

**Seaford Head School**

Achieving Excellence Together



# Attendance Policy

**Staff Responsible for the Policy:**

Assistant Headteacher Standards

**Recommended Review Period:**

One Year

**Date for Review:**

September 2023

## Excellent Attendance at School leads to outstanding education and outcomes.

At Seaford Head School, we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve their best. For our students to be able to gain the most from their education it is vital they attend school, on time, every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. We expect all students to be aiming for 100% attendance.

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning, self-esteem and friendships. Ensuring your child's regular attendance is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Seaford Head School without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

Seaford Head School expect all parents/carers to promote good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this the school will:

- Give you details on attendance in our termly school newsletter.
- Report to you throughout the academic year on how your child is performing in school and what their attendance percentage is.
- Celebrate good attendance by sharing house achievements and individual achievements.
- Promote student attendance through tutor time activities and assemblies and whole school challenges
- Award termly house points to students, 6 House Points for 100%, 3 House Points for 96% to 99.9%, 1 House Points a week for 100% a message is also sent home to parent/carers informing them of the achievement.

Every absence from school must be supported with a letter or email addressed to the Attendance Officer.

Students will not be allowed to sign out from school for medical appointments without a note or appointment card.

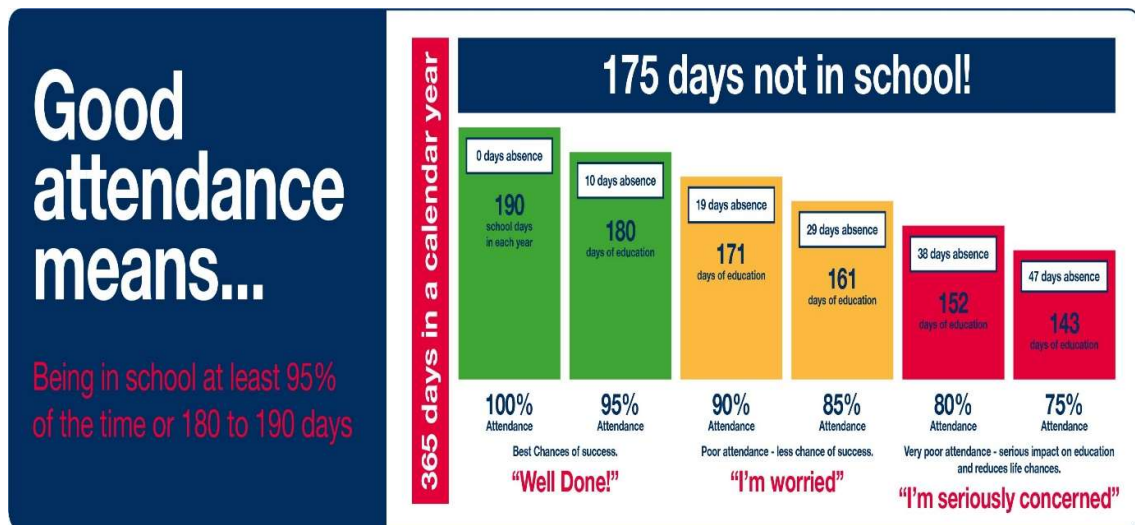
Students with on-going medical conditions may have an Individual Health Care Plan in place that outlines reasonable adjustments to a student's timetable where current medical evidence to support this is in place.

Regular days off ill will be challenged by the school, Medical evidence will be required, and this could be a doctor's note, hospital letter or prescription that supports the medical absence or illness. Lack of medical evidence for these days off will lead to Seaford Head School unauthorising the absence, this may then lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. High levels of unauthorised absence can lead to the involvement of the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school after registration has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other siblings or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time – trips and holidays should not be taken during term time. Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.

<u>Attendance during school year</u>	<u>Equates to Days Absent</u>	<u>Which Is approximately</u>	<u>Which means the number of lessons missed</u>
94%	10 days	2 weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	250 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	340 lessons



A student becomes a “**persistent absentee**” when they miss 10% (19 days) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level may have considerable damage to any student’s educational prospects and we need parents/carers’ full support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absentee mark or is at risk of moving towards it, Parents will be invited in for an Attendance meeting, these students are tracked and monitored carefully through our regular attendance mentoring. Students are also likely to be involved in other interventions where absence affects attainment.

- 96% to 93% - Student mentored by their Tutor and also seen by the Attendance officer
- 92.9% to 90% - student seen by Attendance Officer and/or Head of Year. Parent also may be invited into school for a meeting to discuss Attendance and how the school can help. Penalty fine process may be started.
- 90% to 85% - second meeting held to discuss progress. Educational Welfare Officer will also be asked to be involved on certain cases. ESBAS referral may also be started for certain cases.
- 85% and below - ESBAS referral submitted with parental support. Students/Parents who have had Penalty Fines for non-attendance may now have court proceedings started against them.

