

Staffordshire University Academy		Academy Policy Document			
Approved by:	LAC	Issue date:	Sept 2025	Review date:	Sept 2026
Policy Title	Attendance Policy				
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Attendance at SUA

Policy statement

Staffordshire University Academy is committed to ensuring that all students can fully access education and are supported to achieve their highest potential. We recognise the strong correlation between regular attendance, academic progress and emotional wellbeing, and acknowledge that absence from school can significantly disadvantage students both socially and academically. Our aim is to establish and maintain a culture in which excellent attendance and punctuality are consistently prioritised, with safeguarding firmly embedded at the centre of our approach.

Promoting strong attendance is a shared responsibility across the academy. Every member of staff plays a vital role in encouraging, supporting and recognising regular attendance. We adopt a relational, student-centred approach, ensuring that student feel safe, respected, understood and valued, which we know increases the likelihood of sustained attendance. From classroom teachers and form tutors to Heads of Year, pastoral staff and senior leaders, all colleagues contribute to an environment where attendance is championed and every day in the academy is recognised as important.

This policy is aligned with statutory guidance, including [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(DfE, 2024\)](#), [Education Act 1996](#), and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2025\)](#).

Roles and responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the operational management of attendance within the academy and retains accountability for ensuring that statutory duties are met. The Principal may, however, delegate the leadership of this area to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or to the Senior Attendance Champion.

The Senior Leadership Team and Senior Attendance Champion work together to ensure attendance remains a strategic priority via the academy development plan. They oversee the implementation of this policy, monitor patterns of attendance across the academy and ensure interventions are properly coordinated.

Day-to-day management of attendance is carried out by the Admissions and Attendance Officer and Admissions and Attendance Assistant. This role involves monitoring registers, contacting and supporting parents and carers when students are absent, and following up with families where concerns arise. The Attendance Officer works closely with form tutors, pastoral leads, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Attendance Champion. Together, they analyse attendance data, identify emerging trends at individual, group, and whole-academy level, and coordinate responses that are timely and effective.

Form tutors and pastoral leads play an essential role as the first line of contact with students and families. They are responsible for checking attendance daily, building positive relationships that encourage students to attend, and raising concerns swiftly where patterns of absence or lateness appear.

Parents and carers are expected to ensure that their child attends the academy every day, arrives punctually and is properly equipped for learning. They must notify the academy on the first day of absence with a clear reason and, where absence continues, keep the academy informed. In circumstances where absence is linked to medical appointments or health issues, evidence such as appointment cards or medical letters must be provided.

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Students themselves also carry responsibility for their attendance. They are expected to attend the academy daily, arrive punctually to lessons and engage fully in their education.

Support for students and families

The academy acknowledges that some students may face genuine barriers to regular attendance including medical conditions, social or emotional challenges or family circumstances such as caring responsibilities. We are committed to working with families in these situations to identify the underlying issues and put the right support in place.

This may include pastoral support, mentoring, referrals to Early Help or external agencies, reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or engagement with partner organisations such as the Young Carers team or Mental Health Support Teams. Our aim is always to work collaboratively with families removing barriers to attendance wherever possible.

The academy recognises that emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) can have a significant impact on students' education, wellbeing and long-term outcomes. To address this, we work in close partnership with Staffordshire County Council and external agencies to ensure students and families are supported effectively.

In Staffordshire, schools and academies can draw on guidance and resources developed by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) through the [Graduated Response Toolkit](#). This includes detailed advice on recognising the signs of EBSA, applying early interventions and using whole-school approaches to reduce barriers to attendance.

Additional local support is available through [Entrust Behaviour, Health and Wellbeing Teams](#), who provide practical strategies and targeted interventions, as well as a behaviour support phone line 0333 300 1900. Where appropriate, [Early Help Assessments](#) may be initiated to ensure that multi-agency support is coordinated and accessible for families.

The academy also offers a range of in-house interventions to address emotional based school avoidance. Our Inclusion and Attendance Teams work together to identify students showing early signs of emotionally based school avoidance through attendance monitoring and staff referrals. Targeted support includes personalised check-ins, structured re-engagement programmes, mentoring and tailored timetables where appropriate. In addition, small-group interventions focusing on emotional regulation, resilience and anxiety management are delivered to equip students with strategies to overcome barriers to attendance. These interventions are designed to complement external support and ensure continuity for students within the academy environment.

We also signpost families to services such as [Not Fine in School](#) (Staffordshire Connects), which provides parents and students resources to manage school refusal and related anxieties. Alongside this, we ensure parents are aware of available advice from Staffordshire Children's Services and local voluntary sector organisations who can offer guidance, advocacy and direct support.

