

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



**Approved by:** Admissions & Pupils

**Date:** March 2020

**Last reviewed on:** March 2020

**Next review due by:** March 2023

*It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.*

## **Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy reflects Sinai's Jewish ethos and our commitment to every child. The DfE set high expectations for attendance for primary age pupils. For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so.

The school sets attendance targets each year as part of the School improvement Plan. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are aspirational yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Sinai School expects primary age pupils to attend school for a minimum of 97% of the school year.

## **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **School procedures**

### **Attendance register**

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school for lessons to begin by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.15. The register for the second session will be taken at; 1.00 for EYFS and KS1 and 1.30 for KS2. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

### **Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am. The explanation of absence can be given through the following methods:

- completing and sending the Absence Request Form found on the School's website
- telephone call to the School and leave a message on the automated system;
- In person at the School Office;
- email to [absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk](mailto:absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk) giving details of your child's name, registration group and reason for absence.

If your child is absent on grounds of illness, please provide details of the illness.

A pupil's absence will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this.

## **Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (at 9.15) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Code L: Late arrival before register has closed.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Code U: Arrival after registration, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate,

All pupils who are late must report to the school office where a note will be made of their name and their time of arrival. This will then be recorded on the school's system. An explanation must be sort from parents. Parents entering the school to speak to the admin department or to bring a child in late must come through the front entrance to be signed in.

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the child and parents/guardians to help in any way possible.

Persistent lateness is defined by the school as five or more days in a term.

## **Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensuring proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. The school will identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## **Reporting to parents**

Reports of attendance are issued to all parents/guardians as part of the annual report. Attendance, including lateness, issues will be discussed at Parents Evenings with parents/guardians, if the School deem attendance to be unsatisfactory or a cause for concern.

If a child's attendance drops below the school target then the following action will be taken –

- If attendance drops below the school target of 97% the attendance officer will monitor the reasons for absence.
- If attendance drops below 92% then the attendance officer will continue to monitor the reasons for absence. They may talk to the class teacher or contact parents to discuss the reason for this and any necessary action will be agreed.
- If attendance drops below 90% then this will be classed as persistent absence. Parents will be contacted by the attendance officer and may also be asked to meet with the Headteacher/deputy Headteacher. Regular monthly meetings/ telephone calls will continue until attendance improves.

If there is no improvement after the second monthly meeting, Local Authority guidance will be followed and a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

## **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted. Before authorising an absence the Headteacher will consider: the impact on the pupil's progress, the pupil's annual attendance rate, whether the period of absence falls during any national tests or exams.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Close family bereavement

Parents/guardians are advised of the importance of their children attending school and are encouraged to take their holiday during the break periods. The DfE has specified that parents/guardians should not normally take children on holiday during term-time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. The school does not authorise absence for holidays. The school has a zero tolerance on term time leave.

Requests for absence during Year 6 will not be approved and is discouraged during Year 2.

Permission for absence may be granted in an emergency or for medical appointments, which are unavoidably in school time, provided a parent/guardian has made a request to the Headteacher by completing the Absence Request Form found on the School's website and sent it to School at least one day in advance of any medical appointment (unless made as an emergency appointment).

Please note that absence on the last day of term/early Friday closing counts as a full day if the pupil is not present for the taking of the register both in the morning and after lunch.

Should an absence occur when it has not been authorised, or no request has been made, this will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Contacting the school about anticipated absences:**

Parents/guardians should complete and send to the School the Absence Request Form found on the School's website. Permission for absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Headteacher after taking into consideration the nature of the request received.

Any absences where permission has not been sought in advance will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence, even if it is an absence that would normally be approved.

Requests for absence should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested first day of absence.

Parents/guardians should not book flights or hotels until permission for the absence has been granted by the Headteacher.

### **Legal sanctions**

The school reserves the right to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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

## **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that school is a place where the children want to come and learn: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised for excellent attendance.

Regular assemblies, monthly class attendance certificates as well as information in newsletters ensure that all parents and children are aware of the school's attendance target and the reasons for good attendance and punctuality.

## **Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer monitors all pupil absence on a monthly basis and ensures quick and early intervention is actioned if a problem is identified.

Identified pupils (those with an attendance below 90% or those identified as a cause for concern) will be monitored on a daily/weekly basis. The office staff have a priority call list and will ensure these children are called before 9.30 on their first day of absence, with no reason given and each day thereafter.

Children who are identified as a cause for concern may also have a member of staff designated to them to call daily if they are not in school or not on time. This member of staff will also be responsible for awarding praise when children are in school and arrive on time.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a Persistent Absentee (PA). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/guardians fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

All PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. This may also involve academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. It is the school's obligation to inform the Local Authority and the DfE of any child's attendance which falls with the PA parameters.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis could be regarded as a safeguarding matter.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis and will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils. The Headteacher and governors will make the decision to issue fixed-penalty notices.

### **The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance of specific children to the Headteacher
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaise with the Headteacher about issuing fixed-penalty notices

### **Teachers**

All teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a pupil's attendance, when this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such.

Teachers will alert the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher if the school identifies patterns of behaviour in relation to attendance and punctuality which may not bring their attendance below 90%, but is still a cause for concern.

### **Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **Parents**

Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

A pupil should only be absent from school if the reason is 'unavoidable'.

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parent's evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed [frequency] by the [job title]. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.



## **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

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

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>             | <b>Scenario</b>   |
|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>/</b>    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| <b>\</b>    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| <b>L</b>    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| <b>B</b>    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| <b>D</b>    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| <b>J</b>    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| <b>P</b>    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| <b>V</b>    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| <b>W</b>    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| <b>Code</b>               | <b>Definition</b>           | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| <b>C</b>                  | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| <b>E</b>                  | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| <b>H</b>                  | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>                  | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |
| <b>M</b>                  | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | 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) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | 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 |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |