Rebuilding Confidence. Restoring Futures.

Attendance Policy

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The Sage School

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Introduction

At The Sage School, we realise that regular attendance is crucial for safeguarding, educational progress, and emotional well-being. School education lays the vital foundations of a pupil's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

We recognise that many of our pupils face significant anxiety, and our approach balances the need for regular attendance with sensitivity to individual mental health needs.

Our policy applies to all pupils of statutory school age, across the Key Stages to promote good attendance habits school wide.

The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy: Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2026.

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support pupils to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure attendance is supported with flexibility and personalised approaches to help pupils feel safe and confident.
- Collaborate with families, carers, and external professionals to support attendance.
- Take absences due to mental health or anxiety seriously and address them with understanding, while encouraging gradual reintegration into school routines.

Expectations

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.
- Ensure that they contact the school before 8:30am if their child is unable to attend school, citing the reason.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about a pupil's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. This is at the discrepancy of the Headteacher.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.
- Monitor their child's attendance at school using Arbor.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that pupils of statutory school age (from the school term after they turn five years old until after until the last Friday in June when the pupil is in Year 11) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence.

The Sage School will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality, for example through social media, displays and parent/carer communications.
- Provide intensive and bespoke support to pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Work alongside other services and teams to support pupils' attendance. E.g. Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care, Youth Offending Service, Senior Transition Advisers, Virtual School and the local community.
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance and success looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and pupils regarding attendance.
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for pupils with medical needs.

The Attendance Champion for our school is Mrs G Fulcher. She is the Headteacher and can be contacted on gfulcher@thesageschool.co.uk

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Headteacher having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

Pupils will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss promptly with a staff member any problems that may affect their school attendance.

Governors will:

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Pupils Local Authority Case Worker will:

- Provide support and guidance to school if attendance becomes a concern.

School Attendance Strategy

The school's Attendance Team includes the Pastoral Support Workers, SENDCo, the Headteacher.

We are responsible for all pupils' attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. For pupils who might need extra support to maintain their attendance e.g. Young Carers, we signpost families to appropriate places to reduce the impact that their needs and personal circumstances have on their attendance at school. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked, and we work together with Social Care to identify where pupils need extra support. We will work with families in many ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this is important for this work.

School is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance data and using this to inform how we support pupils. We share this data within the school staff to ensure continuity of support and use the pastoral system to engage pupils in attendance intervention. We are required to report our attendance to the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can compare our performance with that of other schools, both locally and nationally. Attendance data is analysed regularly, and pupils whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern will be noted. This will be communicated with parents and carers. Support will then be put in place.

Pupils whose attendance falls to 90% or under are deemed to be 'persistently absent'. Pupils whose attendance is 50% or under are 'severely persistently absent' and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

We have a whole-school ethos of promoting and celebrating attendance. This means that we train every staff member in attendance procedures so that everyone understands the processes for attendance and the pastoral structures in school. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy, and constantly refer to it. Good attendance is celebrated with

pupils and families and reported to parents/carers at Parents Evenings and in termly reports. You can also see your pupil's attendance on Arbor.

Our whole-school strategy for attendance involves deciding how to allocate resources to manage attendance. Our support and early interventions for attendance are regularly monitored to ensure they are having an impact and are worth the resources allocated to them.

Supporting Attendance

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance.**



When required, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil.

Lateness and attendance are monitored daily by the Headteacher who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Monitor Arbor to ensure accuracy of record keeping by all staff completing registers.
- Alert Pastoral Support Workers when attendance concerns occur.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below an acceptable level.
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community.
- Our early intervention process includes:
    1. Phoning parents/carers to tell them that we are worried about their child's attendance/lateness.
    2. Sending letters to offer support and explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on their child.
    3. Invitation to attend a meeting to make an Attendance Contract. This is a supportive meeting, that you choose to agree to. We discuss the needs of a pupil and family and find ways to support you so your child can attend school.
    4. If the Attendance Contract does not improve attendance, or if the parents/carers do not work with the support even when the school asks them to, then we will ask

the Local Authority to decide if a penalty notice/fine or prosecution should be used.

5. At step 3 or 4, we may choose to use a Notice to Improve letter. This is sent by the school and the Local Authority. It is a final try to improve attendance before using fines and prosecutions. It is used when parents/carers do not engage with us to support the child.
6. After using an Attendance Contract or a Notice to Improve, if attendance does not get better, school will refer to the Local Authority for a penalty notice/fine or prosecution.

- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance/lateness.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Pupils Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Report pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority.

Registration

- The school car park gates are opened at 8:30am and close at 9:00am.
- After 9:00am, entry to the school is via the pedestrian entrance only.
- Registers are taken at 9:00am.
- If pupils arrive after 9:00am, but before 9:30am they will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9:30am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.
- Staff will praise students for arriving on time, take prompt action where students are late or absent without explanation, record lateness and refer concerns to the Headteacher.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Every lesson is registered through the school internal system. Teachers are expected to ensure that the register is taken as promptly as possible. The reason for this is to track punctuality. Teachers will praise students for their punctuality to lessons and alert the Headteacher if there are concerns over student absence.

Lateness

When pupils arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other pupils' learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills.

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8:30am. This can be via phone 01354 572449 – if there is no answer, please leave a voicemail including the name of the child and the reason for absence. This can also be via email to gfulcher@thesageschool.co.uk or via the Arbor app.

