

# Sandfield Close Primary School

## Attendance Policy 2025-2026



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<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	September 2026	Smita Lad	Signed:	Date:
<b>Ratified by Governing Body:</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026		Signed:	Date:

## **Introduction**

At Sandfield Close Primary School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our culture and ethos that values good attendance, including by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. As a school we will work closely with the Education Welfare Service to support regular school attendance. Our School Attendance policy is written to reflect the law and also the guidance produced by the Department of Education.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

## **Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities**

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.

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. (Working to Improve Attendance Guidance – August 2024)

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

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

### **To help us all to focus on this we will**

- Celebrate good attendance during termly Attendance Assemblies awarding certificates and badges to children who have obtained 100% attendance for the term.
- Celebrate good attendance each week by awarding the class with the best attendance for the week with the best class attendance trophy

### **Understanding types of absence**

By law, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

### **Authorised Absences**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

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

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (i.e. condoned absence)
- truancy during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark i.e. arriving to school after 8.40am
- shopping, looking after other children, birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- keeping one child off school who is not ill because another child in the family is ill

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance will be addressed by the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to

give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

The school will consider giving fines when there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period.

*“If your child has unauthorised leave of absence you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £80 per parent per child (increased to £160 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days,) or your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court.”*

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents’/carers’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

All persistent absences are identified and monitored carefully. All pupils who fall into the PA category are also automatically made known to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Severe Absenteeism (SA)**

A pupil becomes a ‘severely absentee’ when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level indicates that the child faces significant challenges to their education and will require additional support and intervention by working with the family.

We monitor all of our pupils attendance carefully to identify pupils who are severely absent, persistent absent or at risk of persistent absence and we will work with the family to address these issues. If we are concerned about your child’s attendance, we will contact you to discuss potential barriers, identify issues, signpost and offer support in the first instance.

Similarly, pupils with Medical Conditions/SEND will be offered the same level of support to reduce their absenteeism but may be offered additional support and adjustments in accordance to their Health Care Plan/EHCP

### **Absence Procedures**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence by 9.00am at the latest by email [office@sandfieldclose.leicester.sch.uk](mailto:office@sandfieldclose.leicester.sch.uk) or telephone (voicemail available) leaving a clear message stating the child’s name, class and reason for the absence.

#### **If your child is absent and we have not heard from you we will:**

- Telephone you in the first instance to clarify the reason for absence.

- Send you a Parentmail text asking you to contact the school URGENTLY to give us a reason to why your child isn't in school if we do NOT receive a reason for your child's absence
- If we have not heard from you by 9.00am, we will telephone the other contact numbers you have provided.
- Follow Appendix 1 on the first day of absence and on subsequent days if we have not heard from you.

### **Monitoring Absence**

- Phone you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence. Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Admin Officer.
- Send out low attendance letters every half term where a child's attendance is 95% or below.
- Refer the matter to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance is a concern and have a meeting in school.
- Conduct panel meeting with our Educational Welfare Officer will all parents where a child's attendance is a cause for concern.
- In some circumstances, if your child is absent from school and has not been seen, we will arrange for a visit to your home to be undertaken to establish that your child is safe. This visit could be undertaken by school staff, our Educational Welfare Officer and in some cases a Police Officer.

### **Telephone numbers/Parentmail**

There are times when we need to contact parents about a variety of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. Remember to inform the School Office if you change your mobile/telephone number by visiting the School Office and completing a Data Collection Sheet. Please also remember to update your Parentmail account.

### **Our Education Welfare Officer**

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Parents/carers may wish to contact our EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority on 0116 4545510. They can also be reached by e-mailing: [education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@leicester.gov.uk).

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at **8.30am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

If your child arrives at school after 8.40am, they will be given a late mark.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after 9.00am they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child is regularly late we will send later letters home so you know how many times your child has been late and why it is a concern. If this continues you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher/Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem. You can approach us at any time if you are having problem getting your child to school on time.

Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. (Working to Improve Attendance Guidance – August 2024)

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Sandfield Close Primary School does not authorise any holiday leave during school term time.

### **Request for Leave during term time**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. At Sandfield Close Primary School, we will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. As Headteachers should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday even if this includes visiting family or attending family events.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, by filling out our leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The Headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Please do not book flight tickets before completing the leave of absence form.

For any requests that are more than 20 days, the Local Authority has advised that a Penalty Notice is unlikely to be issued and the matter is likely to proceed to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution action instead.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence may** include:

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

### **Penalty Notices**

There is now a new National Framework for Penalty Notices which came into effect from August 2024.

