



**Smith's Wood Primary  
Academy  
Attendance Policy  
2019-2020**



# **Smith's Wood Primary Academy Pupil Attendance Policy**

## **Introduction**

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

## **Aims**

- To improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment;
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential;
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff;
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life;
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life;
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies;
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning;
- provide trips and experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding;
- provide sessions which develop vocational skills, such as Forest School and our Skills Team initiative which teaches cookery, DIY, first aid and more
- support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children;
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

## **Legislative Framework**

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Education Authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

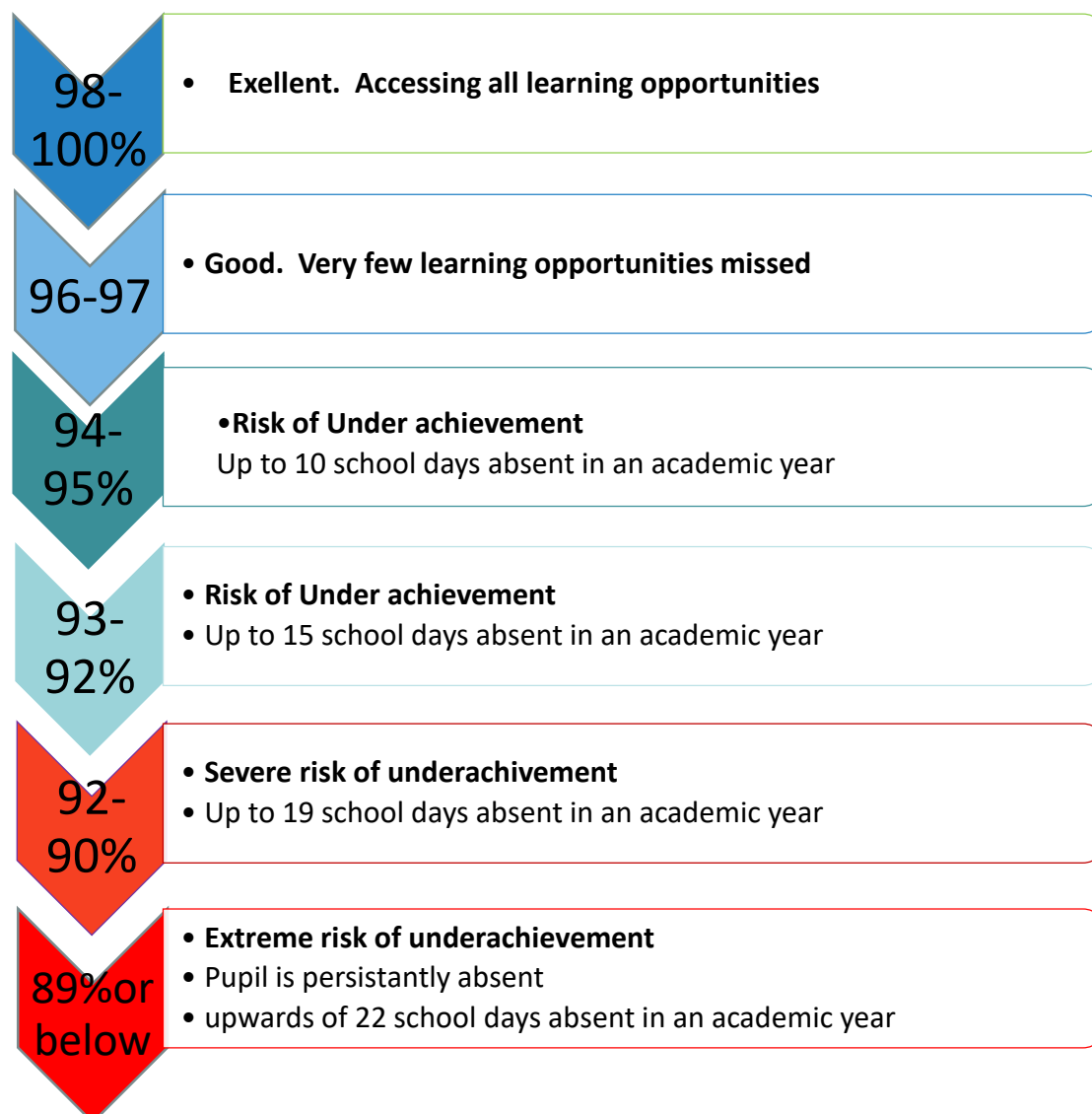
All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

## Expected Levels of Attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success.

At Smith's Wood Primary Academy, we expect all children to achieve attendance that is at least 96% (in line with the current National Average (2019)).

