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation be received from the child's parent, the office staff will contact the parent. Should this prove impossible, the matter will be referred to the headteacher, who will assess the safeguarding actions to be taken, this will include attempting to contact all contacts of the absent child on our MIS system using all contact details we have on record. If contact is still not made, a home visit will take place. Where the safety and whereabouts of a child cannot be ascertained, the police will be informed.
- All absence notes from parents should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and forwarded to the office.
- The headteacher will regularly collect and analyse attendance data and will report this to the Governing Body.
- The school will employ strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
 - The headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents on attendance matters.
 - Parents are asked to contact school each day taken for absence due to illness.
 - Parents always have access to their child's attendance via Scholarpack Parent App.
 - Automated letters are sent to parents of children below 90% attendance (persistent absentee threshold) in Autumn and Spring term. An attendance summary is included as part of the annual school report in the Summer Term.

Lateness/Punctuality

Registration starts at 8.55.

Registration closes at 9.25.

If a child arrives after the registration has started, but before registration closes at 9.25 they will receive a late mark.

If a child arrives after registration closes at 9.25am, they cannot receive a late mark but have to be marked as absent for the whole session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence.

Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absence is defined as missing 10% of sessions or more (i.e. less than 90% attendance).

In this case:

1. Parents will receive a letter alerting them to this fact and offering support.
2. Attendance will be monitored for signs of improvement.
3. An attendance contract may be offered if deemed appropriate.
4. An Education Supervision Order may be put in place.
5. Continued absences will result in further correspondence that could lead to legal action for non-attendance.

Children Missing in Education

The school will comply with all the Local Authority procedures for children who are missing from Education and will take all steps to ascertain their whereabouts

Penalties

Generally, absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised by the head teacher in exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority cannot override the decision made by the Headteacher to unauthorise the absence. If you have any reasons to believe the Penalty Notice should not have been issued please contact the school within 10 working days. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

The national threshold for receiving a penalty is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

The following circumstances are NOT considered to be exceptional circumstances and are therefore likely to result in a Penalty Notice:

- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term time (exceeding 10 sessions within 10 weeks)
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays (eg. 4 days followed by 1 day of absence)
- Where there is evidence of dishonesty about a child's whereabouts
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Persistent absenteeism.

FAQ

What are exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional circumstances are one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance (not an exhaustive list).

I explained my exceptional circumstances to the school, yet I was still issued with a penalty notice. Can this be reviewed by the Council?

No. Only the head teacher of a school can authorise any absence under exceptional circumstances. The County Council cannot override any decisions made by the head teacher. If a request is sent to the Council then a penalty notice will be issued based on the information received.

My child's attendance record is generally good, can I still be issued a fine for short time unauthorised holiday?

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for holidays taken for 10 sessions or more.

Which parent receives the fine?

Where both parents live together and have day-to-day care and also any absent parent who has frequent contact with the child and is named in the child's school records may receive a fine for each of their children. This will include parents who allow their child to go on holiday with another family member or friend of the family.

Who is fined when parents do not live together?

The situation can become complicated where parents do not live together and both wish to remove their child from school at separate times during the same academic year. Where parents are separated, if an absence request is submitted by the parent not involved with the absence, then both parents may be fined.

Who is considered to have parental responsibility?

The definition of a parent is anyone who has parental responsibility for the child and/or any adult with day-to-day care and responsibility. (Section 576 Education Act 1996). This will include step-parents and cohabiters, partners of older pupils if the partner is over 18 years of age and they are living together, other relatives with residency orders.

What happens if I am a self-employed worker OR I am an employee with fixed holiday dates, or on a holiday rota set by my employer?

Legislation no longer allows Head teachers to authorise 10 days absence from school for a term time holiday. If you are self-employed then you are able to select when you take your annual leave.

We want to go on a trip of a lifetime. Could this be an authorised absence?

No, this would constitute a family holiday. The Head teachers cannot authorise term time holidays, unless they accept the reason for leave of absence is exceptional.

I have a significant number of relatives abroad and may need to spend an extended period in another country. Could this be an authorised absence?

Head teachers are bound by law to discourage families from taking trips during term time, whatever the reason given – therefore a penalty notice is likely.

Could an absence to attend a religious observance or festival be an authorised absence?

Absence that is due to religious observance will be authorised. **The day** should be marked as authorised where there is an element of worship associated with the religious observance. The religious observance days are set apart by the religious body of the individual religion, not determined by the parents.

Can I take my child skipping on Scarborough Seafront on Shrove Tuesday?

No, this would be marked as unauthorised as this is a Scarborough tradition, not a religious observation.