Suckley School

Attendance Policy

Responsible Person: Helen Field

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Key Contacts

School Attendance Lead Name: Helen Field
Telephone number: 01886 884283 Email: head@suckley.worcs.sch.uk

Part 1 - Policy

1. Introduction

At Suckley School our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every session and every day that school is open. We consider this paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and enhancing lifelong outcomes.

Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school ethos.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

Aims and ethos

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled. Suckley School acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

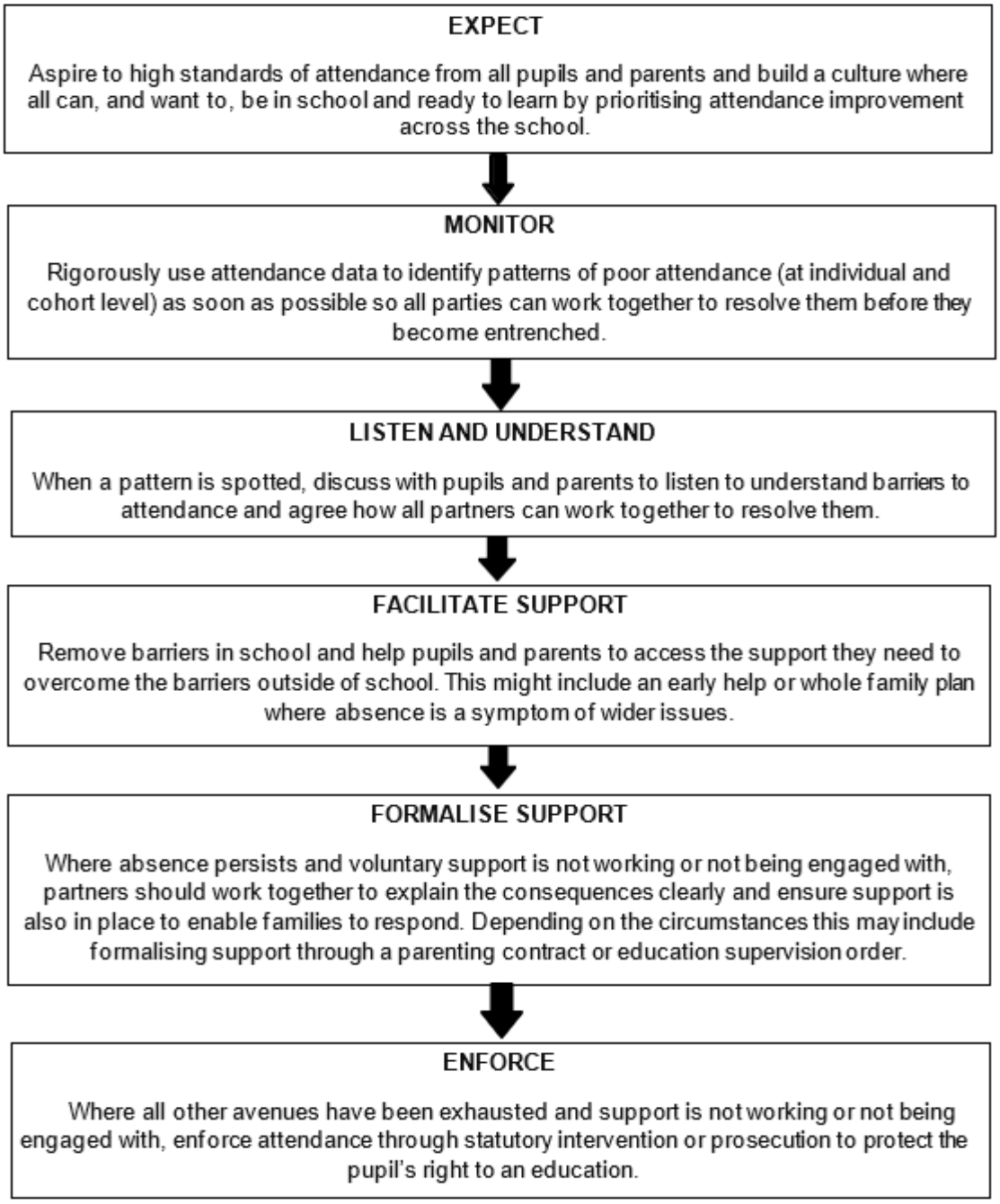
By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

At Suckley School we follow the DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance Approach:



Please follow this link to see the whole document:

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024]

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school encourages parents of nursery and reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age to send their children to every session that is available to them. Every child enrolled at our school is expected to attend every day they are required to,

on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to notify the school of any absence.

