



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

2023-2024

(For All Seva School Sites)

Independent School Standards: Paragraphs 15 and 34.

Date Agreed:	1/9/23
Agreed By:	The Seva Governing Body
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This policy sets out the overarching key aims and principles for pupil attendance and punctuality across the Seva group of schools and will be monitored and reviewed by the Seva Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.

Aims

The aims of the Attendance & Punctuality Policy are to raise the importance of having good attendance in line with the national guidance issued by the Department of Education (DfE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" in May 2022.

The policy aims to:

- improve punctuality.
- ensure reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- monitor attendance and punctuality effectively.
- promote opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils for attendance and punctuality achievements.

All children of school age have the right to high quality full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability, or any special need they may have. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if a pupil is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Seva Education promotes good attendance and punctuality and acknowledges that irregular attendance can disrupt the continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement/low attainment, and impedes a child's ability to develop and sustain friendships within school.

We believe the whole school community should take responsibility for attendance. Therefore, this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed.

Absence from school affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law.

At Seva Education we believe that excellent attendance is essential for successful outcomes. We set a clear target for school attendance of **95%** to ensure that our pupils come to school every day and make the best possible progress.

Our Attendance & Punctuality policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy.

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled to.
- acting early to address patterns of absence.
- maintaining the highest possible overall percentage of attendance and punctuality and minimising any unauthorised absence.
- creating an environment where pupils are excited to learn and, as a result, are punctual and attend regularly.
- ensuring that all staff, students, and parents understand the role of excellent attendance and punctuality in keeping our pupils safe.
- putting in place an effective system for monitoring, and offering support with issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- establishing excellent routines of attendance and punctuality in our pupils, so that they can enhance their future opportunities and emotional well-being.

We support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Seva we believe that promoting regular attendance cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in our schools, the Governing Body, the Local Authority/London Boroughs, and other local partners.

The Legal Position

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.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that children and young people should attend school regularly. The school must keep two registers: admissions register, which serves as the school roll, and a daily attendance register.

Attendance registers are called twice a day: at the start of the day in the morning and during the afternoon session. The register shows whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, off-site, or absent. When a pupil is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. Authorised absence means where the school has given approval in advance, or where a satisfactory explanation was given afterwards.

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 by the school. (DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance: May 2022.)

Statistical Department for Education data suggests that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage, compared to those with the lowest attainment. Higher rates of attendance at Key Stage 5 also equate to higher outcomes.

It is compulsory for young people to be in education or training until the age of 18. In the UK a pupil can legally leave school on the last Friday in June if they turn 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

They must then do one of the following until they are 18: stay in full-time education, for example at a school or college or start an apprenticeship or traineeship. If a child/young adult would prefer the work/voluntary route this will need to involve them working towards a nationally recognised qualification as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for more than 20 hours a week.

At Seva Education we operate two school admission and attendance registers. One for pupils who are 16 and below because of the legal leaving of school age, and a separate register for our pupils who are post 16. Both registers record attendance and punctuality information and attendance and punctuality statistics are calculated separately for each.

2. Inclusion

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime and serious violence: 90% of young offenders had been persistently absent and 83% of knife

possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years. (DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance: May 2022.)

Seva Education carefully considers all policies with respect to the Equality Act 2010 and the impact on equality, including the possible implications for pupils and staff with protected characteristics.

As part of the process of writing this policy, consideration has been given to any potential impact on those with protected characteristics within Seva:

Protected Characteristic	Impact	Protected Characteristic	Impact
Age	Neutral	Pregnancy/ maternity	Neutral
Sex	Neutral	Marriage/ civil partnership	Neutral
Disability	Neutral	Gender reassignment	Neutral
Ethnicity, race and culture	Neutral	Religion or belief	Neutral
Sexual orientation	Neutral		

3. Legislation & Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-toimprove-school-attendance> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with the expectations and agreements of all of the local authorities/London Boroughs that we serve.

4. Procedures

At Seva we aim to promote a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

We will:

- advise families of the schools' expectations during the induction meetings for new pupils and at Parent Consultation meetings.
- report to families on their child's attendance in their school achievement reports.
- contact families every day to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school; this will happen as soon as is practicable on the first day, the reason for absence will then be recorded on the register.
- contact home should a pupil's attendance be a cause for concern, with the aim of establishing the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- seek support for pupils/families where out of school barriers are identified.
- work together with multi-agency teams to improve attendance levels, including for those pupils who have social workers.
- celebrate good attendance within the school.
- reward good or improving attendance and punctuality through termly attendance certificates and other events.