We expect children to be punctual and be in school by 8:55.



## **Attendance Partnership Expectations**

### **We expect the following from all of our pupils:**

- To attend school regularly;
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day, having eaten breakfast or attend breakfast club;
- To tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### **We expect the following from parents and carers:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually;
- To ensure contact is made with school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their child is unable to attend;
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day, having eaten breakfast.

### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

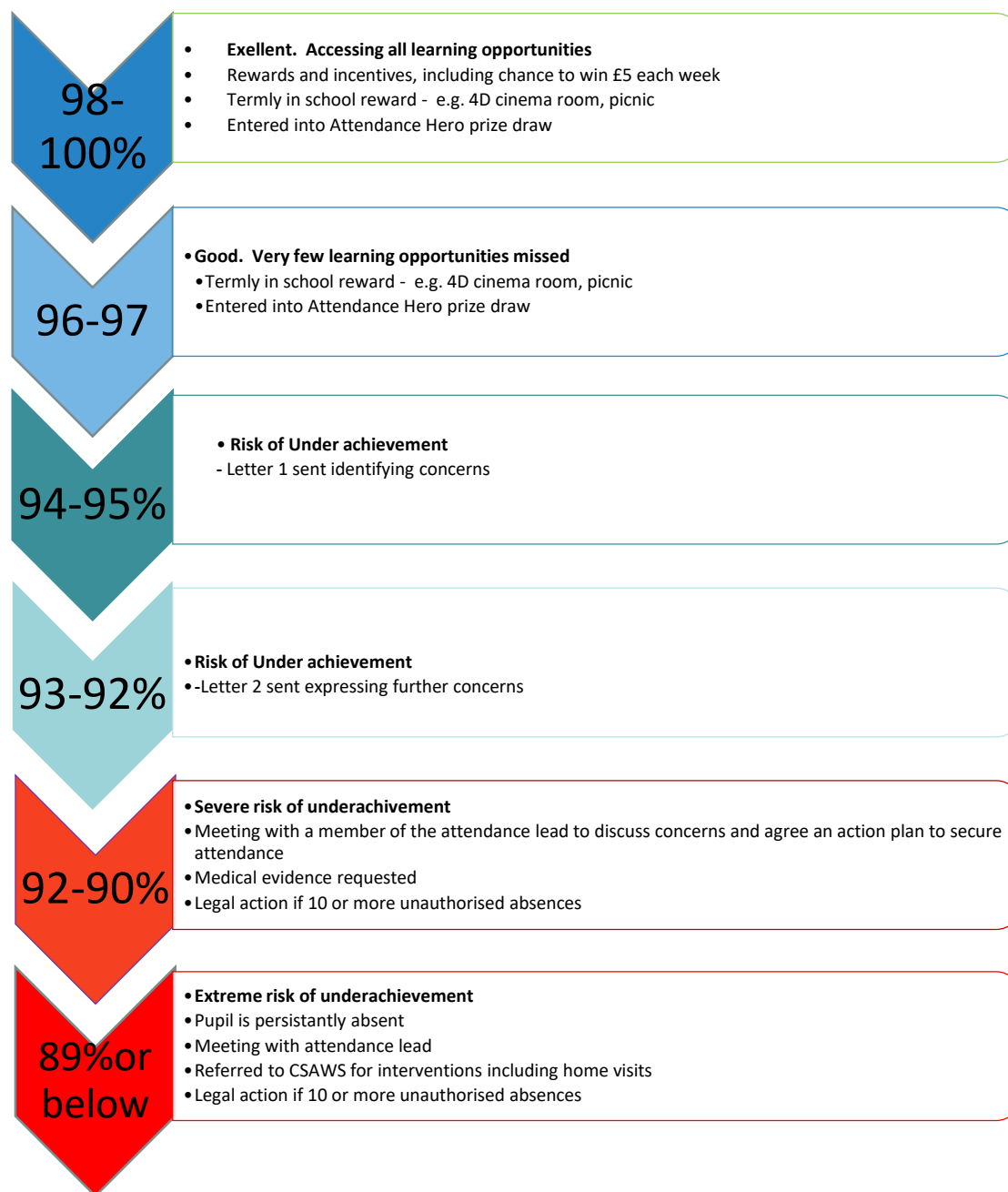
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Regular reports to parents regarding their child's attendance level;
- Early intervention from the attendance leader and CSAWS team when necessary;
- Follow up support if needed.