At Suckley School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our pupils, parents and school.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

2.1 Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in GCSE's at Secondary.

Excellent attendance enables pupils to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each pupil's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	…a pupil will miss this many days:	…and this many lessons:
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Suckley School will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school has made all reasonable enquiries and cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare and safety.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in conjunction with relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full time provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

Part 2 - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures

Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Senior Leadership Team will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:50 am on each school day.
Our morning register is taken at 9:00 am and will be kept open until 9:05 am.
Our afternoon register is taken at 1:15 pm and will be kept open until 2:20 pm
A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**), which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

See DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day…	**Equates to days of teaching lost in one year…**	**Which means this number of lessons have been missed…**
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

3.1 Illness

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

Reporting an absence due to illness

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

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.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE guidance Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or the class teacher for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: **Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS (www.nhs.uk)**

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out on the 'signing out' sheet.

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out on the 'signing out' sheet.

3.3 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

3.5 Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out on the 'signing out' book.

4. First Day of Absence Response

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

- Call/email/text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer the next recorded emergency contact will be contacted.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare and safety of a pupil, we may request a welfare check from the police.

5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

If the need arises, attendance is reported on as a whole in the school weekly newsletter. Good and improved whole school attendance is highlighted.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

8. Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

10. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the senior leadership team to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils and that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or, fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

11. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

12. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information

Penalty notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the Worcestershire children's services portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases. If we have any CME related concerns we will contact CME@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

14. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 1 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the O code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are

unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety.

15. Reporting to Parents

Suckley School regularly informs parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through their termly reports.

Where a child's attendance falls below 93% for whatever reason, our school may contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

16. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Reasons for absence are recorded on SIMS which is the system we use for recording registration. Information for absence and what has been reported are included in the notes section.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body:

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The curriculum committee are responsible for attendance.

The Headteacher/Attendance Officer:

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy at the school
- Having a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Using specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and continued lateness.
- Monitoring school-level absence data at the school and individual pupil level and reporting it to Governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to families with continued poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Arranges calls, home visits and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence

The headteacher monitors trend and patterns of absence and takes appropriate actions e.g. follow-up action plans for pupils with low attendance, timely liaison with home and referrals to outside agencies. The headteacher monitors the attendance data by group using https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/ and our internal data tracking system- Insight. The course of action taken is discussed with the senior leadership team and addressed on an individual basis.

The headteacher supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Class Teachers:

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school using Sims. This is completed in the morning and the afternoon.

School Admin Staff:

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Contact parents/carers of children who are absent without a reason via text and email
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/Carers:

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils:

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time.

18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

Appendix 1

Suckley School Absence Escalation Procedure

Percentage	Responsibility	Action
94% - 96%	School Action: Class teacher/form tutor Headteacher Attendance Lead	Continue to report absence data in weekly newsletter Report individual child's attendance in termly reports Welcome attendance letter (Appendix 2) Improved attendance letter
91% - 94%	School Action: Class Teacher/form tutor Headteacher Attendance Lead External agencies for support	Initial attendance concern letter (Step 1) Improved attendance letter General illness attendance letter On-going medical issues attendance letter Invitation to a meeting to discuss if required
90% or below	School Action as above + Early Help Supporting Families involvement. Referral to EWO Advise sought from attendance help line	Persistent absence concern letter (Step 2) Persistent absence concern requesting medical evidence (if no improvement in 15 days) (Step 3) Invitation to a meeting to attend
50% or below	School Action as above + Early Help Supporting Families involvement. Referral to EWO Advise sought from attendance help line	Pupil is classed as having severe absence Referral to outside agencies and penalty notice

Schools will notify the Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days without authorisation by emailing CME@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Similar escalation letters are also used for punctuality concerns.