If your child is absent, we will follow this process:

- contact parents & carers every day to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school; this will happen as soon as is practicable on the first day and the reason for absence will then be recorded on the register.
- if we are unable to obtain the reason for a pupil being absent, we will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contacts, we ask for at least two emergency contacts for every pupil.
- if we have been unable to contact the family or emergency contacts, we will consider undertaking a home visit if it is out of the ordinary for this family.
- as a last resort, and if we have justifiable safeguarding reasons, and if the school has not been able to ascertain where a pupil is after following the steps above, the pupil will be classed as a 'missing child', and they will be reported to the police.

4.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The school day at Seva starts at 09:00 and ends at 14:30, Monday to Friday.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether a pupil is:

- present
- attending an approved off-site educational activity
- absent
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Lateness

The school day starts at 09.00 am. Pupils who arrive after this time are considered late and must enter the school through the main reception.

School registers will close at 09.10 am and pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as 'L' (late) until 09.30 am, and 'U' (unauthorised absence) after 09.30 am. U's will contribute to unauthorised attendance which can lead to fast-track action.

The procedure for consistent lateness is the same as for absence, at 10% lateness means the Positive Engagement Attendance Officer and Dedicated Attendance Lead are informed by the Attendance Office. One month will be given for improvement.

If no improvement is seen, the Positive Engagement Attendance Officer and Dedicated Attendance Lead will request an appointment and if there are unacceptable improvements after a month, a referral to the placing local authority Children Missing in Education team will be made.

As an Independent School provider Seva uses the DfE attendance codes as set out in Appendix 1.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day.
- arrive at school at 09.00.
- attend all lessons punctually.
- catch up on work missed due to absence if they want to maximise their achievement.

Parents are expected to:

- ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- ensure that their child arrives at school in good time for registration each morning: **start time: 09.00 am.**
- telephone the school, or email the school, by **08:30 am** if their child is unable to attend for any reason, including providing an explanation for their child's absence.
- ensure that their child is in correct school uniform.
- ensure that their child is correctly equipped for school.
- arrange medical appointments outside school time where possible.
- ensure that no holidays are booked during term time.
- contact their pupil's class teacher to discuss any concerns that they may have.
- ensure that the school has up to date contact details.

Seva Education are Committed to:

- always emphasising the importance of good attendance.
- registering pupils' attendance, punctuality, and absence efficiently and accurately at the start of the school day and after mid-day, according to current regulations, using Sims.
- recording the attendance and lateness of pupils twice a day (AM & PM) using Sims
- contacting parents by email and telephone if a pupil is absent.
- inviting parents in to discuss any instances of frequent absence and refer poor attendance on to relevant authorities.
- notifying the Dedicated Attendance Lead, via My Concern/Cpoms, in cases of concern around the implications of a pupil's persistent absence.
- promoting attendance by taking account of each pupil's individual needs.
- co-operating fully with other agencies to encourage punctual attendance at school.
- providing regular reports on each pupil's attendance to parents.

- setting demanding, yet realistic, targets for whole school attendance.
- rewarding pupils with positive attendance.
- Safeguarding each pupil.

If a pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practicing or affected community, then a member of staff will ask direct questions to ascertain whether a referral to the Police or Social Care may be needed.

All staff are aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. These may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal activity including involvement in county lines. It may also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation and so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Seva believes that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risks and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. Staff will monitor all pupils that are absent from school and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, following normal safeguarding procedures.

In the following circumstances a referral to social care and/or the police will be made if:

- a) the pupil may be the victim of a crime.
- b) the pupil is the subject of a Child Protection plan.
- c) the pupil is the subject of S47 enquiries.
- d) the pupil is looked after.
- e) there is a known person posing a risk to the pupil in the household or in contact with the household.
- f) there is a history of the family moving frequently.
- g) there are serious issues with attendance.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence. For example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health as soon as practically possible. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

4.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. The school should be notified of these appointments in advance. If it is necessary for a pupil to be out of school for this reason, the pupil should wherever possible return to school directly after the appointment and not take the entire day off.

