

Attendance Policy



Saffron Valley Collegiate

Last reviewed: September 2023

To be reviewed: Autumn 2024

Mission Statement

The Saffron Valley Collegiate seeks to provide a personalised educational experience that identifies and responds to the circumstances and needs of each individual child or young person. In doing so, it enables them to progress academically and become successful learners through the re-engagement of the young person with education.

EQUALITIES STATEMENT:

All who work at the Saffron Valley Collegiate are committed to the celebration of diversity, and the challenging of disadvantage and discrimination, in all of its forms.

These values are explicit to the ethos of the Saffron Valley Collegiate and implicit in all policies and practices.

Introduction

Ref:

- *School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (DfE May 2022)*
- *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE May 2022)*
- *Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)*

The Saffron Valley Collegiate recognises the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to pupil progress. For many of the pupils at SVC, irregular patterns of attendance in the past have only served to compound their educational problems and increase their level of disaffection. We therefore place great emphasis on the need to encourage and support full attendance.

We aim to be consistent, persistent and patient in our approach to improving attendance.

Expectations

We aim to:

- Help overcome past 'habits' of avoiding attendance as a coping strategy;
- Ensure that all students receive their maximum entitlement to education and success;
- Fully involve parents/carers in the task of improving their son/daughter's attendance, where there are concerns;
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their own attendance and to maintain a full attendance record in order to get the most benefit from their time at school;
- Re-establish the norm of daily attendance;
- Help students to gain the most benefit from their time in education and to protect them from the hazards of non-attendance.

Punctuality

Punctuality to school and all lessons is as important as regular attendance. Registration times at SVC may differ between provisions. Pupils arriving up to 30 minutes after registration will be registered with a late mark. The registers will then be closed.

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed will be allocated a U code. This equates to an absent mark. The school will challenge pupils receiving repeated U codes.

Parental Responsibility

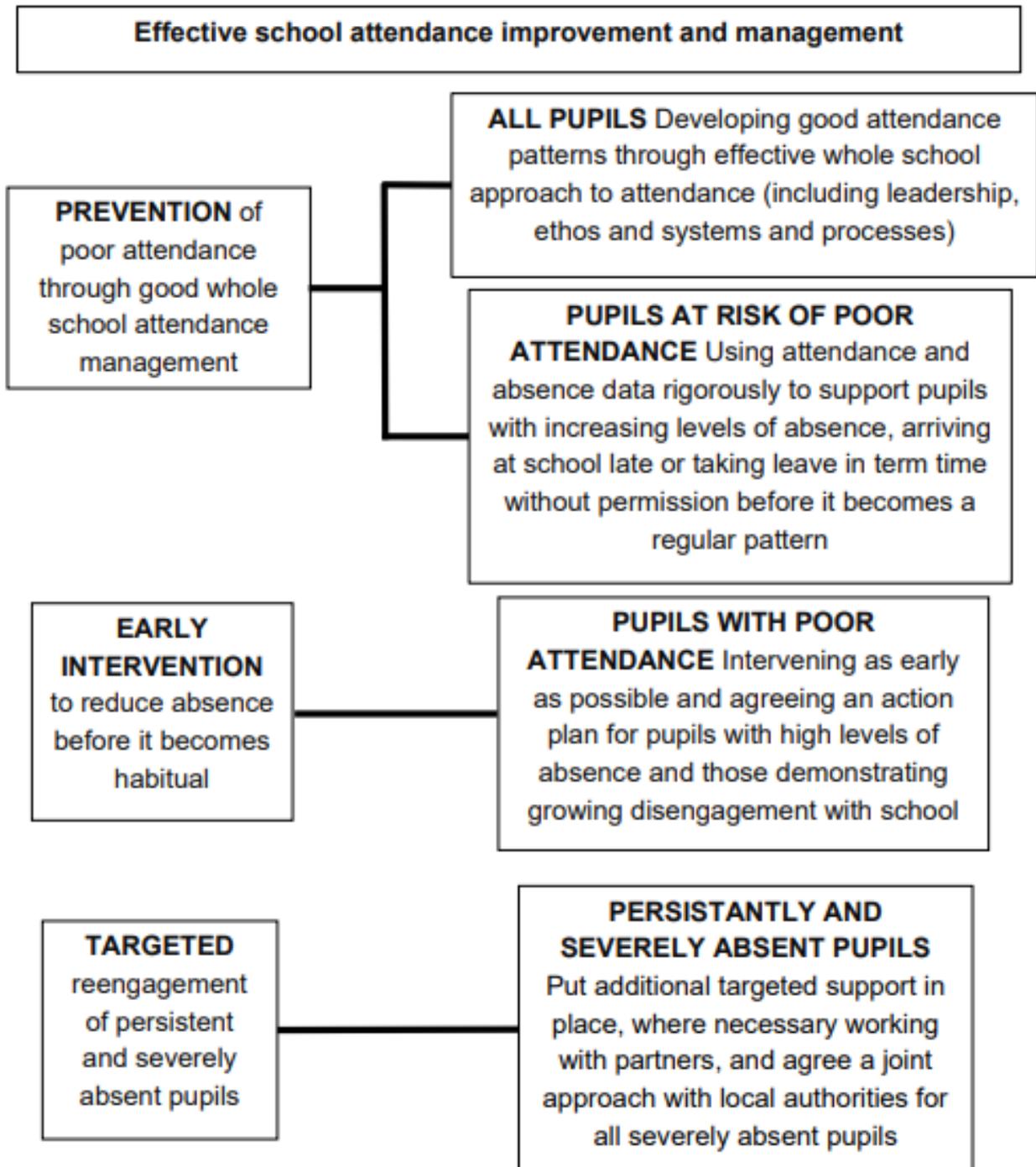
The government expects parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer (NOT students) to:

