

**Outcomes  
First  
Group.**

**Acorn Education**

**Options Autism**

# **Attendance and Absence Procedures Policy**



# **Strawberry Lane School**



CONTENTS	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.0 GENERAL.....	2
3.0 EXPECTATIONS.....	3
4.0 REGISTRATION DETAILS (including Authorised and Unauthorised absences). ....	5
5.0 APPENDIX 1.....	8
6.0 APPENDIX 2.....	10

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**Implementation:** It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

**Compliance:** This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with, and complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed, including:

- [Keeping Children Safe In Education \(KCSIE\) 2024](#)
- [DFE: Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- [DFE: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)
- [DFE: Children missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities 2024](#)
- Safeguarding Policy
- Parent-School Communication Policy

## 2.0 GENERAL

### Ethos

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children and young people need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. At Strawberry Lane School we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for our learners. We will encourage good attendance for all children and young people, by offering an environment in which they feel valued and part of the school community.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child/young person has good attendance, the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Governors and staff work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children and young people are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures

**Document Type** Policy  
**Policy Owner** Headteacher  
**Date First Issued** March 2025

**Version Number** 1.0  
**Last Review Date**  
**Next Review Date** At least annually

for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy. These systems should be reviewed regularly and modified where necessary to reflect the circumstances of the school.

**Aims:**

Through this policy, Strawberry Lane School will:

- Make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual and whole school attendance levels.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of their education.
- Work in partnership with children, parents, staff and the Local Authority SEND Teams, so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

**It is recognised that:**

- The majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to engage with school staff and activities alongside their peers, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.
- Some pupils may need to be supported and rewarded in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- All pupils have an equal right and access to, an education in accordance with a curriculum, that meets their needs as a learner with Autism and Complex Needs.
- No pupil will be deprived of their educational opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other pupils.
- All staff, but especially class teachers, play a key role in promoting good attendance.

**3.0 EXPECTATIONS**

**Strawberry Lane School expects all our pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day



**Strawberry Lane School expects that families will:**

- Endeavour to arrange health appointments out of school hours wherever possible.
- Inform a pupil's teacher, Headteacher, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Safeguarding and Attendance lead of any reason or problem that may prevent a pupil from attending school.
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure that pupils attend school.
- Inform school, as soon as is practical and preferably early on the morning, **before 9:30am**, of absence, whenever a pupil is unable to attend school, for each and every day of absence.
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence.

**Parents/Carers and pupils can expect the following from the school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with family when a pupil is absent without explanation.
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school.
- Education staff supporting positive transitions from home to school.
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.
- Attendance figures published in each Pupil's Annual Education Review Report.
- Flexibility and understanding around a pupil's attendance pattern where related to their Autism and Complex Needs. Examples may include: An agreed delayed start to the day to support positive travel from home to school for a day pupil.
- Accurate recording of arrival into / departure from school in order to inform planning and reporting in order to promote and sustain appropriate attendance / punctuality.
- Regular contact from school if a pupil is absent for a prolonged period (including home/hospital visits, TEAMS calls), with work sent home if appropriate.

**We encourage attendance by:**

- Consistent, clear communication with parents / carers and pupils about the importance of regular attendance.
- Setting targets for improved attendance if needed and sharing these with Local Authority Representatives, parents / carers and pupils.
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each session.
- A coordinated team-work approach with the support of our Clinical Team, to promote full attendance from each pupil. The focus will be on meeting a pupil's personalised needs as a learner with Autism and Complex Needs to ensure that they feel safe and motivated to attend school. This will include the clear use of visual supports for transitioning into school as appropriate to each pupil. Targets for attendance / punctuality / transition times may form part of the IEP if appropriate.

**The school's response to non-attendance:**

Where that has been no contact from parents, and no known reason for the pupils' absence has been given in advance, the school will follow the procedures as stated in Appendix 1 (Absence Procedures), including:

- Following up with parents/carers if there has been no contact made with the school at certain times throughout the day.
- Contact Home/School Transport and Social Worker if appropriate.
- Inform the Local Authority SEND Case Worker.

