

Attendance Policy 2018

Samuel Ward Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils.

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| It was ratified by the Samuel Ward Academy Local Governing Body on: | May 2018 |
| Review date: | Bi-annually |



SAMUEL WARD

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. School's roles and responsibilities | 2 |
| 3. Collection and analysis of data | 6 |
| 4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance | 6 |
| 5. Term-time holidays | 9 |
| 6. Extended leave of absence | 9 |
| 7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities | 10 |
| 8. Pupils' / students' responsibilities | 10 |
| 9. Governors' responsibilities | 10 |
| 10. Conclusion | 11 |
| APPENDIX A – A Guide for Parents | 12 |
| APPENDIX B – Attendance leaflet | 14 |

SAMUEL WARD ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Samuel Ward Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school on every available day and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff as well as school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring full school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Samuel Ward Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
 - i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / and tutors are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

REGISTER CODES

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|--------------|---------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |

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

- ii) The register will be called promptly at **8:45 am for all students** and **13:10 for years 7, 8 and the 6th Form** and **12:40 for years 9, 10 and 11** by each tutor in the morning and classroom teacher in the afternoon. A mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii) The registers will close at **9.30 am** in the morning and 10 minutes into the lesson in the afternoon. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent for the morning session** (and the afternoon session if they arrive after the PM register closes). Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.6 on page 7).

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked **unauthorised absent** unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Attendance Leader.
- ii) Samuel Ward Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Samuel Ward Academy will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- iii) If the school has requested supporting evidence in order to authorise an absence, and nothing has been received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for leave of absence such as a parent's return from a posting or a serious illness in the immediate family.
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
 - (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
 - (f) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period** (usually a maximum of two days including a funeral unless it is an immediate family member).
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
- no explanation has been given by the parent;
 - the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - the pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday
 - the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday
 - the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Class registers

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school inclusion and safeguarding team and measures taken to locate the pupil.

2.7 Staff training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

3. Collection and analysis of data

- 3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. (See para.2.2 above). The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Samuel Ward Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.
- 4.2 Samuel Ward Academy has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences which include contacting the parents/guardians as highlighted below and requesting proof of absence.
- 4.3 First-day calling
Samuel Ward Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence, if the parent has not already called. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible make contact with the first contact on our system, we will try all other numbers provided for the pupil. **If we do not hear from the parent/carer by 11am, we will carry out a home visit to ascertain that the pupil is safe. If there is no response from the house, we will report the pupil missing to the police, and may make a referral to Children and Young People's Services. The safety of all pupils is of paramount importance to Samuel Ward Academy.**
- 4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence
The Attendance Leader is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Samuel Ward Academy will intervene in non attendance at an early stage. Initially, we will write to parents to notify them that their child's attendance has dropped to below 95% and again at below 93%.

If a pupil's attendance drops to below 90%, the school will be unlikely to unauthorise any further absences without supporting evidence (e.g. medical evidence)

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence, or there are attendance concerns, the school will contact parents to discuss the reasons for the absences. A meeting may be arranged. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Penalty Notices and Referral to the Educational Welfare Officer

After 2 days (4 sessions) of unauthorised absence, parents will be sent a letter highlighting that their child has had unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence (unless the 2 days occurs as part of a longer holiday). After 4 days or 8 sessions (including unauthorised holidays), a penalty notice will be issued to all adults responsible for the pupil (even if the child does not live with that parent). All correspondence concerning attendance will include information about the school's attendance policy with particular regard to when penalty notices are issued.

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason. Academies must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para. 2.3.(iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other student with an emerging pattern of absence. (See para. 4.4). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

4.7 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be expected to attend a detention to make the time up. Pupils who fail to show to this detention or who are frequently late will receive a further sanction.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main office, sign in and go immediately to their lesson. The academy's attendance officer will pick up these signing in slips in the first period of the day. The main office will let the attendance officer know of any pupils arriving after period one. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day should sign out at the main office. The office will expect to see a medical letter or permission that has already been verified by the Attendance Leader or Attendance Officer. It is advisable to inform the school of intended medical, dental or other legitimate absences well in advance of the planned absence. If in doubt, the academy will contact parents' to confirm the planned absence which could result in lateness for the appointment.

4.10 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Samuel Ward Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. Inclusion Officers and the Attendance Officer will be notified by staff of any pupils that are absent from their lesson that were marked in, in a previous lesson. This will usually be done by email and occasionally phone. The Inclusion and safeguarding team work together to locate the pupil as soon as possible and deal with the reason for their absence. If, however, a pupil / appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

4.11 Study leave

Samuel Ward Academy believes that pupils' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations.

5. **Term-time holidays**

Samuel Ward Academy will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday **other than in the most exceptional circumstances**. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

Samuel Ward Academy will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;

In the case of leave requested due to work commitments or from military personnel; the employers will be contacted to confirm the request

Requests for holidays for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;

- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Samuel Ward Academy will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: GCSE examinations.

6. Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Samuel Ward Academy will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved.
- Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

We do not recommend extended holidays are taken during your child's GCSE course years.

7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Samuel Ward Academy.