Appendix 2- Welcome Attendance Letter

Suckley School

Headteacher Mrs Helen Field

CHURCH LANE, SUCKLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE, WR6 5DE

Telephone/Fax: 01886 884283

E-mail: office@suckley.worcs.sch.uk Website: www.suckleyschool.co.uk

Welcome attendance letter

Dear (insert name of parent(s)/carer(s))

Welcome to (insert name of school)

Good attendance and punctuality remain a top priority for us at (insert name of school). We share parents and carers views in wanting the best for your child and we are looking forward to working in partnership with you.

At (insert name of school) we strive to ensure your child has the best opportunities to be the best they can be, to feel safe and supported in school, and to develop a sense of belonging both with their peers and as a wider part of our school community.

To support that, regular attendance will be key.

At (insert school name) schools starts at (insert time) and finishes at (insert time)

You can find more information about our breakfast clubs and after schools clubs or minibus service by visiting our school website or contacting the school office on xxxxx.

We expect all pupils at (insert name of school) to attend school as regularly as possible. Our ambition for every child is 100% attendance.

We recognise that on occasion some children may experience illness or have exceptional reasons preventing regular attendance. We will work with you as partners to ensure in such circumstances any identified barriers are discussed so we can best support your child's wellbeing and education.

Giving your child the best start

90% attendance may seem like an acceptable level of attendance; however, the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child misses half a day of school every week, the equivalent of 19 school days (almost one whole month), during the year. Children who miss this amount of school do not achieve as well as their peers who attend more regularly.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of learning lost
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of learning lost
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of learning lost
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of learning lost
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning lost

Suckley School

Headteacher Mrs Helen Field

CHURCH LANE, SUCKLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE, WR6 5DE

Telephone/Fax: 01886 884283

E-mail: office@suckley.worcs.sch.uk Website: www.suckleyschool.co.uk

Our attendance policy is available to read on our school website (insert link). This explains how we monitor attendance and follow up absence.

We know being a parent/carer can be challenging at times. We are here to help if there are any problems affecting your child. Do please speak with your child's class teacher in the first instance or myself, my contact details are listed below.

To assist parents deciding whether their child is too ill to attend school or otherwise, the NHS have produced a weblink you may also find useful:

Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

As parents/carers you can best support your child to secure regular attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring a good bedtime routine to enable your child to get enough sleep.
- Establishing a good routine each evening and each morning so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Making sure your child attends school every day it is open, unless there is an exceptional reason preventing this.
- Ensuring your child arrives at school on time every day by (insert expected time)
- Arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Informing the school if your child is ill and too unwell to attend (insert details of how this should be done)
- Taking absence seriously – if your child is not wanting to attend, or has not attended as you expected why is this? Are they putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing? Do you know who they are talking to online?
- Taking any holidays during school holiday periods, and not during term time
- Talking positively to your child about school and taking an interest in their school day
- Attending parents' evenings and school events.
- Praising and rewarding your child's efforts and achievements at school.
- Supporting school staff by working in partnership to best manage and support your child with any difficult or challenging behaviour or circumstances.
- Discussing any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child's educational journey and ensure their educational entitlement.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3 Initial Attendance Concern Letter

Suckley School

Headteacher Mrs Helen Field

CHURCH LANE, SUCKLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE, WR6 5DE

Telephone/Fax: 01886 884283

E-mail: office@suckley.worcs.sch.uk Website: www.suckleyschool.co.uk

Re (child name) Class/year group

Dear

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance.

(Child name) has missed xxx days of school since xxx and their current attendance has fallen to xx %. *They have been absent on xxxx/separate occasions since xxx (insert/delete as appropriate)*

I enclose a copy of the register and reasons provided for absence for your information.

I appreciate that you may have called school and provided reasons for the absences, but I just needed highlight this to you as your child is now nearing being classed as a 'Persistent Absentee' which is 90% and below.

(Child name)'s level of absence is likely to have an impact on their learning. Opportunities to socialise and sustain friendships with peers are also being lost.