Long-term medical conditions requiring regular and repeated visits to medical professionals during term time need to be evidenced, reviewed and will be monitored by a senior leader.

If your child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedure:

1. Contact the school office to explain the reason, as soon as possible, on the morning of the first day of absence before 09.00 by telephoning the attendance line on 020 8422 2999 and pressing option 1. Alternatively, send an email to education@sevaeducation.com
2. Send in a written note, or email, explaining an absence of more than one day when the pupil returns to school.

For unavoidable medical appointments during the school day please phone us or send us a note in advance of the appointment.

We will always invite the family in to discuss the situation with a senior leader if a pupil becomes persistently absent. We may then consider referring the matter to the relevant Education Welfare Services team if attendance fails to improve.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and return to school where possible.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found later in this policy.

4.4 Attendance, Lateness & Punctuality

Good timekeeping is a vital skill for life. Being on time helps a pupil to be calm, relaxed, and happy in school. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their 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.

The register is a statutory document and is taken twice a day. Each day counts as two sessions of attendance. Timings are made clear to families and local authority transport teams.

Registers are marked at all sites at 09:00. If a child arrives after the registration period, they will be formally marked in as late at 09.10. At 09:30 the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time (09.30), they will receive a mark to note that they are on site, but this will not count as a 'present' mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

It is essential that pupils arriving and leaving school with a family member outside the normal hours are signed in and out from the school offices. These records are used in the case of fire/emergency.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the relevant staff member to resolve the problem. However, parents & carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time. We encourage good punctuality by being positive

role models to our pupils and through celebrating and rewarding good punctuality, as we do attendance.

As a special school, catering for a large proportion of pupils who arrive to school from a wide range of locations on transport provided by placing authorities' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) teams, we acknowledge that sometimes transport providers arrive late to school. This can be for reasons beyond pupils' and families' control, such as heavy traffic or the late arrival of escorts. **Pupils will not be penalised for lateness that is beyond their control.**

Pupils who travel independently must ensure they make suitable arrangements to get to school on time.

4.5 Following Up Absence

Seva will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for it and identify whether the absence is approved or not. We will identify the correct attendance code to use and ensure safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

At Seva we follow a six stage process as set out below to promote good attendance:

<u>The Seva Six Stage Attendance & Punctuality Process</u>		
Stage		
1	PROMOTE	We aspire to high standards of attendance and punctuality from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, attend school so that they are ready to learn. We prioritise attendance improvement across our schools as we know that education is the greatest lever to improve pupils later life chances. We celebrate good or better attendance and punctuality.
2	MONITOR	We rigorously use attendance and punctuality data to identify patterns of poor attendance and punctuality, at individual and cohort level, so that all parties can work together to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
3	LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND	When a pattern is spotted, we discuss this with pupils and parents and listen to them to understand the barriers to attendance and agree how we can all work together to resolve any issues.
4	FACILITATE SUPPORT	We make parents aware of attendance and punctuality concerns when they meet our threshold criteria as set out in this policy. We remove any in school barriers and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school, where we can. This might include access to early help as part of a local offer, or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
5	FORMALISE SUPPORT	Where absence and punctuality persist and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance parenting contract.

6	ENFORCE	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.
Attendance and punctuality letters celebrating school attendance are issued.		
Letters are also issued to identify and areas of attendance and punctuality concern.		

4.6 Reporting to parents

Seva will report attendance termly to parents about their child's attendance.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the family), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of absence is required.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- families keeping their child off school unnecessarily.
- truancy before or during the school day.
- absences which have never properly been explained.
- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- activities such as shopping, looking after other pupils or birthdays.
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been formally agreed.

Pupils can sometimes be reluctant to attend school because of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) or any factors such as anxiety. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, family and child, and an attendance or transition plan will be initiated with the aim of improving school attendance. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then Seva will work with the family to understand the cause of the problem.

When a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, this will usually be addressed through informal conversations with the Positive Engagement Attendance Officer and/or Dedicated Attendance Lead. Where there is a lack of engagement and/or the attendance continues to drop then a more formal conversation will be had with families to highlight the need for immediate action and to be clear about the next steps and potential need for communication with the local authority and/or the relevant Educational Welfare Service.