In addition to local provision, we encourage families to access high-quality national resources. These include [Young Minds](#), [Stay Well](#) and [Happy Maps](#), which provide practical strategies for supporting children experiencing school anxiety or refusal, as well as the [Support Services for Education](#) and [School Avoidance Alliance](#), which offers courses and toolkits for both parents and professionals.

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Through these combined in-house, local and national support services, the academy aims to intervene early, provide targeted support and maintain a strong partnership between students, parents and professionals to reduce the impact of EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) and promote successful reintegration back into the academy.

Rewards and incentives for attendance

At SUA, we are committed to recognising and celebrating students who attend regularly, show improvement and demonstrate dedication to their education. Positive reinforcement is central to our whole-academy approach, helping to build motivation, pride and a culture where attending every day is valued. Our attendance reward system includes weekly, half-termly, termly and annual incentives, encouraging both individual and group progress. It is designed to be inclusive, acknowledging consistent achievement as well as positive improvement, with frequent and visible rewards that keep attendance a key priority. By celebrating the efforts of individuals, tutor groups and year groups, we create a positive and supportive atmosphere where every step towards better attendance is valued.

Weekly recognition

Students who achieve 100% attendance each week are recognised during tutor time or assemblies and awarded positive points via ClassCharts. In addition, tutor groups take part in a weekly attendance competition, with results being displayed and celebrated in assemblies each week. Winning tutor groups receive small class rewards and public recognition. Students with full weekly attendance are also entered into raffles, with prizes ranging from vouchers and fast-pass lunch tickets to SUA merchandise and stationery.

Individual rewards

To ensure progress as well as perfection is celebrated, students are rewarded in a variety of ways:

- Short-term recognition may include attendance star cards, positive/improvement letters sent home, positive phone calls or ClassCharts points.
- Half-termly and termly awards recognise both 100% attendance and significant improvements, with certificates presented through Attend.
- Annual awards celebrate students who maintain 100% attendance throughout the year with certificates, additional points, recognition in the termly and end-of-year celebration assemblies and invitations to special reward events or visits.

Tutor group rewards

Attendance is a team effort and group-based incentives promote collective responsibility. Each week, the tutor group with the highest attendance is recognised as 'Tutor Group of the Week' and earns a group treat alongside points towards the Attendance Cup. At the end of each half-term, the group with the highest cumulative score wins the SUA Attendance Cup and enjoys a larger reward such as a breakfast morning, games session or pizza lunch.

Academy attendance cup

The academy Attendance Cup brings together healthy competition across year groups. Each week, attendance data is analysed and points are awarded to the tutor group with the highest average attendance. Points are accumulated over the term, with the winning group receiving a special celebration event. This initiative builds pride, teamwork and a shared commitment to attendance on a whole-academy scale.

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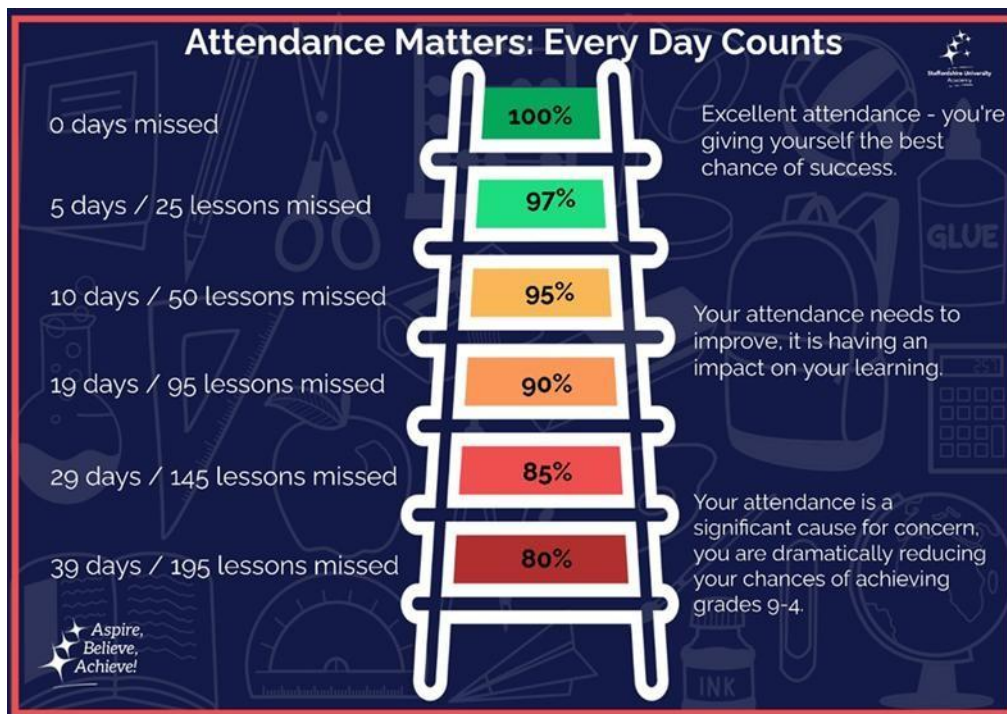


