



Serenity School

Attendance Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Policy Statement	3
2. Parental Engagement.....	3
3. Attendance Targets and Monitoring.....	3
4. Registration and Recording Absences.....	4
5. Categories of Absence	4
6. Fixed Penalty Notices and Legal Action	4
7. Support for SEND Pupils.....	4
8. Support for pupils in the Early Years.....	5
9. Procedure for Absences	5
10. Procedure for Challenging Sickness Absences	7
11. Support.....	8
12. Rewards and Incentives for Attendance.....	8
13. Collaboration with External Agencies	8
14. Use of data	8
15. Conclusion.....	8
Appendix A: Attendance Codes	9
Appendix B. Flowchart for Procedures of Absences.....	11

1. Policy Statement

Serenity School is committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their individual needs, have access to a full, effective, and efficient education. We recognise that good attendance plays a key role in ensuring pupils feel engaged, valued, and can achieve their full potential. At Serenity, we understand the challenges faced by pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and will provide a flexible, supportive environment that encourages high attendance, while working closely with families and external agencies to address any barriers to regular school attendance.

We aim for all pupils to achieve at least 95% attendance over the course of the school year and will implement early interventions to support families and students at risk of persistent absence.

Serenity School promotes a whole-school approach to attendance, where all staff recognise and support high attendance as a shared priority that contributes to pupils' academic and personal success.

2. Parental Engagement

Parental involvement is crucial in maintaining good attendance. We encourage parents to communicate regularly with the school and to notify us of any attendance issues as early as possible. We will provide multiple channels of communication for parents, including phone calls, texts, emails, and an online parent portal. For pupils with known attendance issues, parents will receive regular feedback and may be invited to attendance support meetings.

Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure their child attends school regularly. We work in partnership with parents to support this responsibility, fostering a collaborative approach to improve attendance.

Where persistent absenteeism is identified, parents will be asked to engage in more structured interventions, such as attendance contracts or meetings with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), SEND Coordinator (SENDCO), or external professionals, as appropriate.

3. Attendance Targets and Monitoring

Serenity School sets attendance targets annually, in line with the School Development Plan (SDP). Our target is for pupils to maintain at least 95% attendance, with a particular focus on early intervention for those who fall below this threshold. For pupils with complex medical or therapeutic needs, individual attendance plans will be established, acknowledging that some absences may be unavoidable due to health-related appointments or treatments.

The Attendance Officer, in collaboration with the SENDCO and other relevant staff, will monitor attendance regularly. A member of the Senior Management Team will oversee all attendance efforts, monitoring data, addressing attendance trends, and coordinating interventions school-wide. This role ensures that attendance remains a priority across the school and that staff have the necessary support to address attendance challenges effectively. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will receive additional monitoring, with action plans developed to support improvements in attendance.

The school will prioritise attendance monitoring for vulnerable pupils, including those identified as Children in Need, Looked After Children, and others with safeguarding concerns, to provide targeted early intervention. This process will involve parents, relevant staff, and where necessary, external professionals.

For pupils with **severe absence** (attendance below 50%), the school will provide intensified support, including multi-agency collaboration as needed. This may involve partnerships with local authorities, safeguarding teams, and external agencies to ensure a holistic approach to improving attendance and addressing complex barriers.

4. Registration and Recording Absences

The school records attendance on Bromcom. Pupils are required to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless a statutory reason for absence applies (such as illness, medical appointments, or other exceptional circumstances). Attendance is registered each morning and afternoon, and all absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised based on the information provided by parents.

Absence codes and recording procedures have been updated to reflect the latest DfE guidance. For example, any COVID-19-related absences will be recorded using the 'X' code, as per current public health advice.

Parents are expected to notify the school by 9:20 a.m. on the first day of absence, either via phone or through the school's parent portal. If no reason for absence is provided, the school will contact parents by phone and text to follow up.

5. Categories of Absence

- **Authorised Absence:** These include illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance, or other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher. For SEND pupils, medical evidence may be required if attendance falls below 95%, and home visits may be conducted to ensure pupil wellbeing.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** Absences without a valid reason or not agreed in advance will be marked as unauthorised. Examples include family holidays taken without permission or persistent lateness.
- **Lateness:** Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be recorded as late. Recurrent lateness will be addressed through targeted interventions, including meetings with parents and involvement of the EWO. After three instances of unauthorised lateness, a warning letter will be sent home, and further action may be taken, including issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

6. Fixed Penalty Notices and Legal Action

In line with the latest DfE guidance, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) may be issued after a national threshold of 10 unauthorised absences (5 school days) within a rolling 10-week period. The fine structure is as follows:

- **First Offence:** £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.
- **Second Offence within 3 years:** £160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.
- **Third Offence and Further Offences within 3 years:** Cases will be referred to the Magistrates' Court, where a fine of up to £2,500 per parent, per child, and a criminal record may result."

FPNs will be issued to each parent or guardian responsible for the child's care. Parents are encouraged to work with the school to avoid legal action and address attendance concerns proactively.

7. Support for SEND Pupils

As a SEND school, we recognise that some pupils may have health or learning needs that can affect their attendance. The school will work closely with parents, the local authority, and healthcare professionals to develop personalised attendance plans for pupils who are unable to maintain the typical attendance targets due to medical conditions or therapeutic needs, making reasonable adjustments to support their unique needs as appropriate.

- **Personalised Learning Packages:** Where necessary, Serenity School will provide home learning options, transitional programmes, or flexible timetables to support pupils who may have difficulty attending school full-time.
- **Welfare Checks:** For vulnerable pupils, welfare calls and home visits may be conducted to ensure the child's wellbeing when they are absent for extended periods.