If attendance levels are not improving, an initial letter will be sent to the family (decision on sending these letters are made on a case-by-case basis), highlighting the cause for concern. At Seva we recognise that absence below 90% is doing considerable damage to a pupil's education and we need the fullest support and cooperation from families to address this.

If the pupil's attendance still does not improve, a further letter will be sent and the matter will be raised with the pupil's placing authority and, if possible, the relevant Educational Welfare Service.

5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is strongly discouraged by the Government, placing authorities/London Boroughs and Seva Education.

It is the family's obligation to apply to the school in writing, or at a meeting arranged with the Attendance Officer, for a leave of absence. It must be made by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides. All applications for leave must be made in advance and the outcome decided is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

In granting approval, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time, as well as the attendance and punctuality record of the child.

At Seva we strongly recommend that families gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking the holiday. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or more than that agreed will be classed as unauthorised.

The Executive Headteacher will grant leave of absence to pupils during term time when there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- the death or terminal illness of immediate family.
- to attend a wedding or funeral of immediate family.
- where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above these will be assessed on a case by case basis, along with the contextual factors presented, and it will be the Executive Headteacher's decision to authorise/not authorise.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Executive Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- illness and medical/dental appointments
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents or child belongs. (If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm any queries.)
- traveller pupils traveling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showpeople (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be traveling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal Sanctions & The Role of The Educational Welfare Service (EWS)

Parents & carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any attendance and/or punctuality problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved this way Seva may refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) from the relevant Local Authority/London Borough for support, where the child is of compulsory school age.

An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) may also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the pupil's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can facilitate sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority/London Borough, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may consider:

- the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from your child's placing local authority.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

At Seva we promote attendance and punctuality in a variety of ways such as:

- weekly class attendance announcements in achievement assembly.
- certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each term.
- 'Aim High' Achievement Points.
- prizes and stickers.
- half termly/termly achievement prizes and rewards.
- activities and trips: 'Get in the Green Award'.

Each half term there is a reward activity or trip for any pupil who is 'in the green.' This means that they have met a set number of criteria for the whole half term. These criteria are outlined below:

1. above 95% attendance.
2. fewer than 7 late marks.
3. more than 65 Achievement Points at Key Stage 3, 40 Achievement Points at Key Stage 4, and 20 Achievement Points at Key Stage 5.
4. fewer than 20 Behaviour Points.

These are our minimum expectations, and our expectation is that all pupils are able to meet these consistently. Pupils that consistently meet these expectations will achieve well. The reward activities and trips may include the follow:

- bowling.
- cinema.
- theme park.
- fairground activities.
- video and board games.

Each half term these reset so that all students have an opportunity to 'get in the green'.

7. Attendance Monitoring

Seva recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and we have a range of staff with responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school who work with Local Authorities and London Boroughs.

<u>Key Contacts for Improving Attendance & Punctuality</u>		
Role	Name	Title
Dedicated Attendance Lead (DAL) & Children Missing Education (CME)/ Children Missing Out On Education (CMOE) Lead	Shaun Buchanan	Head of School and DDSL
School Attendance Officer	Darshana Dattani	School Administrator
School Attendance Support Officer	Thomas Haswell	School Manager
Positive Engagement Attendance Officer	Samantha Kelly	Positive Engagement Attendance Officer
Governor for Attendance & Punctuality	Peter Behan	Director of Operations
Other Professional Contact for Attendance & Punctuality	Florina Stochescu Gary Hawkins	ALS Manager-Further Education Executive Headteacher
Children Missing Education (CME) Contact for Harrow Pupils	Telephone: 020 8901 2690	Email:cme@harrow.gov.uk
Children Missing Education (CME) Contact for Ealing Pupils	Telephone: 020 88255517	Email:cme@ealing.gov.uk (Generates an email to Vipul Damacha)
Children Missing Education (CME) Contact for Hounslow Pupils	Telephone: 020 8583 2768	Email:cme@hounslow.gov.uk
Children Missing Education (CME) Contact for London	Telephone: 020 8753 6797	Email:kyria.parsons@lbhf.gov.uk

Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Pupils		
Children Missing Education (CME) Contact for Achieving for Children	020 8547 5008 (8am to 5.15pm, Monday to Thursday, and 8am to 5pm on Friday. Out of hours, phone 020 8770 5000.)	