Attendance expectations and targets

At SUA, we set high expectations for attendance because we know that regular attendance is directly linked to academic success and personal development. Every student should aim to have an attendance of 100% across the academic year.

To put this into perspective:

- 95% attendance = around 10 academy days missed in a year
- Even small amounts of absence can have a measurable impact on progress, outcomes and future opportunities.



The academy is committed to reducing the number of unauthorised absences. We value positive and proactive partnerships with parents and carers continuing to work closely with families to support good attendance and ensure every student can thrive.

Staffing structure

- **Strategic lead for attendance:**
Miss S Randle (Assistant Principal)
- **Operational lead for attendance:**
Mr S Handy (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Attendance Champion)
- **Daily monitoring:**

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Attendance is recorded and monitored each day by form tutors and the attendance team, this monitored via SIMS and Attend.

- **Ongoing tracking:**

Attendance is tracked closely by pastoral leaders, including Heads of Year, as well as Heads of Faculties and subject leaders. This is tracked via SIMS and Attend.

- **Reporting:**

Attendance data is reported to form tutors, the pastoral team, the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Academy Council. Reports are produced by SIMS and Attend.

Student daily routines

Students should arrive at the academy before or at 8:30am, as the tutor check-in period begins promptly at 8:30am. Upon arrival, students should make their way directly to their tutor group, where the teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from the academy. Any student arriving after 8:30am must enter the academy through the main Marston Road student entrance, staff ensure that all late students are registered immediately, both for safeguarding purposes and to comply with fire safety regulations. Students who arrive late will also be recorded by a member of the attendance team at the late gate, ensuring a complete and accurate record of punctuality each morning. Persistent lateness will be addressed and challenged as part of the academy's commitment to high attendance standards. Late arrivals are tracked daily through the academy's attendance system, enabling early identification of patterns and timely interventions. It is important to note that even minor lateness has a significant impact on learning; for example, a student who is 15 minutes late every day effectively misses the equivalent of 10 full academy days over the academic year.

The government expects academies to take a proactive and consistent approach to managing U codes (unauthorised absence for arriving after registers close). Under the national "10 in 10" expectation, academies must not allow students to accumulate repeated U codes without intervention. If a student receives ten unauthorised sessions within a ten-week period, this can trigger formal processes such as penalty notices or referrals for further action. Registers are taken promptly each morning, recording late arrivals accurately and follow up immediately with students and families to address the reasons behind persistent lateness. Our approach reflects the DfE's wider emphasis on early intervention, safeguarding and accountability, ensuring that all students understand the importance of punctuality and regular attendance.

Wave approach to attendance support

At Staffordshire University Academy, we operate a graduated and layered model of intervention to address attendance concerns early and effectively, ensuring that students receive the right support, at the right time, from the right people. Attendance is closely monitored, we use a staged approach to keep parents and carers informed and involved.

If a student's attendance falls below 97%, parents or carers will receive a wave one letter, highlighting the concern and offering guidance on how attendance can be improved. Form tutors will also make contact to discuss the situation and offer support, including one-to-one conversations with students to explore strategies for improving attendance.

If attendance continues to be a concern, a wave two letter will be issued, parents or carers may be invited to a meeting in school to discuss ongoing barriers and jointly agree on an action plan. A wave three letter will follow if attendance does not show improvement, indicating a heightened level of concern and outlining additional support measures. Finally, a wave four letter signals that, despite previous interventions, attendance remains a

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significant concern, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will become involved to provide further support, where necessary and implement statutory measures.

Throughout all stages of this process, our focus is on working collaboratively with families to identify and address barriers to attendance. We aim to support every student in returning to regular attendance as quickly as possible, ensuring they can access their full educational potential and thrive both academically and socially.

Wave 1 – Tutor support

Tutors are the first line of support, providing consistency and early intervention in a trusted daily setting. They check in with students during morning registration, have conversations to identify early barriers to attendance, provide encouragement and praise, set informal attendance targets, communicate with home where appropriate and focus on building positive routines and relationships.