- Contact the PRU on the morning of the first day of absence, and everyday thereafter;
- Ensure that all absences are accounted for by cooperating with staff seeking to establish reasons for non-attendance, in a timely manner;
- Minimise instances of absence due to appointments by, (wherever possible,) scheduling these in school holidays, after school, or towards the beginning or end of the school day;
- Provide advance warning of appointments that will result in school absence.

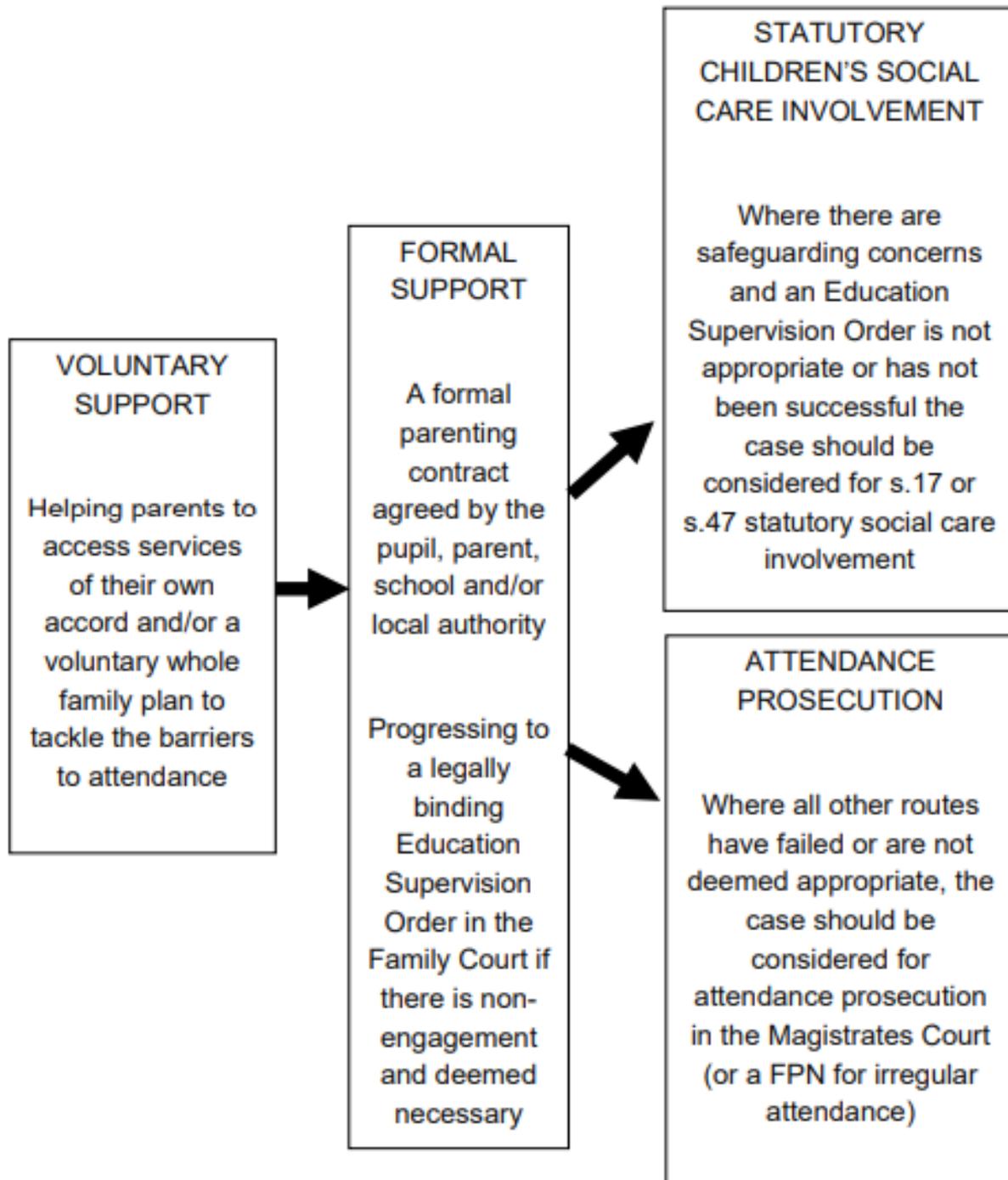
Our Approach

(From Working together to improve school attendance, DfE May 2022)



An Offer of Support and Challenge

(From Working together to improve school attendance, DfE May 2022)



What this looks like at SVC

Prevention

Creating an environment that promotes our ethos: Ready, Respectful, Safe
Build strong pupil/staff relationships – tutors/designated staff – boundaried care
Communication to clearly outline attendance and punctuality expectations from induction onwards
Appropriate sharing of information, to ensure the needs of pupils are understood and addressed
Learning experiences that acknowledge and cater for pupils' special educational needs
Parental meetings
Weekly attendance reports sent home
Creative, vibrant and relatable lessons that students want to attend
Pre-set topics so that pupils know what to expect in their learning journey
Rewards for great attendance
Breakfast clubs

Early Intervention – Voluntary Support

Supported transport to school (e.g. school minibus pick up)
Informal discussions, e.g. coffee mornings
Solution focused staff meetings, with a trauma informed approach – use of case discussion
Regular, meaningful communication with pupils and parents/carers
Supportive meetings to establish nature of barriers to regular attendance/punctualities, acknowledging that issues may be complex and involve multiple elements
Measures to support pupils to catch up with work missed
Development of safety plans
Support from Early Intervention/Taskforce Family Workers
Support from the wider Taskforce Team
Involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)
Maintaining and sharing records of progress, or otherwise
Rewarding progress

Targeted – Formal Support

Referral to Education Welfare Officer
Attendance parenting contract
Involvement of relevant external agencies, social workers, CAMHS etc.
Personalised education programme to meet individual needs of student. Where this involves modified hours, this will always be time-limited and recorded in a document signed by the parent/carer. The aim will always be to work towards a full-time timetable, as soon as possible.
Offsite education (in exceptional cases)
After school lessons/online learning (in exceptional cases)

A trauma informed approach