## **Roles and Responsibilities for attendance**

- Smith's Wood Primary Academy has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of school staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have responsibility for attendance issues in school. For detailed roles and responsibilities please see appendix 6
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team.
- Attendance issues are reported, on a minimum termly basis, to the Governing Body.
- School uses Central School Attendance and Welfare Service Ltd (CSAWS) to support the school with the processes associated with children's attendance at school. School employ CSAWS to provide the legal monitoring services and support that will help reduce the number of persistent absent pupils and improve whole school attendance.
- We believe that through attending school every day on time children and young people will get the best possible start in life.

## Procedures

We will adhere to the following process for rewarding attendance and addressing attendance concerns of all pupils.



Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, a number of unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised, a referral may be made straight to CSAWS. Referrals will be made to the Education Enforcement team for the issue of penalty notices where pupils have 10 or more unauthorised absences.

## **Absence**

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30am school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given.

School staff will send text messages to parents to ascertain a reason for the child absence from school.

If staff are concerned about a child's absence or there is no response to text messages, they will follow the process in detailed in Appendix 1. This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits, referrals to the CSAWS Attendance and Welfare Officer and to the police for a safe and well check.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2019)

**It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school.**

**Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per child ( KCSIE 2019) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.**

### **Illness:**

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school they should follow the above absence process.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

School will challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing addition services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

**The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:**

- Attendance is less than 92%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- There is a pattern in days off, which are reported as illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

**Medical appointments**

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day, only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment.

Parents are required to provide a copy of the appointment letter prior to the day of the appointment.

**Other reasons for absences:**

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

**Religious Observance**

School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. However, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Religious bodies maybe contacted to verify these occasions.

**Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must advise school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

School will authorise absence of Traveller children if their parent(s) are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to and has given indication that they intend to return.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence (exceptional circumstances)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### **Procedure for requesting a planned absence:**

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 2) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office (Appendix 2). There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher .
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (*appendix 3 : model pro forma*)

