



**Specialist Education**  
Support Network

George Johnson Education Centre

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**Date issued – September 2018**

**Review date – September 2019**

## **Purpose of the policy**

SESN believe that attendance and continuity is crucial to gain an effective, meaningful intervention where positive sustainable outcomes are achievable.

Our education provision, its curriculum and the range of opportunities available has been designed to inspire, raise aspirations and increase our student's desire to engage and succeed in their education.

SESN, its staff and partners all strive to create a safe, inclusive and sustainable learning environment where students as well as their families feel confident in attending our provision.

We believe that by working closely with the student, their families, parents, carers, supporting services and other schools we will encourage high expectations of attendance and commitment.

## **Statutory Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements.

At SESN we offer a number of placements which will determine the student's attendance. This will be agreed with the referring body i.e. the students current school or the local authority.

SESN will have a continual record of attendance throughout the academic day. Due to our transport partnership, offsite provisions and external activities attendance monitoring is a crucial element of safeguarding our students.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

*"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

*(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*

## **Aims of the policy**

Our aim is to establish a strong ethos within the provision to make our students feel included with a strong desire to engage within their education with us. We also aim to:

- To improve a student's overall attendance
- Gain an understanding of any underlining reasons for ongoing absences and attendance issues at our provision as well as their school.

- To engrain a positive attendance ethos within our communication with families, parents, carers and relevant services
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data and to share this with partner schools and relevant services.

## Roles of a Student

- It is expected that students maintain a high level of attendance.
- To be punctual at all times. This includes arriving on time to the agreed location for being collected by our transport provision and/or arriving at the school on time.
- Students must discuss any issues with a member of staff that are likely to cause regular absence.
- Students should feel comfortable to liaise with staff in supporting the non-attendance of other students where that student may be at risk or in danger.
- Students must gain an understanding of what authorised absences and non authorised absences are and the sanction put in place if regular absences occur.

## Roles of a Parent/Carer

Parents are expected to understand authorised absences and non authorised absences and what the implications/sanctions are for continual non authorised absences.

Parents and Carers have a responsibility to inform SESN of any issues in regards to their child's attendance as soon as possible. **A phone call must be made by 8.30am on the first day** of the child's absence to inform the school of their child's absences and the reason for absence. If the child is being collected by our transport a phone call must be made by 8am to allow us to inform the driver.

## Roles of staff

All staff at SESN will ensure continual support with any issues regarding absence and will work with the student and their parents/carers in dealing with any ongoing difficulties, which cause regular absence.

SESN expect all their staff to engage, promote and encourage positive time keeping skills and punctuality within the students and throughout their education and activities on and off site.

Absences must be recorded at the earliest point whereby the students has failed to attend at the expected time of 9.00am, or when they have failed to arrive for collection via our transport provision.

Staff will accommodate any student who has been absence for any length of time from the school by providing them with a stable reintegration period. The student will be provided with an opportunity

to discuss any issues around their absence and an opportunity to cover any topics/work missed to prevent any form of exclusion from ongoing work.

SESN will monitor ongoing attendance and formulate data to identify any anomalies or patterns and that these are reported to the head teacher to put in effective strategies where appropriate.

Where a student is absent and a phone call has not been made by the expected time, a phone call to the parent/carer will be made to determine the reason for the student's absence. If there is no response from the parent/carer by 10.00am it is SESN's responsibility and duty of care to contact any relevant services working with the child and the local authorities including the police. Any lack of contact during an absence is a serious safeguarding issue which we will act on accordingly.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to oversee the school's attendance policy and procedures. The Centre Manager will monitor, evaluate and review attendance and formulate a report each term. The Head Teacher will also be in contact with the referring body i.e. the student's school or the local authority of any ongoing absence issues and put in place effective intervention where necessary.

Governors should monitor and evaluate attendance and ensure the policy is carried out.

## **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

It is the Centre Manager's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A parent/carer cannot make this decision themselves regardless of a telephone call on the first day of absence or a letter.

### **Authorised Absences**

Where possible the Centre Manager should be made aware in advance of any up and coming absences with the exception of sickness. I.e. any medical appointments must be brought to the Centre Manager's attention. The Centre Manager will authorise an absence where:

- Sickness - The child is too ill to attend and the school accepts this as valid. If the child is off for long periods the school may ask for proof from their doctor.
- The child has a medical/dental appointment – Students are expected to attend the school at the available time prior to or following the appointment.
- Days of religious observance – This must be agreed with Head Teacher prior to any absence
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement
- Going to other schools for visits, interviews or examination
- The child has been excluded.
- The child is on study leave.

## Unauthorised Absences

SESN are required to inform the local authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.

SESN are also under a safeguarding duty, under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** to investigate any unexplained absences.

For long periods of absence a case may be escalated whereby parents/carers can receive a fixed penalty notice for their child's non attendance.

SESN will work with the student and the family to maintain positive engagement and attendance and discuss any issues to prevent disengagement and non-attendance. SESN therefore encourage parents/carers and family members to inform us of any issues which are likely to impact on a students' ability to attend our provision. We can then implement the correct intervention before long term absence takes place.

SESN work with a number of partners to support our students with any barriers and difficulties which may impact on their attendance. These may not be clear or easily identifiable, but we will look at ongoing incidences and discuss these with the students to determine any reason for the absences.

These may include:

- The student has young carer responsibilities
- The student is being bullied
- The student is in danger or they feel that someone else is in danger
- The student has a physical or mental health issue
- The student/parent/carer has an attachment disorder

This list is not exhaustive, and can extend to many other issues which SESN will support our student and their families with.

Our Centre Manager will log an absence down as an unauthorised absence where:

- The student/parent/carer have not provided a clear reason for the absence
- The student has woken up late.
- The student has stopped off at a shop before arriving
- The student is celebrating a birthday
- The student has siblings who are ill
- The student/parent/carer forgot which days they were due to attend
- The student has been removed from school to attend a holiday without prior discussions with the Head Teacher.

This Policy will be reviewed regularly to accommodate any relevant information or updated legislation.

Approved by

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

CEO