Where a pattern of non-attendance / transition problems is emerging a 'Child Centred Planning' multi-disciplinary Meeting will be convened and the parent/carers will be invited to visit school to work with school staff to help resolve the difficulties where appropriate (this could also be arranged via TEAMS if required, although face-to-face meetings are always preferable).

Other, relevant professionals, such as Case Workers from the placing Local Authority, social care, health and Clinical teams, may also be invited. This may result in:

- The pupil being placed on an Attendance Plan.
- And agreed reduced timetable (number of days and/or hours per day) for an agreed, limited period.
- Recommendations to explore alternative avenues of education (i.e. on-line learning), or alternative placements; Or
- An agreement to cease the placement.
- See Appendix 2 – Attendance Flow Chart.

For prolonged absences, regular contact with the parent/carers and pupil will be agreed and facilitated through TEAMS calls or home visits (if appropriate), and work will be sent home if appropriate.

A Return to School/Transition Plan will be agreed with all parties when the pupil is able to return to school, which may include a reduced timetable of days and/or hours.

#### 4.0 REGISTRATION DETAILS (including Authorised and Unauthorised absences).

##### Registration

Registration begins at 9:00am and ends at 9.30am.

Any one pupil arriving between 9:31am and 10:00am will be registered as Late (L).

Any pupil arriving after 10:01am will be registered using a U code (Late, after the register has closed).

For pupils on reduced hours timetables, the registration timings will shift in line with their actual start time. For example, if a pupil is on a 9:30am to 2:30pm timetable, then a Late mark will be recorded if they arrive between 10:01 and 10:30am. A U Code will be entered if they arrive after 10:31am.

Afternoon registration is at 1pm.

A Late mark (L) will be used if a pupil arrives in school after 1:30pm and a U Code will be used after 2:00pm.

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.



## Authorised Absence

**Definition:** An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Examples of authorised absences

- Leave in term time (you should ask permission first, by law, the school can only authorise in exceptional circumstances)
- Short term emergency
- Certain days for religious observation
- Bereavement
- Dentist or doctors' appointment (try to make appointments outside school time)
- Hospital treatment
- Medical Needs

If possible, notify the school of any issues that may affect your child's attendance before the absence occurs.

## Unauthorised Absence

**Definition:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Unacceptable reasons for absence include, but are not limited to;

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents/carers.



## Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Strawberry Lane School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Strawberry Lane School respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

## Medical Absence

It is recognised at Strawberry Lane School that our pupils may have medical needs, and this is taken into consideration when recording absences.

## Illness

When a pupil has an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork and provide where possible and appropriate access to on-line learning, staff visits and/or TEAMS calls to maintain contact.

## Religious Observance

Strawberry Lane 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 is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.



## 5.0 APPENDIX 1

### Absence Procedures

#### No contact with parents/carer

##### Days 1 & 2

- If a pupil is absent and there is no message/known reason, class staff will inform Safeguarding and Attendance lead/SLT by 9:30am
- The Safeguarding and Attendance lead/SLT will contact parents by 10:00am and will then make a follow up call before 12:00pm if there has been no response from parents/carers.
- If there has been no response or contact following the two previous phone calls, then a further call will be made after 1:00pm/afternoon registration.
- A follow-up call will also be made to the pupil's social worker (if they have one) if there is still no response from parents/carers after the third phone call.
- Safeguarding and Attendance lead/SLT to contact Home/School Transport (if appropriate), to ascertain if they can add any information or updates.
- The second and any subsequent phone calls to be followed up with an email to parents/carers and social worker.

##### Day 3

- If pupil is still absent on Day 3, then follow above Protocol, but if still no response after the second phone call, Safeguarding and Attendance lead/SLT to contact LA SEND Officer.
- If no response following afternoon call, then Safeguarding and Attendance lead/SLT to contact Social Care Duty Team (if no social worker in place or unable to contact social worker).
- Arrange a Home Visit if necessary and appropriate.

##### Days 4 & 5

- Follow advice from Social Worker, Duty Team or LA SEND Officer.





### **Week 2 and ongoing**

- Maintain daily contact with Social Worker, Duty Team or LA SEND Officer, following their advice.

### **Contact gained with parent/carer**

- Arrange a meeting with all parties as soon as possible to discuss absence and plan for pupil's return.