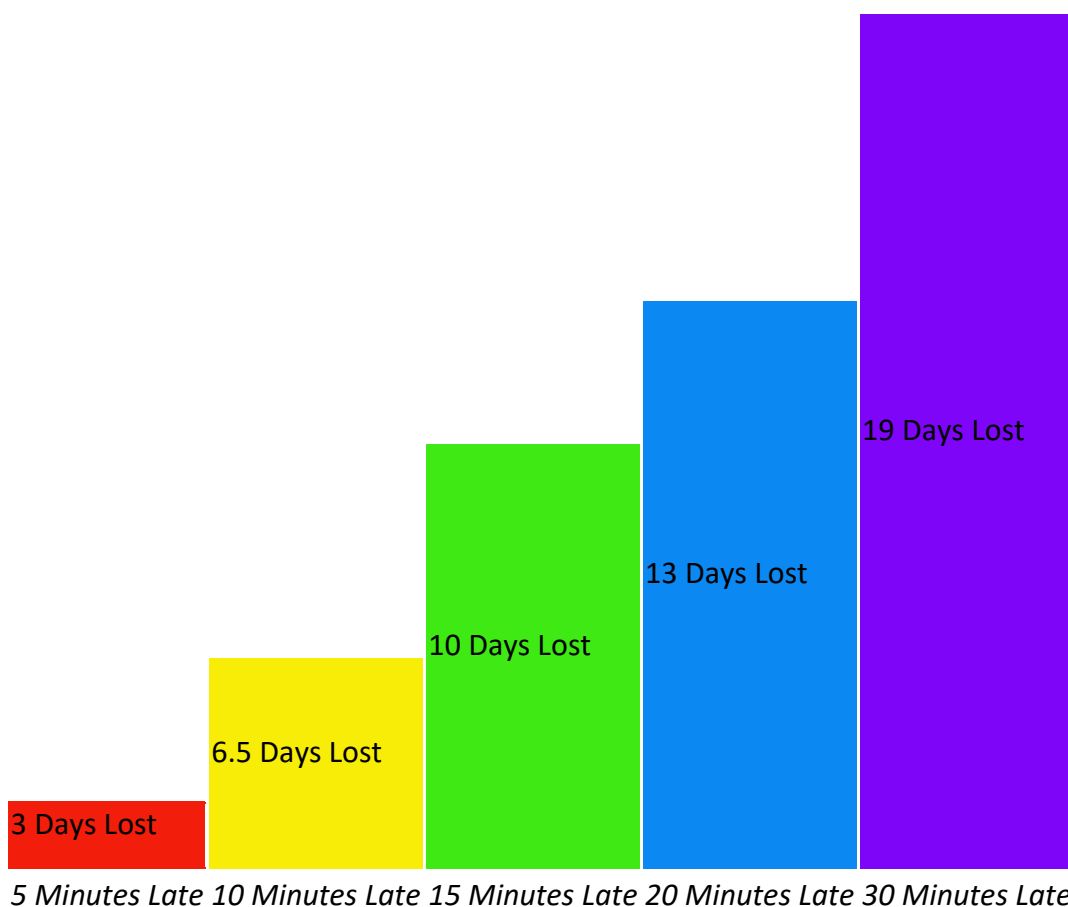


- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 4) must be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every-day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



(Over one academic year)

To access the most of the school day we ask parents to ensure that their children are in school at 8:45.

Children arriving after 8.55 am will be late for school and have to report to the school office.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes, this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 8.55am

The registers are monitored daily in order to identify pupils who are arriving late and those who have regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable. Pupils who have 10 or more U codes will be referred to the Education Enforcement Team for the issue of a penalty notice.

### **Reintegration of Long Term Absentees**

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of students learning, and positive strategies should be employed to minimise such effects.

#### Key Principles

- We should always keep in touch with a student/and his/her family during a long absence.
- We should always make sure he/she is welcomed back
- We should never make sarcastic comments about an absence – a thoughtless word can destroy hours of work by staff.

Head Teacher and SENCO to consider a phased return where appropriate. This needs to be considered in line with the Solihull LA process and procedure, which includes seeking expert advice from relevant professionals and co ordinating a multi-agency meeting. Consideration needs to be given to any special needs the pupil may have and appropriate support identified. Consideration must be given to a package of support which may include providing a mentor (staff member/student)

Class Teachers should ensure that the pupil feels welcomed back to school in an appropriate way and take any necessary steps to support their re-integration.

### **Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from

education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended). Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **Alternative Education Providers**

On rare occasions, a small number of pupils may be accessing an alternative education provider agreed by the school for all or part of their timetable. In this instance the pupil remains on roll at Smith's Wood Primary Academy. Attendance to approved alternative providers is monitored and reflected on school registers. The responsibility of ensuring pupils are safeguarded and receiving appropriate education remains with Smith's Wood Primary Academy.

### **Registers**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations

Every half day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence can be given only when the head teacher has either approved in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the head teacher [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No.2006/1751) – reg 7(1)].

There are procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks. School complies with and uses the DFE Compulsory National Attendance Codes to categorise absence (Appendix 5).