All Seva staff are committed to working with families to ensure pupils have the highest possible levels of attendance. All pupils who have 100% attendance and punctuality over a term will receive a special certificate in our reward assembly at the end of each term.

The school has rigorous monitoring systems to ensure that pupil data is used efficiently to support and improve attendance in a range of ways. The pastoral team will monitor this.

Daily: pupil registers are completed by 09:10 am in order to identify absent pupils and initiate absence procedures. Any staff with incomplete registers will be followed up by email or in person. Overall attendance data is shared with the pastoral team by 09.30 am. Absent pupils are contacted by the Seva Administrator via telephone or email by 09.50am and absent codes are updated by 10.00 am each morning.

Weekly and fortnightly: pupil attendance is monitored, and any concerns are recorded in positive engagement attendance officer/attendance meetings. Actions will be agreed, delegated, recorded, and reviewed for pupils whose attendance is declining. Attendance trends are reported to SLT to ensure positive improvement over time. Meetings with parents are arranged to look at emerging concerns and offer Early Help.

Half-termly: Attendance and punctuality reports, including persistent absence reports are reviewed. The attendance team and Senior Leadership Team hold a half-termly strategic meeting with the Governors.

Seva keeps pupils' placing authorities informed of all their pupils' attendance. We are obliged to inform placing authorities when a pupil is absent according to the placing authorities guidelines.

As part of our monitoring:

- the relevant senior leader/member of the attendance team, or DAL will meet with all families of pupils whose absence or punctuality are a cause for concern.
- any child who is absent for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions will always get immediate attention from the DAL .
- we know that children who are absent from education for prolonged periods of time and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding concerns and can eventually lead to children being missing in education. (We will take swift action where appropriate.)
- the School Attendance Support Officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis in conjunction with the Dedicated Attendance Lead to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and to develop strategies to support individual/cohorts of pupils. (We inform families of their child's attendance and how this can impact on their learning.)

- parents are expected to call or email the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.
- attendance data is analysed at half termly governing body meetings.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistical releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with Governors. Seva uses attendance data to track the attendance in each of our schools and identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Research shows that low attendance and pupil poor attainment are linked together. When taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account, for each key stage measure, overall absence has a statistically significant negative link to attainment. For example, a pupil with 100% attendance has an 80% chance of achieving at least 5 good GCSE's. However, if a pupil takes one day off every two weeks (90% attendance) then this falls dramatically to 50%.

The table below demonstrates the impact of lost learning linked to the attendance percentage. Higher attendance leads to higher outcomes.

Attendance Percentage	Number of Days Lost per Year	Number of Lesson Lost Per Year	Number of Minutes of Lost Learning
100%	0	0	0
98%	4	28	1,400
95%	9.5	66.5	3,325
92%	15	105	5,250
90%	19	133	6,650
80%	38	266	13,300

97-100%	95-96.9%	93-94.9%	90-92.9%	0-89.9%
<p style="text-align: center;">Outstanding!</p> <p>You have missed less than one week over the academic year.</p> <p>You are setting yourself up for the best chance of great GCSE results.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Risk of underachievement:</p> <p>You have missed two weeks over the academic year – (over 60)</p> <p>You need to start catching up on your work now.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Serious risk of under-achievement:</p> <p>You have missed three weeks over the academic year – (over 90 lessons) If this continues you are likely to lose half a grade in your GCSEs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Severe risk of under-achievement:</p> <p>You have missed a whole month of school this year (over 150 lessons). If this continues you are likely to lose a whole grade in your GCSEs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Extreme concern:</p> <p>You have missed more than a month of school this year.</p> <p>If this continues it will be extremely difficult for you to catch up and achieve good GCSE results.</p>

8. Roles and Responsibilities

At Seva we believe our attendance and punctuality responsibilities include:

- offering a clear vision for attendance and punctuality improvement to all stakeholders.
- evaluating and monitoring our expectations and processes.
- data analysis.
- communicating messages to pupils and parents both of positive attendance and punctuality, and sharing any areas where we have concerns.
- making sure all our teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- making sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of funding.
- offering support and where possible this will include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the Local Authorities/London Boroughs School Attendance Support Teams and other partners.
- setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- helping parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. (We include clarity with our pupils and parents on the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance.)
- visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.