As each family's circumstances are different we want to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupil welfare and wellbeing are really important to us at (insert school name) and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for children to experience a sense of belonging, success and fulfilment.

We will continue to support (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence.

Should there be any ongoing reasons preventing (child name)'s regular attendance, or you would like to discuss this matter further, please do contact me on xxxx.

Alternatively, we look forward to seeing an immediate and sustained improvement in (child name)'s attendance

Yours Sincerely

Appendix 4 A Parent's Guide to School Attendance

Frequently Asked Questions

What is PA?
PA stands for 'Persistently absent'. This is when your child's attendance is below 90%.

What is risk of PA?
Risk of PA is when your child's attendance is at risk of dropping below 90%- we aim to offer early intervention support at this stage.

What is an EPN?
EPN stands for 'Education penalty notices'
EPN's are issued for unauthorised absences (this includes term time holidays).

Can I just go on holiday and pay the fine?
EPN's have now been capped nationally at **TWO** fines within any 3 year period. After this, other action like a parenting order or prosecution has to be considered.

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing!

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child
Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.
For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

5 consecutive days of term time leave
Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period
Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.
Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Frequently Asked Questions cont...

What is an unauthorised absence?
A child being kept off school unnecessarily or without good reason. Term time holidays is not justified reason to take your child out of school

What happens if I keep my child off, and don't contact the school?
School will call/email/text home and obtain a reason– if no reason is provided school may carry out a visit to your home– this is to check on the welfare of you and your child.

It is a legal requirement for each and every child to access regular education.

Parental Home Agreement

Parents/ carers AND school both have a legal duty for attendance.
It is a legal requirement for each and every child to access regular education.

Every Day/Every Minute Counts

'90% attendance' or 'only 5 minutes late' may sound like small issues, but the amount of learning missed is huge!

Help with your Child's Attendance

If you need support with your child's attendance, please do reach out to us.

Headteacher: Mrs H Field
Phone: 01886 884283
Email: office@suckley.worcs.sch.uk

A Parents' Guide to School Attendance

'Happy, Aspirational and Ready for Life'

Our Attendance Mission

At Suckley School we believe good attendance is vital for a child to achieve their **full potential**.

We aim to promote good attendance by providing a **safe and motivating environment** for all children.

We **work together** to improve attendance.

As a team, we will **break down any barriers** a child or family may have to accessing their education.

Every child matters, every day matters.

School Attendance

Punctuality
If you child arrives after the gates have been closed at 8.50 am you must accompany your child to sign in at the office.
If your child arrives at school after registration closes your child will receive an unauthorised late mark unless there are exceptional circumstances– this effects your child's attendance.

Absence
If your child is going to be absenct from school you must contact the school office before 9.00 am to provide a reason for the absence. You can either call: 01886 884283 or email: office@suckley.worcs.sch.uk and secretary@suckley.worcs.sch.uk.

Medical evidence
If your child is absent from school and is at risk of becoming 'persistently absent' (at risk of falling below 90%) you will be required to provide medical evidence for your child's absences. This way we can ensure the absences are authorised.

PA/Risk of PA
We want to avoid children becoming 'persistently absent' (below 90%). Interventions will be out in place when your child's attendance becomes at risk of becoming PA. This may include supportive parent meetings. Being persistently absent may make you liable for fines or school attendance referrals.

Fines/Holidays
Holidays are not authorised by school unless there are exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence due to holidays may result in a fine being issued by Worcestershire County Council.

Every Day Counts

100% attendance	0 days missed	No learning missed!
97% attendance	5 days missed	A weeks learning missed
94% attendance	12 days missed	2 weeks and 2 days learning missed
90% attendance	19 days missed	3 weeks and 4 days learning missed
85 % attendance	30 days missed	6 weeks of learning missed
80% attendance	40 days missed	8 weeks of learning missed

Every Minute Counts

Always on time!	No hours missed!	No learning missed!
5 minutes late each day	15 hours missed	3 days learning missed
10 minutes late every day	32 hours missed	6.5 days learning missed
20 minutes late each day	65 hours missed	13 days learning missed
30 minutes late each day	95 hours missed	19 days learning missed