### **Use of Attendance Data**

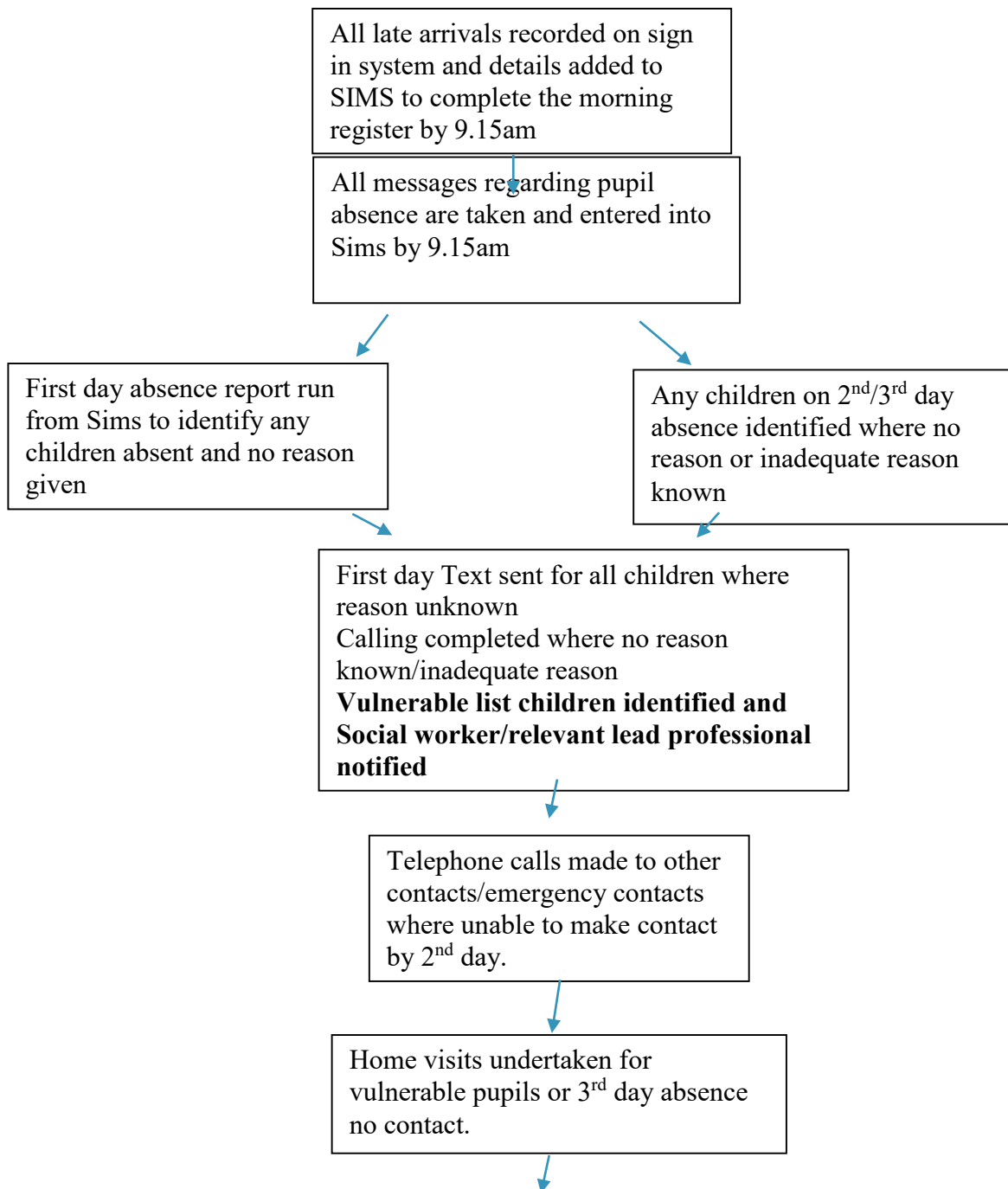
All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Where there is cause for concern, this information is shared with CSAWS during regular attendance meetings held at school. CSAWS then follow up attendance concerns with parents and carers on school's behalf.

