SAFFRON VALLEY COLLEGIATE

BE READY, BE RESPECTFUL, BE SAFE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last review	**Summer Term 2026**
Review cycle	**Annual**
Policy due for review	**Summer Term 2027**

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

Reference:

- *Working together to improve school attendance (DfE August 2024)*
- *Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)*

Saffron Valley Collegiate (SVC) recognises the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to student progress. For many of the students 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. Students arriving up to 30 minutes after registration will be registered with a late mark. The registers will then be closed.

Students 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 students receiving repeated 'U' codes and work with them to improve their punctuality.

Parental Responsibility

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

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

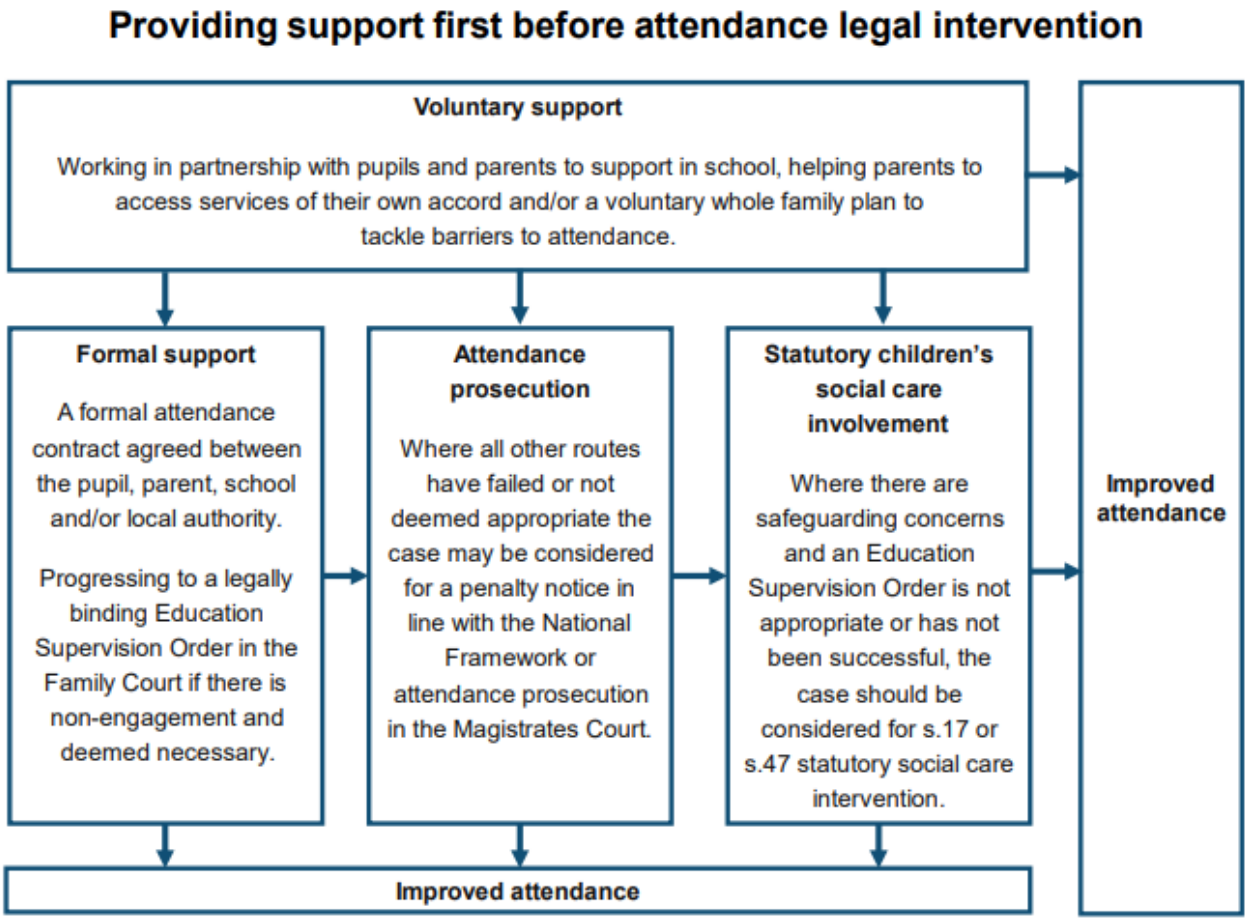
- Contact SVC on the morning of the first day of absence, and everyday thereafter.
- Ensure that all absences are accounted for by cooperating with staff seeking to establish reasons for non-attendance, in a timely manner.
- Minimise instances of absence due to appointments by, (wherever possible) scheduling 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

Working in Partnership

We believe that the best way to ensure excellent attendance is through an effective partnership with parents and carers. We understand the challenges many young people and families face around school attendance and want to work together to support our young people in overcoming these challenges. We are able to offer guidance and signposting to wider support, as well as a range of internal options that can help secure the highest levels of attendance possible. All our attendance interventions are designed to facilitate all parties being involved, supported and significant in the process of improving and maintaining high levels of attendance.

Providing Support First Before Attendance Legal Intervention

(From Working together to improve school attendance, DfE August 2024)



What this looks like at SVC

Prevention

- Creating an environment that promotes our ethos: ***Ready, Respectful, Safe***
- Build strong student/staff relationships – tutors/designated staff
- Communication to clearly outline attendance and punctuality expectations from induction onwards
- Appropriate sharing of information, to ensure the needs of students are understood and addressed
- Learning experiences that acknowledge and cater for students' 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 students know what to expect in their learning journey
- Rewards for great attendance
- Breakfast clubs

Early Intervention – Voluntary Support

- Solution focused staff meetings, with a trauma informed approach – use of case discussion
- Regular, meaningful communication with students 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 students 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)

This list is not exhaustive

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 students 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 students 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
WSVC 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
Leave of absence will only be authorised by the Headteacher 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/carers 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 students off roll
SVC follows Local Authority procedures for removing students 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

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 and their legal definitions can be found in Chapter 8 of the Working Together to Improve Attendance Document). These should be used at all times and any queries about coding need to be referred to the Attendance Champion.