Wave 2 – Head of Year intervention

Heads of Year provide more targeted oversight, coordinating support for students showing early signs of disengagement. They review attendance patterns and explore underlying causes, meet with students one-to-one to discuss challenges, contact parents or carers directly to offer support, provide time-limited interventions and refer students to internal support services, such as Wellbeing, SEMH, or SEND, as required.

Wave 3 – Attendance Officer/Attendance team

The Attendance Team ensures robust systems are in place to monitor, record and respond to sustained absence. They issue formal letters home outlining attendance concerns, develop Attendance Support Plans (ASP), monitor attendance over a set period with clear targets, conduct home visits or phone calls to support family engagement and make safeguarding referrals where concerns persist.

Wave 4 – External agency support

External professionals are involved when a student's needs are complex or when persistent absence begins to place their wellbeing at risk. Support may include referrals to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) or the Local Authority Inclusion Team. With parental consent, an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Team Around the Family (TAF) process may be initiated to coordinate multi-agency support. Staff may also work closely with external partners such as CAMHS, the Mental Health Schools Support Team, Family Support Workers, or the allocated school nurse. In cases where families do not engage or absence continues despite intervention, the academy may need to consider referrals to the local authority or Staffordshire Families Integrated Front Door (SFIFD).

Why this approach works?

Our wave approach is proactive, structured and focused on the needs of each student. It helps us identify attendance concerns early and provide support that is timely and meaningful. Support is tailored to the individual needs of the student and their family, collaborative in nature and involves working closely with staff, families and external agencies where appropriate. The level of support increases only when needed, ensuring that interventions are appropriate and proportionate. By applying this approach consistently across the academy, we aim to reduce barriers to attendance, build strong and supportive relationships and help every student attend regularly, achieve their best and succeed.

Attendance monitoring systems and processes

We use the 'Attend' school attendance software to monitor student attendance in real time. This enables a responsive and proactive approach, allowing staff to intervene early and tailor support to individual students.

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Attend helps us identify patterns of concern, respond quickly to emerging issues and provide targeted support where needed. Accurate, up-to-date attendance monitoring is vital not only for safeguarding but also for supporting academic progress and overall wellbeing. The system provides a centralised, user-friendly platform that ensures all staff can access current information, take appropriate action and maintain high standards of attendance management across the academy.

Attend also improves accuracy and efficiency across the academy. Regular register reports and real-time alerts support quick identification of missing marks, unexplained absence and safeguarding concerns, allowing staff to complete same-day follow-ups and intervention. Family engagement is strengthened through built-in communication tools that keep parents and carers informed and involved.

The system's clear data dashboards highlight trends and priority students. Because Attend is accessible to all staff, from tutors to senior leaders, it reinforces our whole-academy approach to attendance. Every action is automatically logged, improving accountability and providing the evidence required to meet DfE expectations and demonstrate due diligence.

What is Attend?

Attend is a cloud-based attendance management system that gives staff detailed, live insight into student attendance patterns. It allows for:

- Real-time attendance recording
- Automated alerts for unexplained absences
- Integrated communication tools (e.g. SMS, email, and letters to parents/carers)
- Data analysis dashboards
- Customisable reports for different staff roles (e.g. tutors, Heads of Year, SLT)

How we use Attend at SUA?

1. Daily registration and oversight

- Tutors take attendance register every morning using SIMS that writes directly back to the Attend system
- The attendance team monitors late arrivals and unexplained absences in real time
- Parents/carers can be contacted quickly if no reason for absence is provided

2. Live alerts and safeguarding

- If a student is absent without explanation, Attend flags this immediately
- First-day calling and parental contact procedures are launched promptly
- Alerts can be escalated internally to the Safeguarding Team if needed

3. Tracking and intervention

- Tutors, Heads of Year and the attendance team use Attend to:
- Identify students falling below attendance thresholds
- Spot trends (e.g. regular absence on specific days)
- Log interventions and meetings with students/families
- All interactions are logged and reviewed, ensuring consistency and accountability.

4. Reporting and review

- Weekly, termly, and year-to-date attendance reports can be generated by year group, key cohort, or individual student.
- SLT and Local Academy Council (LAC) can access high-level summaries to support strategic planning.
- Data is used during parental meetings, Early Help Assessments and multi-agency reviews.

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Procedures, monitoring and intervention

At SUA, first-day absence procedures are managed through SIMS and Attend, with parents and carers contacted automatically by text, email, or telephone where a student is not in the academy. Where absence remains unexplained, the Attendance Officer and Assistant escalates the matter through further contact, home visits, or safe and well checks.