At Seva we recognise that attendance and punctuality may never be fully 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies. We recognise that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. (DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance: May 2022.)

8.1 Persistent and Severe Absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), Seva and the relevant Local Authorities/London Boroughs will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils.

In doing so Seva will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus is given by Seva and our Local Authorities/London Boroughs to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school).

These persistent, and severely absent, pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is made by Seva, working with all relevant services to prioritise these top priority pupils for support. This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may consider an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school or include how to access wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by Seva, the Local Authorities/London Boroughs, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

Seva is conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, Seva will report a family and their child for a full children's social care assessment. This is in line with the DfE statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and DfE Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance: May 2022.

Seva and the relevant Local Authorities/London Boroughs will work together and make use of the full range of interventions to improve attendance and punctuality, after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

Some of these include:

- parenting contracts.
- education supervision orders.
- attendance prosecution.
- parenting orders.
- fixed penalty notices.

8.2 The Governors

Governors regularly review attendance data at meetings. This includes thorough examination of recent and historic trends at a school level as well as benchmarking to comparator schools where possible within the local authority area, region and nationwide.

Governors:

- pay particular attention to pupil cohorts within the school(s) that have historically had poor attendance or punctuality, and/or groups/anonymised pupils that face entrenched barriers to attendance.
- are made aware of school specific contexts which may include pupils who have a social worker, are from a background or ethnicity where attendance and punctuality have historically been low, have a long-term medical condition, have more complex SEND, or are experiencing financial difficulties.
- work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and punctuality, providing support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas.

Part of the Governors role in relation to this policy is to:

- drive attendance improvement across Seva.
- work intensively with the school staff on sites that require it.
- act as a point of contact in a supportive critical friend capacity.

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the attendance team to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.3 The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy and the school's procedures are implemented consistently across the school sites, and for monitoring school-level absence data and alongside the Dedicated Attendance Lead, reporting it to Governors three times a year.

8.4 The School attendance officer, support officer and Positive Engagement Attendance Officer

The attendance officer works closely with the support officer and Positive Engagement Attendance Officer to:

- monitor attendance data across the school and at group/individual pupil level.
- report concerns about attendance and punctuality to the DAL and Executive Headteacher.
- liaise with external professionals to tackle persistent absence.
- arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns.
- advise the Senior Leadership team which pupils are attending well, and which are a concern.

The Attendance Officer:

- monitors registers daily and reports to SLT if any registers are not taken.
- sends out the daily watchlist to check with positive engagement attendance officer which pupils are missing.
- contacts home daily, by 10.30 am, if an absence is unexplained.
- updates codes on Sims for daily absences.
- manages the attendance communication by picking up and responding to attendance messages and entering relevant codes.
- provides a list of calls with no response to the support officer, positive engagement officer and DAL.
- attends and contributes to weekly attendance meetings.

- collates and presents information for Attendance Panel Meetings and records any actions.
- follows up with parents who regularly fail to notify the school for reasons of absence.
- sends an email daily to parents of absentees and pupils who have arrived late.
- update attendance displays in the school.
- sends escalating letters warning parents of any concerns.
- provides half-termly attendance and punctuality reports for the Dedicated Attendance Lead, Executive Headteacher and Governing Body.
- oversees the data systems relating to attendance and punctuality and resolves any functional issues which occur.
- ensures pupils and parents are notified of the start and end of term end dates via email, newsletter, and the school website
- is responsible for on and off-rolling pupils in conjunction with the support officer, DAL and Executive Headteacher.

8.5 Class Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance and punctuality on a daily basis, using the correct codes in Sims, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers:

- receive weekly attendance tracker information from the Attendance Officer.
- praise those pupils with good attendance.
- speak to pupils with attendance/punctuality issues on a one to one basis.
- liaises with the Positive engagement attendance officer on a weekly basis.

8.6 School Office Staff

School Office staff are expected to take calls/answer emails from parents about absence and punctuality and record it on the school system and work under the direction of the Attendance Officer.