Samuel Ward Academy expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend school every day;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Samuel Ward Academy by 8:45 on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter unless specified otherwise by the Attendance Officer (i.e. in long term illnesses)
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Samuel Ward Academy endeavours to support parents to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' responsibilities

All should be aware of the importance of school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school every day, they should speak to a teacher, Inclusion Officer, their Head of Year or tutor.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late. Pupils are expected to follow the rules set out in the Samuel Ward Behaviour Policy which also includes expectations for attendance and punctuality.

9. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of Samuel Ward Academy shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

10. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

- school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- Regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development

- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others
- school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

APPENDIX A: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. **When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8:45 for all students** and the afternoon register at **13:10 pm for Years 7 and 8 and 12:40 for Years 9,10 and 11.**

2. **What happens if my child is late?**

Registration starts at **8.45am** and finishes at **9:05am** in the morning. Pupils should arrive to registration between 8.40am and 8.45am.

If your child arrives between **8:46 am** and **9:30 am** he/she will be marked **late**

If your child arrives after **9:30am** he/she will be marked as **absent**

Pupils who arrive after **9:05** should report to the main office and sign in. Students who are late will be expected to make up the time in a detention.

3. **Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We expect parents to call in before 8:45am on the first day of absence and every morning thereafter unless a prior agreement has been arranged with the Attendance Officer. A letter may be requested from the parents or from a medical expert to further confirm absences.

4. **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness (long-term illnesses or persistent absences for illness will require supporting medical evidence)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the Holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement (we will usually authorise a maximum of two days absence including a funeral, unless it is an immediate family member)
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university etc

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce medical evidence.

5. **What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters or looking after unwell family members etc

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will contact the parents on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter if the parents have not let the school know of the absence.

If we cannot contact you, we will try all the other contacts you have provided us with. **If we have not heard from you or anyone else on your contact list to explain your child's absence by 11am, we will carry out a home visit where possible. If we are unable to speak to anyone at home and safely account for your child, we will report your child as missing to the police and may also make a referral to Children and Young People's Services.**

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Collect a leave of absence form from the school's office at the earliest convenience, fill it in and return it to the Attendance Leader as soon as possible. The Attendance Leader and the Headteacher will review all cases but cannot guarantee authorisation will be granted.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's GCSE course years.

8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

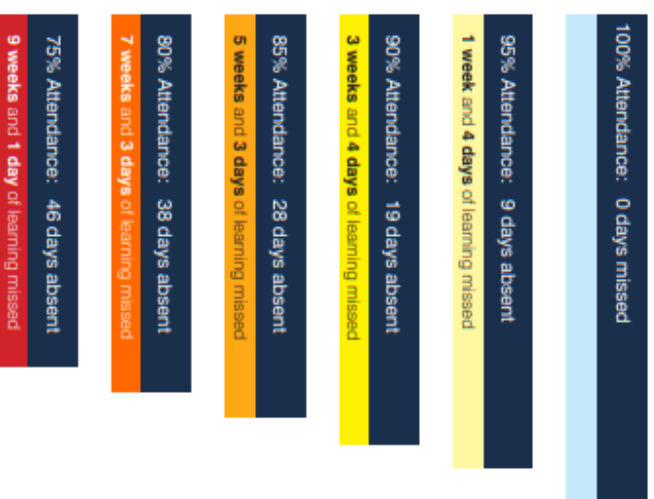
Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's tutor, Inclusion Officer or Head of Year immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading and sound acceptable. However, it can look like this:



Samuel Ward Academy

Chalkstone Way

Haverhill

Suffolk

CB9 0LD

Tel: 01 440 761511

www.samuelward.co.uk

Note the names of key contacts:

KS5 - Miss Coe 01440 760335

KS4 - Mrs Barnes 01440 760332

KS3 - Mrs Gillard 01440 760339

Working together to raise attendance and attainment for your child.

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.



Vector icons by Freepik



For some parents, **90%** may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or **19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 weeks.**

How to keep your child's attendance levels high.



Please try to book Doctors/Dental/ Opticians or any other appointments outside school hours where possible. If it is unavoidable, please ensure



they attend part of the day such as before the appointment or afterwards if this is possible.

Try to encourage full attendance, as this is a habit required for their future employment. Clearly, if your child has a high temperature, diarrhoea, vomiting or similar it would not be appropriate to bring them into school and they usually need a 24 hours recovery period.



However, if your child is feeling poorly with a headache, cold or stomach ache they can still attend



school supported by over the counter medicines given before school and with paracetamol,

which can be kept in the office for them. They should bring plenty of water to keep their fluids up throughout the day. Please be assured we will contact you if their symptoms get worse. If you are unsure how long your child should be absent with an illness speak to your child's school, your doctor or your pharmacist for advice.

As you will be aware it is policy not to authorise any holiday during school term time. While family holidays are enriching experiences, the school year is designed to give families the opportunity for these breaks without having to disrupt their children's education.

Persistent Absence

Any child with attendance below 90%, regardless of the reason for the absence, is considered to be a persistent absentee. This equates to just 2 days each month.

Is your child a persistent absentee?

Statistics show that persistent absentees are less likely to achieve their full potential, and can affect GCSE grades, and a child's future prospects.

Approx 90% of young people with an absence rate of 85% or below fail to achieve 5 or more good grades at GCSE.