The system also supports the generation of formal intervention letters, attendance contracts and personalised attendance reports, ensuring a clear chronology of actions is recorded. This enables senior leaders and LAC members to monitor the impact of interventions and provides the Local Authority with the evidence required should formal action become necessary.

If attendance fails to improve despite support and intervention, concerns are escalated via the Attend system and, where appropriate, referred to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team. In such cases, statutory measures including penalty notices and prosecutions may be pursued in line with national guidance.

Parents and carers must contact the Attendance Officer as soon as possible to explain an absence or lateness by calling 01543 224 700 (Option 1), and a reason must always be provided for every absence. Where attendance falls below 90%, absences will only be authorised with medical evidence of illness. Minor issues will not be accepted as sufficient reason to miss school, and non-urgent medical or dental appointments should not be arranged during the academy day.

Students who arrive late must explain the reason for their lateness. If the reason is not acceptable, staff will issue a sanction in line with the academy behaviour policy. Punctuality is important and students are expected to build good habits of arriving on time the academy.

The academy will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes are used:

- / Present AM
- \ Present PM
- L Late in registration time
- K Attending education provision set up by the local authority
- V Attending an educational visit or trip
- P Participating in a sporting activity
- W Work Experience
- B Attending any other approved educational activity
- M Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- J1 Interview
- S Study Leave
- X Not required to attend
- D Dual registered at another school
- C Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1 Authorised absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
- C2 Part-time timetable
- T Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- R Religious observance
- I Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Q Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

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- Y1 Unable to attend to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- E Suspended or permanently excluded
- G Holiday not granted
- N Reason for absence not yet established
- O Absence in other unknown circumstances
- U Late after registration close
- Z Prospective pupil not on admission register
- # Planned school closure

****Note:**** Code H (authorised holiday) is withdrawn. Exceptional term-time leave should be recorded as C

When the academy has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant students who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the academy has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Students who are absent from the academy but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register. Under the [DfE \(2024\) attendance framework](#), students receiving remote education for authorised health or isolation reasons will be recorded using the appropriate ‘Y’ or ‘C’ attendance codes in line with current DfE guidance.

Students who need to leave the academy during the day must bring a note from parents or carers, and permission will be granted or refused by the Head of Year or attendance team. For any unexplained absences the academy will contact parents or carers if no reason is provided. Where no suitable reason is given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In some cases, the Attendance Officer, safeguarding or pastoral team may carry out home safe and well visits to discuss attendance concerns or to obtain reasons for absence.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absence can only be authorised where a valid explanation is provided and accepted by the academy. Examples of authorised absence include some types of illness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments, recognised religious observance and exceptional circumstances such as the death of a close family member. Where medical appointments are unavoidable, students are expected to return to academy afterwards and attend before the appointment if possible.

The academy will not authorise absence for activities such as family holidays during term time, shopping trips, haircuts, or for students being kept at home to care for siblings or other family members. In cases where the reason for absence is unclear or insufficiently evidenced, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents are reminded that routine dental check-ups should not be scheduled during the academy day.

Attendance and the link to safeguarding

At SUA, we recognise that good attendance is not only essential for academic success but also a safeguarding matter. [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#) makes clear that:

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'All staff should be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm. Children missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, mental health issues, substance abuse, and travelling to conflict zones.'

We therefore treat absence as a safeguarding issue as well as an attendance issue, ensuring concerns are shared with our Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Statutory attendance information for parents and carers

At SUA, we are legally required to monitor and report student attendance in line with the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and Staffordshire County Council guidance. Parents and carers play a vital role in ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually. The following statutory information is drawn from [Working Together to Improve School Attendance \(DfE, 2024\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(DfE, 2025\)](#).

Legal duty to attend school

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 18) must receive full-time education, either at school or otherwise. Once enrolled at SUA, your child is expected to attend every day the academy is open, unless they are too unwell to attend or there is an exceptional reason.

The DfE makes clear that:

"Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly." ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024](#)).

Persistent and severe absence

The Department for Education defines clear thresholds for concern:

- Persistent Absence (PA): Attendance of 90% and below (equivalent to missing around one day every two weeks).
- Severe Absence (SA): Attendance of 50% and below (equivalent to missing more than half of all school sessions). Severe absence is treated as a significant safeguarding concern.

Students whose attendance falls within either threshold will be closely monitored and supported through our Wave Approach to Attendance Support. This may involve meetings with the attendance team, Heads of Year and multi-agency professionals. Where attendance does not improve, referrals to external agencies or legal intervention may follow.