For any pupil that is not present within the first 15 minutes of the start of lessons and the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to contact the parent/carers.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their pupil's absence. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on the pupil's electronic school record. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes (see appendix 1).

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carer to an enquiry regarding their pupil's absence from school.

At times we may decide it is necessary to conduct a home visit to establish the safety and wellbeing of a pupil who is absent without explanation from a parent/carer.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting information may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment.

Illness

Pupils who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea or sickness can return 48 hours after the last episode.

Pupils with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school.

A guide to whether your child is able to attend school with minor illnesses is here: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk). The information is backed up by the Department for Education (DfE).

We expect pupils to attempt to come to school unless they are too unwell to complete basic tasks. We will contact you if they need to return home.

Medical Needs and SEND

The nature of our school means that our pupils often have medical needs, social, emotional or mental health needs, or special educational needs and disabilities. Where these needs impact on attendance, we will work with families, the pupil's SEN Caseworker and the SEND professionals at the Local Authority to identify and overcome the barriers to attendance.

This starts with the universal offer of support for all pupils and leads to higher tiers of need where increasingly specialist support is required. We will consider reasonable adjustments. We will liaise with appropriate services to ascertain support in the rare instances that a pupil is unable to access any education inside the school setting.

Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we may seek medical information to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision. This may take a variety of forms, which we will discuss with parents/carers on an individual basis.

Where pupils have an EHCP, we will liaise closely with the pupil's SEN Caseworker to work towards the best attendance outcomes for the pupil.

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with, the pupil and their parents/carers.

Definitions of Leave

We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised by the Headteacher due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carer, such as:

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carer to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Coding is always at the Headteacher's discretion. They will use guidance from the Government (DfE) to make their decision.

Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their pupil out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers

agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted at least one week before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form (Appendix 2) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their pupil out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term-Time Leave Request Form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Exceptional circumstances

(*definition of exceptional*: *rare, unavoidable, short*)

Will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

Absence Due to Sporting Activities

Attendance at sporting events as a spectator or supporter will not be authorised. Training camps should be organised for during the school holidays. Absence to attend competitions will be assessed on an individual basis and information from the sport's national governing body may be requested to assist with the school's decision-making process.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, and the school does not know where the pupil is, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education.

After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us. During this 20-day period, school will continue to try and contact you and will liaise with any other services that your child is open to.

The Local Authority will conduct investigations into the location and educational provision of the child.

Appendix 1 – Registration Codes

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed.
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school.
P	Sporting Activity	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school.
V	Educational trip	A trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded or permanently exclusion.
I	Illness	Unable to attend school due to illness.
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.

R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave for Year 11 or 13 pupils for public exams.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when a pupil is a mobile child (compulsory school aged, of no fixed abode) and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday	The holiday was not authorised by the school.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late	Late, after register has closed.
These codes are not counted so will not affect a student's attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson.
Q	Unable to attend	Travel to school has not been organised
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure.
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not on Roll	For use when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining.
#	School Closed to Pupils	Whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Appendix 2 - Term-time Leave Request Form

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Parent/Carer,

All schools by law must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance relating to school attendance. They must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code, and follow the criteria set out within the guidance. The statutory guidance states:

- A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance
- A leave of absence must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with
- Schools must judge each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request
- Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school
- A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance
- A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted
- Where this guidance refers to a parent, the school and/or local authority will need to decide which adult(s) is most appropriate. Generally, parents include:
    - All natural parents, whether they are married or not
    - All those who have parental responsibility
    - Those who have day to day responsibility for the child

Please note all schools are expected to regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

There is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold
A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by all schools in England, this is: • 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period • These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence • For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold • The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?
• Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school • For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be: • £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days • If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be: • £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court • Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500 • Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child; a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below *(further information can be attached if required).*

Pupil's full name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Pupil's full address and postcode	

First date of absence	
Last date of absence	
Date of return to school	
Number of school days absent	

Please be aware, as per our school's attendance policy and the Local Authority's published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the Headteacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the parent the child normally lives with; and
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

Please also note that, if on the rare occasion circumstances are deemed exceptional by the Headteacher, the duration your child is permitted to be away from school may only be determined by the Headteacher.

Reason for request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional (Further details may be attached to this form)

If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please detail their name/s and which school/s they attend below
Pupil's name, name of school and school telephone number:

Full name of person making request (note requests must be made by a parent who the pupil normally lives with)	
Relationship to child	
Full address and postcode (if different from child's above)	
Signature	
Date	

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time - School Response

Dear	
Copy sent to	

Re: Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Date of response from school	
Date application received by school	

Pupil's full name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Pupil's full address and postcode	
Pupil's percentage attendance year to date	
Number of sessions absent this academic year (total)	
Number of which are authorised	
Number of which are unauthorised	

Has this pupil had any previously recorded unauthorised leave of absence?	
Was a Penalty Notice Fine requested as a result?	
Are you aware of any Penalty Notice Fines that the parents have previously received for this pupil and/or a sibling/child for whom they hold parental/day to day care and responsibility?	

School response to parent/s request for leave of absence

Number of requested sessions authorised	
Number of requested sessions unauthorised	
Date pupil required to return to school	

Headteacher Signature	
Headteacher Name	
Date	