Throughout our work with young people, we appreciate the need to support young people and their families with a recognition of their specific current needs and any past trauma they may have experienced. Issues may be complex and solutions may also require a multi-dimensional approach.

Supporting pupils with mental health/emotional wellbeing issues

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. Any associated anxiety about attending will be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance.

Where support offered is not engaged with, or where all other options have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate, we will work with the local authority to consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under our existing powers, in accordance with current guidance.

Authorised absence

The PRU is very clear about the circumstances under which absence can be authorised. See appendix: Absence and Attendance Codes.

Granting leave of absence during term time

Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider each application [for authorised leave of absence] individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Examples of circumstances where a leave of absence *may* be granted:

- A religious observance;
- Children of service personnel who are about to go on deployment;
- The funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling;
- Sudden loss of housing (up to a maximum of three days);
- Weddings of parents and siblings.

(This list is not exhaustive)

In each case, the Headteacher will consider the nature of the circumstance and the child's former attendance record when making a decision on the authorisation of extended leave. All applications for absence during term time must be made in advance. Absence due to emergencies will be coded in the usual manner. Leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

Parent/carers should note that they may be fined for taking a child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.

Taking pupils off roll

The Collegiate follows Local Authority procedures for removing pupils from a school roll, to safeguard our vulnerable cohort; this includes identifying young people identified as CME: children missing education.

Appendix: Absence and Attendance Codes

(School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, May 2022)

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at school

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

- Registration code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration.
- Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an approved off-site educational activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: dual registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: at an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised absence from school

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

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised absence from school

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.