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The guidance also reminds

schools to:

“Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.” ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024](#)).

Holiday requests and Staffordshire County Council guidance

Holidays during term time will not be authorised except in *exceptional circumstances* as defined by the academy and in line with Staffordshire County Council guidelines. Exceptional circumstances may include serious family emergencies but do not include:

- Family holidays
- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Trips or events based on cost or convenience

Parents and carers must submit any holiday requests in writing well in advance. The Principal will consider each request, but holidays based on preference or financial reasons cannot be authorised. Where absence is unauthorised, it will be recorded accordingly and may result in a penalty notice.

The DfE is clear that:

“Headteachers should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher does not authorise a leave request and the pupil is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a penalty notice.” ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024](#)).

Penalty notices and fine fees

Staffordshire County Council enforces penalty notices for unauthorised absence, including term-time holidays taken without permission. The current penalty fees are:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days.
- Failure to pay may result in prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court.

These fines are issued by the Local Authority as part of their statutory duty to ensure children attend school regularly and to address persistent absenteeism. For this reason, we treat repeated or prolonged absence as a safeguarding matter as well as an attendance concern.

Medical and persistent absence procedures

At SUA, we take attendance seriously and recognise that medical or illness-related absence must be managed carefully. Academies have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. For students whose attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend. Acceptable evidence includes appointment cards, letters from medical professionals or copies of prescribed medication. This process is in line with Department for Education guidance.

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Managing medical/illness absence

When a student returns from an absence due to illness, the following procedures are followed:

- Students will usually have an informal discussion with the Attendance Officer to ensure they are fit for the academy, receive any support for missed work through our pastoral team and understand the importance of regular attendance. Where appropriate, the Attendance Officer liaises with the pastoral team to provide additional support.
- If the level of medical absence is concerning, parents/carers will be contacted to explore ways to support the student through a Care Plan, ensuring medical conditions are managed safely in the academy.
- The Attendance Officer may suggest a visit to a GP or other health professional if needed.
- Students and parents/carers may be invited to attendance meetings with the form tutor, pastoral leaders and/or the safeguarding team if attendance becomes a concern.
- If parents/carers do not engage and all other support has been exhausted, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO may initiate a Fixed Penalty Notice or a time-limited monitoring period. The academy aims to work collaboratively with parents to avoid formal penalties whenever possible.
- Following investigation and close monitoring by the Local Authority, unresolved issues may result in a Penalty Notice or, ultimately, prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance and complete a leave of absence request form.

The academy will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The academy will define this as a day where the students parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The academy may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence

Where a student's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

Legal framework

This policy has been reviewed to ensure alignment with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) procedures and thresholds and will be updated as required in response to future SSCB guidance or statutory safeguarding updates.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (as amended)
- [DfE \(2024\) 'Working together to improve school attendance'](#)

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- [Working together to improve school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DfE \(2016\) 'Children missing education'](#)
- [DfE \(2025\) 'Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2025'](#)
- [DfE \(2023\) 'Providing remote education'](#)
- [Working together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – Early Help Assessment Guidance for Professionals](#)

The academy reserves the right to withdraw students from enrichment activities if attendance or punctuality is poor, this may occur at short notice.



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(Appendix 1) – Wave 1 Attendance Letter

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Dear **#ContactName#**,

Wave 1 Attendance Concern Letter

Student name: **#StudentLegalForename# #StudentLegalSurname#**

DOB: **#StudentDOB#**

Attendance: **#Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#**

Unauthorised %: **#Attendance_Unauthorised_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#** Days

missed: **#MissedDaysCount_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#**

I am writing to bring to your attention a concern regarding **#StudentChosenFirstName#**'s academy attendance, which has fallen below 97%. Regular attendance is essential for your child's academic progress and overall wellbeing, and we want to work together to ensure they have the best possible opportunities for success.

At SUA, we closely monitor attendance, as research shows that even small drops in attendance can have a significant impact on learning and achievement. We understand that absences can sometimes be unavoidable due to illness or other circumstances, but we kindly ask for your support in ensuring that **#StudentChosenFirstName#** attends the academy regularly and punctually.

We also want to remind you of NHS guidance regarding school attendance and illness. In most cases, children with mild illnesses, such as colds, coughs or sore throats, can still attend school. If your child is feeling unwell, we encourage you to refer to NHS advice on whether they are well enough to attend.

If there are any specific reasons affecting **#StudentChosenFirstName#**'s attendance, or if you require any support, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to discuss ways we can assist in improving attendance.