## Appendix 1

### School Absence Procedure



Cases identified for discussion/referral to Attendance and Welfare Officer or police safe and well check.

## Appendix 2                      SCHOOL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice

**Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.**

Name of Pupil .....	Class .....
Date of birth .....	
<p>Please detail below the <b>exceptional circumstance</b> why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the <i>Headteacher</i>. (please attaché your supporting evidence)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	
Address.....	
Leave of absence from date:..... to date .....	
Number of schools days that your child will be absent from school .....	
Signature .....	Date .....
Name of Parent/Carer .....	

**Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.**

**For School Use:**

Previous requests for leave of absence .....	Yes / No	Attendance
..... %		
Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance	Yes / No	
Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer .....	Yes / No	Date & time
.....		

Authorised

Unauthorised

By Headteacher

**Appendix 3** Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter

**Authorised Exceptional Leave of Absence Standard Letter**

TO THE PARENTS OF:-

Dear Parents

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

I write to confirm that on this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Requests for leave of absence are never taken lightly and in making this decision I have accepted your reason and evidence for the exceptional circumstance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

cc Class Teacher/File

Appendix 4 – Unauthorised Leave of absence letter templates

**Template Letter 3**

*(insert full Name of Parent Applying)  
Insert Full Address)*

Dear *(individual Parent)*,

**Child:**                                      **DOB:**                                      **Class:**

**Dates applied for:**                                      **to**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form in respect of the above Pupil.

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence.

**Section 444 of the Education Act 1996** states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

This means that children are expected to attend school every day unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable, such as illness.

I have carefully considered your request and do not accept that the absence is unavoidable.

If you decide to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* will be marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences will be referred to Solihull Council and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File



*Template Letter 4*

*(insert full Name of other parent )*

*Insert Full Address)*

Dear *(individual Parent)*,

**Child:**

**DOB:**

**Class:**

**Dates applied for:**                      **to**

We have recently received a leave of absence request form in respect of the above Pupil from *(insert name of parent making the request)*

On this occasion I am unable to authorise your child's leave of absence.

**Section 444 of the Education Act 1996** states that: If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence.

This means that children are expected to attend school every day unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable, such as illness.

I have carefully considered the request and do not accept that the absence is unavoidable.

If you decide to go ahead with the proposed leave of absence, *(name of child)* absence of *(how many sessions)* will be marked in the register as unauthorised. These unauthorised absences will be referred to Solihull Council and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to each parent. The Penalty Notice is a fine of up to £120 for failure to comply with the law on school attendance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

c.c. Class Teacher/File



## Appendix 5

### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Appendix 4

### Smith's Wood Primary Academy Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance

Name	Role	Responsibilities
Governor Representation	Schools Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (eg pupil registration, attendance registers)</li> <li>• Reviewing school attendance</li> <li>• Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy</li> </ul>
John Talbot Danielle Givens	Head Teacher Acting Head Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Data analysis and Strategic Plan for attendance.</li> <li>• Implementing school policy and leading on whole school approach.</li> <li>• Authorising/authorising absences</li> <li>• Leave of absence request</li> <li>• Line management</li> <li>• Contact with parents</li> <li>• Overview of clear and escalating interventions</li> <li>• Evaluation of interventions.</li> <li>• Promoting school attendance.</li> <li>• Responsibility for links with CSAWS and the LA Statutory Team.</li> <li>• Attendance at attendance panels</li> </ul>
Class Teachers	Class Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marking registers</li> <li>• Promoting importance of regular school's attendance</li> <li>• Providing early warning of attendance concerns</li> <li>• Positive role modelling</li> <li>• Following policy and procedures consistently.</li> </ul>
Sue Volante Victoria Hudson	School Office and Attendance Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining registers</li> <li>• First day calling/text messages</li> <li>• Identifying children whose absence needs further follow up action in line with the school absence procedure.</li> <li>• Late arrivals</li> <li>• Process for clearing registers</li> <li>• Administration of school attendance letters, leave of absence letters etc.</li> <li>• Producing attendance reports</li> <li>• Communication with CSAWS.</li> </ul>