We will consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate when a pupil reaches the national threshold on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

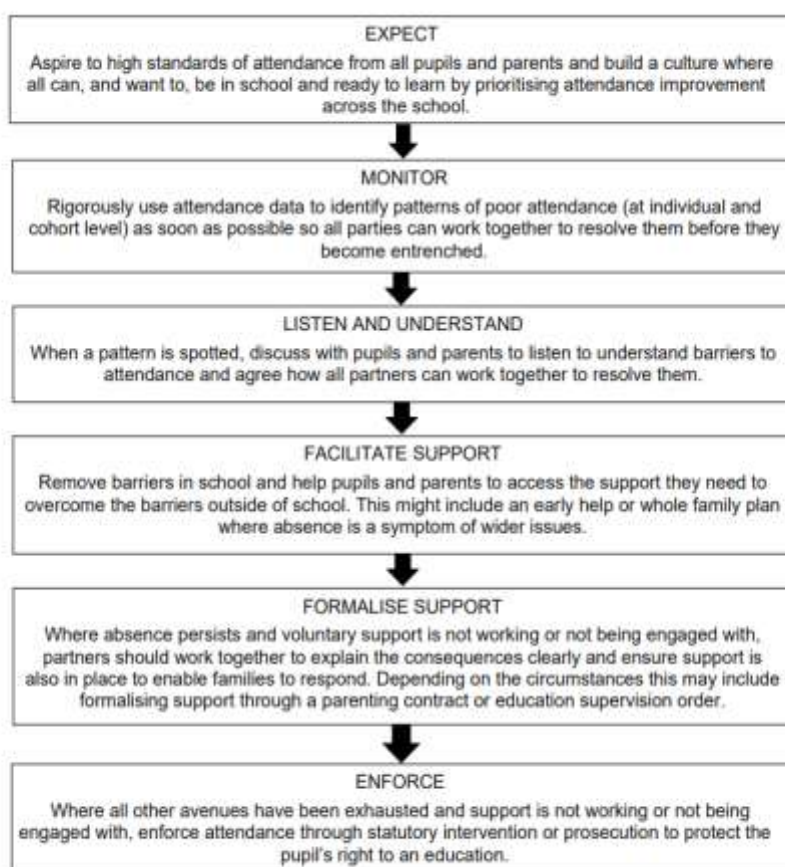
A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met

for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives**

We monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This will go beyond headline attendance percentages and will look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality)



across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Our school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Our target for 2025 - 2026 is **95%+ attendance with no unauthorised absence**

### **The registration system**

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records.

### **Security of registers**

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

### **These people support attendance matters in school:**

Mrs Panna Tailor, Office Administrator

Mrs Smita Lad, Headteacher/DSL

Mrs Lilian Reading, Deputy Headteacher/DSL

Mrs Samantha Heselton SENDCO/DSL

Ms Harvey Kaur, Education Welfare Officer

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Sandfield Close Primary School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2025
- KCSIE September 2025
- Working to Improve Attendance Guidance August 2024
- LA and Maintained Schools Protocols on the Management of Children Missing Education September 2023
- DfE Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Schools
- Policy and Practice Guide for School on Absent Pupils and Safe and Well Checks September 2023

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Sandfield Close Primary School Attendance Procedure**

1. Registration closes at 8.40am
2. Listen to absence calls, read absence emails
3. Bring together registers, lates, and absence calls to ascertain children absent with no explanation.
4. Make first absence calls for children with no explanation.
5. Inform Headteacher of any vulnerable children who are absent.
6. Text parent/carer via Parentmail using absence template if we still have no explanation.
7. If no response is given from parent/carer by 9.00am proceed to step 8.
8. Call everyone on the contact list until you get an answer/reason for absence.
9. Overseas tone – make a note of the date and time of the call store on Sims.net. Inform Headteacher or Educational Welfare Officer so a home visit can be arranged and a calling card dropped through letterbox.
10. If you have not received a response by 12:00 noon arrangements for a home visit should be made by the Headteacher. If no response a calling card should be left requesting the parent to make contact with the school urgently. (Appendix 2)
11. If the Headteacher cannot get an answer refer the matter directly to Social Services/Police requesting a welfare call. (Appendix 2)

**Leicestershire Police: 0116 2222222/101**

**Social Care: 0116 4541004**

**Appendix 2:**

**First Visit**



**SANDFIELD CLOSE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL


**Home visit Calling Card**

We visited your property today to conduct a welfare check but found that no one was home.

We need to speak to you urgently and would be grateful if you could make contact with the school ASAP on 0116 2660333.

Signed: ..... Date:  
.....

**Second Visit**



**SANDFIELD CLOSE**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Welfare Concern Calling Card**

We have previously visited your property on: ..... to a conduct a welfare check but found that no one was home.

We left a calling card for you to contact the school as a matter of urgency on 0116 2660333.

It is important that you contact the school in the next 24 hours or the Educational Welfare/Police/Social