Please take this letter as a gentle reminder of the importance of maintaining good attendance. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working together to support **#StudentChosenFirstName#**'s education.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact **#StudentChosenFirstName#**'s form tutor via email in the first instance via info@suacademy.co.uk

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Team

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(Appendix 2) Wave 2 Attendance Letter

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Dear #ContactName#

Wave 2 Attendance Concern Letter: Attendance under 94%

Student name: #StudentLegalForename# #StudentLegalSurname# DOB:#StudentDOB#

Attendance: #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

Unauthorised Sessions: #Sessions_UnauthorisedSessions_CurrentAcademicYear#

Days missed from the academy: #MissedDaysCount_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

I am writing to advise you that your child's attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to 94% or below and as a result we are becoming concerned that your child is missing a significant part of learning. Our records show that #StudentChosenFirstName#'s current attendance is #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#, which is below our academy's expected minimum of 97%. We understand that absences can sometimes be unavoidable due to illness or other exceptional circumstances. However, frequent absences can impact academic progress, social development and overall wellbeing. If you require a copy of your child's attendance record, which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, please contact your child's Head of Year.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason, please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

We must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the academy at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice Fine being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

We would like to work together to support #StudentChosenFirstName# in improving their attendance. If there are any circumstances that we may not be aware of that are affecting their ability to attend regularly, please contact us so that we can discuss how we can help. We are able to offer a range of support, including an Early Help Assessment (EHA), to work collaboratively with you in removing barriers and putting the right measures in place. We kindly ask for your commitment in ensuring that #StudentChosenFirstName# attends school consistently moving forward, we are here to support you every step of the way.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year



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(Appendix 3) Wave 3 Attendance Letter

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Dear #ContactName#,

Wave 3 Attendance Concern Letter

Student name: #StudentLegalForename# #StudentLegalSurname#

DOB: #StudentDOB#

Attendance: #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

Unauthorised sessions: #Sessions_UnauthorisedSessions_CurrentAcademicYear# Days

missed: #MissedDaysCount_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

I am writing to express my concern regarding #StudentChosenFirstName#'s attendance to the academy, which has now reached a level where they are at risk of being classified as persistently absent. Regular attendance is crucial for academic success, personal development, and future opportunities.

Our records show that #StudentChosenFirstName#'s attendance is currently at #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#, which is below the minimum expected standard of at least 97%. We understand that there may be valid reasons for absences and we want to work together to support #StudentChosenFirstName# in improving their attendance.

To address this concern, we kindly ask you to:

- Ensure that #StudentChosenFirstName# attends the academy every day unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence
- Provide medical evidence if absences are due to illness
- Contact the academy promptly to discuss any barriers preventing attendance.

When your child's attendance falls below 90%, or accumulates ten unauthorised sessions within a ten-week period, you are also at risk of being referred for a Fixed Penalty Warning. This means #StudentChosenFirstName# will have a period of 20 school days to demonstrate an improvement in attendance. If this is not demonstrated then a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued, which could result in a fine of £80 per parent. If your child's attendance continues to deteriorate following this period without good reason then the Local Authority may pursue legal action against you.

To support you and avoid any unnecessary action, please contact us to arrange a date and time when you can call in to discuss strategies to improve your child's attendance and any other issues which you feel may be relevant, attendance@suacademy.co.uk or 01543 224 700.

Kind regards



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Mr. S Handy
 DSL & Senior Attendance Champion

(Appendix 4) Wave 4 Attendance Letter

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL #ContactAddressBlock# #CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Dear #ContactName#,

Wave 4 Attendance Concern Letter: Final Warning Letter

Student name: #StudentLegalForename# #StudentLegalSurname# DOB: #StudentDOB#
Attendance: #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#
Unauthorised Sessions: #Sessions_UnauthorisedSessions_CurrentAcademicYear# Days missed: #MissedDaysCount_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

During a routine inspection of our registers by the Local Authorities Education Welfare Officer, your child has been identified as being persistently absent and the threshold has been met for statutory action. We have tried to work with you to improve your child’s attendance and have expressed our concerns regarding this, but we have seen no improvement. A decision has been made to make a referral to the Local Authority for persistent absence.

The Local Authority will now be reviewing the information we have passed to them and will consider whether to instigate legal proceedings against you for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. I am obliged to remind you that Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 says, "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence."

If the reasons given for your child's irregular academy attendance are not satisfactory, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law. If the case is proven in the Magistrates Courts, you may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000. Furthermore, Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1996 says, "If a child in the circumstances mentioned in sub-section 1 the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at school and fails without reasonable justification to cause them to do so, they are guilty of an offence" If the case is proven under section 444 (1a) the Magistrates Court may fine you up to a maximum of £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months.