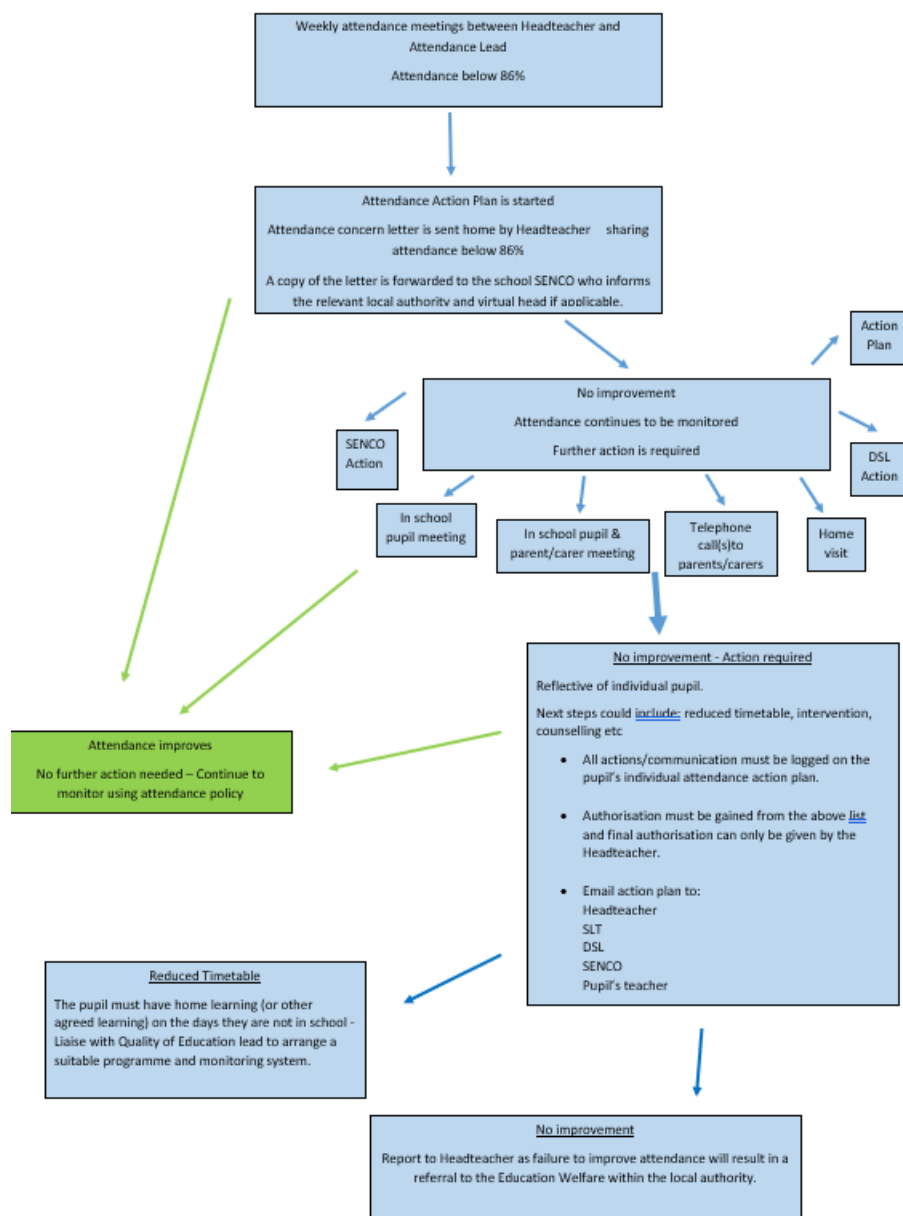
## 6.0 APPENDIX 2

### Attendance Flowchart:



#### Attendance Flowchart

The below flowchart is to be used alongside Strawberry Lane Schools Attendance Policy



We are part of the Outcomes First Group Family, by working together we will build incredible futures by empowering vulnerable children, young people and adults in the UK to be happy and successful in the world.

**Outcomes  
First  
Group.**

**Acorn Education**  
**Momenta Connect**  
**Options Autism**