If a student is absent it is the parent/carer’s responsibility to:

- Contact us by 8.15am on the absence line or via Edulink every day of your child’s absence. Please leave the students full name, Tutor group and brief reason for absence. If no reason is given the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you will be contacted asking for more details.

If a student is absent we will:

- Send a message via Edulink/Text/phone/Email to the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Carry out a Home Visit if the school has not seen a student for a period of time.
- If absence persists your child’s Head of Year and/or the Attendance Officer will contact you to invite you in for a meeting to discuss this.
- Medical evidence will also be requested for 3 separate absences of for absences of 3 days or more

### Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss essential work, late arriving students also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the student and also encourage absence. Students who are late to school before registration closes will receive a 20 min lunchtime detention, if they are late after Registration they will be given a 1hr Afterschool detention and will be expected to make up every hour missed in school. At 9.20am the registers will be closed.

The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect all students to be in Tutor bases/lessons at that time. Students should aim to be at the school by 8.40am and line up for Roll Call at 8.45am, students will be classified as late if they arrive after 8.45am.

Registers are marked immediately and submitted by Tutors/teachers by 8.55am. A student will receive a late mark if they are not in Tutor/period 1 by 8.50am. All students arriving after 8.45am will be required to sign in with the Attendance Officer/Assistant Head of Year via reception.

Parents will be notified via a letter of the schools concern around their child's lateness to school.

### **Lost minutes = Lost learning**



### **Withdrawals from Learning in Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking your child away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and at Seaford Head School, holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example a parent/carer in the forces being deployed for a tour of duty overseas. Holidays taken in Term Time will have Penalty Fines Issued against them.

If there are very exceptional circumstances the school may authorise a leave of absence – in these circumstances the parent/carer should apply using the Withdrawal from Learning Form available from the schools website and be emailed or sent into the Attendance Officer. All applications in these exceptional circumstances must be made in advance. In making a decision the School will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of absence in term time.

## Expectation for students

Irregular attendance means that students will miss out on aspects of the educational experience on offer at Seaford Head School.

Students need to understand that if they are absent or late they will not get access to their entitlement of learning for success. Furthermore, their development of their social skills, key learning skills and their ability to achieve academically will be severely compromised. Students should:

- Aim for 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine illness
- Arrive at school by 8.40am in time for Roll Call at 8.45am and Tutor/Period 1 at 8.50am and be punctual to every lesson
- Register at the Attendance office/student services if they are late into school.
- Communicate with individual teachers and catch up on work missed during the period of absence

The role of the School's Attendance Officer is to help the school improve attendance and meet the needs of children and young people by supporting, advising them and their families using a range of different tools, i.e. group mentoring, liaising with outside agencies, informing parents/carers of their rights and responsibilities in relation to regular school attendance and the process of legal proceedings in relation to non-school attendance.

They also help the school develop appropriate strategies in partnership with other agencies to maintain and/or improve levels of attendance to help ensure the school's performance indicators and targets are met. The Attendance Officer works together with Heads of Year, Student Services and the Education Welfare Officer on a weekly basis to ensure consistency with student attendance.

Attendance Officer – Mrs Joanne Owen [joanneowen@seafordhead.org](mailto:joanneowen@seafordhead.org)

Absence [@seafordhead.org](mailto:@seafordhead.org)

Absence telephone number – 01323 872728

## Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)

## Summary

The School has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure their child attends and arrives on time. All Seaford Head staff are committed to working with parents/carers and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## Legislative Framework for School Attendance and Absence

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of parents of excluded pupils, schools/ academies and the LA is set out in a succession of acts, regulations and other guidance.

Education Act 1996 Under Section 7 of the Act: the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have, this can be by regular attendance at school, or otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child themselves). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend the school regularly the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. In addition, if it can be proved that a parent knew of the child's non-attendance and failed to act, then they may be found guilty under Section 444(1 A). This offence (known as the higher or aggravated offence) can lead to a warrant being issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction may result in a higher level fine and/or a custodial sentence.

On 6 April 2017, in the case of Isle of Wight Council v Platt [2017] UKSC 28, the Supreme Court ruled that the word 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.'

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents> The Act added two new sections (444A and 444B) to the Education Act. It introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444; the issuing of penalty notices is governed by:

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2007/1045/contents/made>  
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/contents/made>

Children Act 1989 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/36>

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/16>

Education and Inspections Act 2006 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2013)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/regulation/2/made>