8.7 Dedicated Attendance Lead

The Dedicated Attendance Lead:

- liaises with the positive engagement attendance officer to schedule any necessary home visits for pupils who cannot be reached.
- follows up with families for those whose child's attendance does not improve after positive engagement attendance officer and class teacher intervention.
- chair weekly attendance meetings.
- oversees and advises on interventions for individual pupils.
- supports the positive engagement attendance officer with parent meetings and Attendance Panel Meetings.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with stakeholders.

10. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Pupils with Medical Needs
- SEND Information
- Behaviour
- Complaints
- Curriculum, including PHSE and RSHE
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes, Descriptions & Meanings

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Pupil is present at morning registration. Authorised.
\	Present (PM)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration. Authorised.
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school. Authorised absence.
C	Authorised Leave of Absence (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. Authorised absence.
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Educational Activity Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered. Authorised absence.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded. Authorised absence.
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence.
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school Unauthorised absence.
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances. Authorised absence.
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness Authorised absence.
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity. Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational

		establishment. Authorised absence.
L	Late (before registers closed)	Pupil arrives late before register has closed. Authorised.
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment. Authorised Absence.
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason. This code will be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time. Unauthorised absence.
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence. Unauthorised absence.
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity. Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school. Authorised Absence.
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance. Authorised Absence.
S	Study leave	Pupil is on study leave during their public examinations. Authorised absence.
T	Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school. Authorised absence.
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed. Unauthorised absence.
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity. Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school. Authorised absence.
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Educational Activity Pupil is on a work experience placement. Authorised Absence.

X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils. Not required to be in school. See post 16 register.	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend. Not counted in possible attendances.
Y	Partial and forced closure Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody. Not counted in possible attendances.
Z	Pupil not yet on roll/admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school. Not counted in possible attendances.
#	School closed to all pupils	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day. Not counted in possible attendances.

Appendix 2: Request for Term Time Absence Letter



Request for Term Time Leave of Absence

Child's Name: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence (INCLUSIVE): ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Number of School Days Involved: _____

Date of Pupils Return to School: ____/____/____

REASON FOR REQUESTING ABSENCE IN TERM TIME:

(Please include an explanation, and attach any evidence to support your request, for absence.)

**Any short notice request for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by documents before an appropriate decision can be made e.g. proof of travel documents.*

Address/Location whilst absent: _____

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Under education law, parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. The school holiday dates are published in advance, and we strongly advise parent/ carers to book their family holidays during those times. Requests for leave of absence, in line with government guidelines, will not normally be authorised. Parent/ Carers who request leave during term time for their child must do so in advance by completing this Leave of Absence Request form for Authorised absence. Leave of absence should be requested at **least two weeks in advance**. The parent/carer will be advised of Seva Education's decision in writing. If the Leave of Absence Request is denied and the pupil is absent during the requested period, the **Education Welfare Service will be notified, and the parent/ carer may be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority**. Penalty notices are issued on a per parent per child basis.

Please return this form in person or by email (education@sevaeducation.com) to the School Administrator, for consideration.

The Executive Headteacher's decision is final.

SCHOOL USE ONLY:

Request received date: ____/____/____

Acknowledgement sent date (admin team): ____/____/____

Senior Leadership Team received date: ____/____/____

- **Current attendance (%):** _____%
- **Authorised Absence in Current Academic Year:** _____%
- **Unauthorised Absence in Current Academic Year:** _____%

SCHOOL COMMENTS:

Request outcome: Authorised/Unauthorised

Executive Headteacher Sign Off: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Date of Outcome Letter Sent to Parent: ____/____/____

Appendix 3: Warning Letter



Dear

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007,

Name of pupil ----- Registered at ----- (school name)

This is a formal warning that you are at risk of being in breach of the regulations stated above. ----- (child's name) has been absent from school and the absence(s) has/have not been authorised.

Should the number of unauthorised absence sessions reach 15 or more in the current term you will be in breach of the regulations and the Local Authority may issue you with a penalty notice.

The notice requires you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each child to whom the absence relates.

Payment of the penalty enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. (section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty means you are liable to prosecution for the offence, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority will ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

If you fail to ensure your child attends regularly and 15 sessions of unauthorised absence is reached a penalty notice will be issued. **You will not receive a further warning before the penalty is imposed.**

If you believe there are legitimate reasons for your child's absence please contact the school within 5 working days to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

----- (Name)

----- (Designation)