The Local Authority will be in contact with you shortly but in the meantime, we must stress the importance of your child attending the academy every day. We will continue to support yourself and your child with the interventions currently in place. If you have any questions or concerns relating to your child’s attendance, then I would encourage you to contact myself so we can discuss how best to support you and your child.

Yours sincerely



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S Handy".

Mr S Handy
DSL & Senior Attendance Champion



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(Appendix 5)- Attendance Improvement letter

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Audience:	Staff	Students	LAC	Parents	

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Dear #ContactName#

Attendance Improvement Recognition

Student name: #StudentChosenFullName# **DOB:** #StudentDOB#

Attendance: #Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#

Following our routine daily/weekly attendance reviews, we are pleased to inform you that we have noticed a significant improvement in #StudentChosenFirstName#'s attendance to the academy. We truly appreciate your efforts in ensuring regular attendance, as it plays a vital role in their academic progress and overall success.

We will continue to monitor and support #StudentChosenFirstName#'s attendance at the academy and we encourage you to maintain this positive progress. Consistent attendance not only enhances learning opportunities but also fosters a sense of responsibility and engagement in academy life.

If you have any queries or require further support, please do not hesitate to contact us at attendance@suacademy.co.uk or call 01543 224 700.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

The attendance Team

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(Appendix 6) – Holiday Request Letter (Authorised)

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

Name – Student name - DOB:

Dear Parent name,

Thank you for the Leave of Absence request dated **0th Month Year** advising you intend to take **#StudentChosenFullName#** out of the academy on the **0th Month Year**.

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and academy governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

New government regulations prevents SUA from authorising Leave of Absence for the purpose of a family holiday; **however, we have considered your application and, on this occasion, we are able to authorise the absence due to the identification of exceptional circumstances.**

We are obliged to inform you that future requests for a leave of absence in term time may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct and the, "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024). For your information the penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **First** offence the penalty notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **Second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 28 days.

Following the second offence **every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. We must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this decision, which follows Local Authority and government guidance stating that family holidays should be taken during the 13 weeks of school holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

If you would like to talk this through or need any further support, please feel free to contact our Attendance Officer, Mr Bate, on 01543 224700, or by email at attendance@suacademy.co.uk.

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(Appendix 7) – Holiday Request Letter (Unauthorised)

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

Name – Student name - DOB:

Dear Parent name,

Thank you for the notification dated **0th Month Year** advising you intend to take **#StudentChosenFullName#** out of the academy between the dates of **0th and 0th Month Year**.

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and the academy governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

We have considered your application very carefully. Although we understand the reason for your request, we are unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as we believe the circumstances are not exceptional or in line with academy policy. **Therefore, your child’s absence from the academy during this period will be recorded as unauthorised absence and will be recorded in the attendance register with the “G” code.**

We are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child’s absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the, “Working Together to Improve School attendance”, statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **First** offence the penalty notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

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For a **Second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 28 days.

Following the second offence **every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this decision, which follows Local Authority and government guidance stating that family holidays should be taken during the 13 weeks of school holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

If you would like to talk this through or need any further support, please feel free to contact our Attendance Officer, Mr Bate, on 01543 224700, or by email at attendance@suacademy.co.uk.

(Appendix 8) – Suspicion of holiday letter

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

#ContactAddress_BlockFull#

#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#

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Dear Parent's name

Name – Student name – DOB

We have reason to believe that **#StudentChosenFullName#** absences between **0th and 0th Month** were due to unrequested leave. The reason for this is because:

-
-

We want to make every effort to establish the reason for students absence. Where no reason for absence is provided within 5 academy days or the academy is not satisfied that the reason given is legitimate, we are required to amend the pupil's attendance to be recorded as unauthorised.

We understand that you may wish to offer an alternative explanation for your child's absence. We will, therefore, allow you 5 academy days from the date of this letter to provide evidence to us that supports a legitimate reason for the absence. **If we do not receive appropriate evidence, by this time, then we will continue to code your child's absence as an unauthorised.**

We are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the, "Working Together to Improve School attendance", statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **First** offence the penalty notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **Second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 28 days.

Following the second offence **every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this decision, which follows Local Authority and government guidance stating that family holidays should be taken during the 13 weeks of school holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

If you would like to talk this through or need any further support, please feel free to contact our Attendance Officer, Mr Bate, on 01543 224700, or by email at attendance@suacademy.co.uk.