The Polygon School
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POLICY DOCUMENT
013: Attendance

Access: Unrestricted
Publish to: All Staff & School Website
Status: Non-Statutory
Approval level: Full Governing Body

Review Responsibility	Valid From	Signed off	Valid to	Frequency Of review
JF	21-03-2019	Chair of Governors	21-03-2020	Annual
AHJ	21-03-2020		Open-ended	following further advice from Department of Education
AHJ	07-09-2020	FGB	20-03-2021	Annual (policy reinstated as schools fully reopened by government order,
AHJ	08-03-2021	FGB	01-09-2022	Annual or after advice from the Department of Education.
BP	01-09-2022	FGB	01-09-2023	Annually
BP	01-09-2023	FGB	01-09-2024	Annually
BP	01-09-2024	FGB	01-09-2025	Annually
MH/BP	01-09-2025	FGB	01-09-2026	Annually
MH/BP	September 2026	FGB	September 2027	Annually

Introduction

The Polygon School is a special school for young people aged 11-16 years for whom mainstream education is inappropriate. All pupils hold Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). All have Individual Education Plans and Individual Behaviour Plans that are regularly reviewed with parents/ carers. The school serves the community of Southampton City and takes most of its referrals from a feeder primary school or the Local Authority.

The Polygon Governors wish to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his true potential and meets their individual needs.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

The school recognises attendance as a key factor in safeguarding and work closely with other agencies supporting pupils.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Pupils will be placed on the appropriate pathway to support their engagement and attendance.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

The school acknowledges the expected practice that full time education for Key Stage 3 and 4 is expected to be around 25 hours per week of tuition, but that there is no legal definition of “full-time education”. The school also understands that the DfE expectation is that every child has 32.5 hours of school contact per week.

Aim

For every pupil to attend as frequently as possible, aiming for 100% attendance each school term.

Rationale

The school wishes every pupil to reach their full potential and it is more likely that this will happen if the pupil attends regularly. Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%

- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between secondary school, and higher education, employment or training
- close work with the Police, Youth Justice Service and Social Care shows a direct link between non-attendance and criminal behaviour

Guidance from KCSIE 2026:

Young carers Schools should be alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing.

Working with Others Promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school.

Mental health Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, attendance and progress at school.

Key Principles

Children have a right to good quality education and the school wishes to provide good quality education for all pupils on roll. Every pupil needs to be in school during the school term to help maximise their educational chances. Pupils in school are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour that may result in conflict with the Law. The school will use all possible avenues to achieve pupils' attendance including punitive measures if necessary. The school will set annual targets to assist in securing the best attendance possible for each pupil which will be negotiated with parent/carers.

Practice

1. The school will send a truancy text to the named parent/carer whose child fails to arrive in school as expected before 10.30 a.m. to ascertain reason for non-attendance. This will help both parent/carer and school keep a check on the child's safety. The relevant safeguarding team within Children's Services will be notified of any child on the Child protection register who fails to arrive at school without notice.

2. Parents/carers will notify the school by telephone if a pupil is absent as soon as possible on the first day of absence with an explanation for the absence and will notify the school each further day that the pupil is absent.

3. Parents/carers will notify the school of any planned absence and will try to keep medical appointments in school time to a minimum.

4. The school register will be marked correctly on SIMs and the data collated from the registers is shared with teachers, pupils and their parents. Every entry in the attendance or admission register is preserved for 6 years from the date the data was entered (taken from 'DfE working together to improve school attendance' published August 2024).

5. A child will be considered late if they fail to arrive during the morning or afternoon registration period. The school day starts at 8.40am and registration closes at 10.00am; an afternoon mark will be gained for attendance after 11.45am and afternoon registration closes at 1.15pm. A late mark does not count in attendance statistics. The timings have been decided to reflect the bus timetables for children who are travelling into the City where buses may only run one per hour.

6. To support good attendance, the school has a system of rewards where good attendance is recognised which includes, but is not limited to a weekly attendance draw, funded by the "Friends of the Polygon School Association", attendance certificates, invitations to school trips and activities designed specifically to reward good attendance. A tutor group Attendance Cup awarded weekly.

7. To support pupil engagement and therefore attendance, the school will use external alternative provisions for pupils who require a more personalised timetable. Whenever a pupil attends an alternative provision, the school will carry out due diligence checks in line with SCC recommendations. School will ensure there are suitable robust processes between the provision and school and that the monitoring of pupil progress and planning for post-placement are all in place. Sharing of updates is always undertaken with all stakeholders, and there is written record of progress monitoring.

8. The school will share attendance data with parents/carers during target setting days and on the annual academic report. A weekly telephone call to parent/carers will be made each Friday afternoon to ensure all significant adults are aware of the pupil's weekly attendance.

9. When a pupil has been absent from school for a significant period of time, a plan will be negotiated with parent/ carer to support the re-integration into school. A pupil is considered to be a persistent absentee (pa) when their attendance drops below 90%.

10. The school maintains a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data using SIMS, the school Information Management System. Regular monitoring by the Education Welfare Service supports the school to hold meetings to formulate an "Action Plan" to support attendance if the child's attendance falls below acceptable levels. This will include a Universal Help Assessment, a Families Matter referral and a MASH referral if appropriate.

11. The school will work with outside agencies to ensure that every means possible is explored to encourage attendance. The school will use the support of voluntary and statutory services to encourage attendance for pupils displaying signs of disengagement and will support reintegration following significant periods of absence. In specific instances, the school may commission personalised support for the child, with the support of the SEND Panel.

12. The school will, where necessary, refer to the relevant Education Welfare Service and make referrals to the appropriate legal team for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices to parents or further legal processes. The Education Welfare Officer for the school is provided by SCC.

13. Members of the senior leadership team will receive a weekly KPI report to allow scrutiny for pupils from vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After and PPG, in order to ensure those at risk of poor attendance are provided with the appropriate level of support.

14. Governors will receive attendance statistics and information on the strategies employed to improve individuals' attendance each term. The nominated governor for attendance is **Carley Sefton-Wilson**.

15. The school has nominated a member of the senior leadership team, **Matthew Harvey** to hold daily responsibility for attendance, supported by Senior Support Assistant**, Kevin Betlem**

16. The procedure on the removal of a pupil from roll can be found on page 23 of the school's Safeguarding Policy (Policy 023(a) Safeguarding and child Protection).

17. 'Working together to improve school attendance 2022' (updated July 9th 2026) – provides the school with DFE statutory guidance.

18. Southampton City Council School Attendance Roles and Responsibilities – Guidance for school's document; Education Welfare Service process and forms; and Penalty Notice request forms can be located on Young Southampton at the following web address:

    www.youngsouthampton.org/working-with-children/schools-guidance/school-attendance.aspx