The school will collaborate closely with external services, such as healthcare providers, educational psychologists, and SEND support services, to provide comprehensive support for pupils. This includes ensuring all reasonable adjustments are in place to maximise their attendance and engagement in the educational programme.

8. Support for pupils in the Early Years

Attendance for EYFS pupils will be monitored with a focus on establishing regular routines. Recognising that younger children may have additional health-related needs, the school will work closely with families to support attendance, ensuring flexibility while reinforcing the importance of regular school participation

9. Procedure for Absences

(See Appendix B for a visual summary of Procedures for absence)

The process outlined below must be followed from the first day of absence and as soon as contact is made with the parent and/or the pupil returns to school, attendance should be monitored in line with the most appropriate process. Where no contact is made with the parent following the process below, the CME process should be triggered.

For formal attendance interventions, the school will utilise structured documentation, such as the Intervention and Support Meeting Form, to ensure consistency in recording and tracking all support measures. This form documents attendance history, views from stakeholders, and specific attendance goals, aligning with our approach to transparency and accountability in attendance management.

First Day Absence

If a child is absent, Parents/Carers will be expected to contact the school office and leave a message stating the name of the pupil and reason for absence before 9:20am. If a call has not been received by 10:00am, the school Office Administrator will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence. This information will then be recorded as required. If absence reason is unknown, Code N will be used temporarily.

For any absence recorded with **Code N** (Reason Not Yet Established), the school will update the attendance code within five school days once the reason is ascertained, as per DfE guidelines. If no valid reason is provided within this period, **Code O** (Unauthorised Absence) will be applied.

Day 2-3 Absence

If a child remains absent for more than 2 consecutive days, phone calls should continue to be made to priority 1 and priority 2 contacts. In the case of children who are CIN/CP/LAC/TAF/etc. the social worker must also be contacted to ascertain the whereabouts of the student. Again, Code N will be used where absence reason is unknown.

In the case that the school has not received any information by the third day, a letter will be sent out by the Education Welfare Officer, requesting parents to make contact and to explain absences.

When attendance falls below 95% attendance (more than 3 days absence)

Deteriorating attendance must be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity in order to promote the development of good habits and prevent further absences from accruing.

When a pupil finishes an academic year at the expected level of attendance of 95%, they would essentially have been absent for 10 school days. Our role is to maintain this level of attendance so that the pupil is not adversely affected by non-attendance at school. When attendance drops below 95% over a period of time, parents may not necessarily be aware of this in which case, the school will inform the parents of this at the earliest opportunity. The school will also send a letter to parents reminding them of their legal obligation to ensure regular attendance at school, to inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below the expected level of attendance, that it will continue to be monitored and that a further deterioration in attendance will lead to attendance intervention possibly from the Educational Welfare Officer.

Where pupil's attendance has dropped below 95% attendance primarily due to sickness absence, the Sickness Absence Leaflet may be attached to a letter and sent out as an attempt to deter further absences.

6-10 days of Absence

In the case that a child has been missing from education for 6-10 days, the Education Welfare Officer is to action a referral carrying out relevant checks to ascertain whereabouts of pupil(s); Home Visit, neighbours, calls, letters, sibling schools, sibling school EWO, check with any other involved professionals and so on.

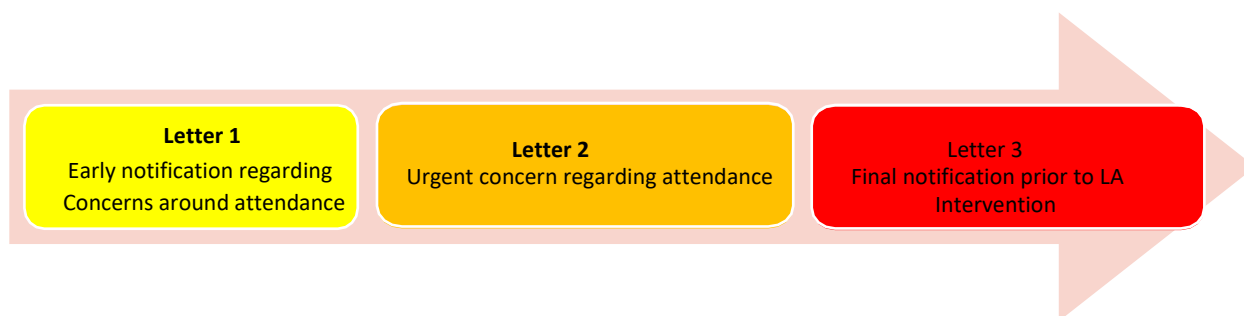
If the child is not located, the in-house Education Welfare Officer will complete a CME referral with the Headteacher, attaching all evidence of interventions from the school. The in-house EWO might also contact the local borough and consult with the Education Welfare Office to gain support.

If pupil is located and evidence suggests that they will not return to School, then Education Welfare Officer to forward all information to the school to complete an Off-Roll Notification Form attaching all evidence gathered. This is to be forward to the Local Authority and the School to continue sending letters on Day 6 and 9, as usual.

The Office Administrator, EWO, and Headteacher will work and liaise closely throughout this process, however the overarching responsibility will be the Headteacher.

Letters

There is a three-tier letter of response to unexplained absences during the first three days where the final letter will be sent home requesting a meeting between the parents and the school.



10. Procedure for Challenging Sickness Absences

Rationale

All absences must be explored from the first day as a measure of safeguarding pupils. Once the reason for absence is known and/or contact with the parent is made, the school can discern between the absence management processes to decide which is most applicable and thereafter follow that process. To promote consistency in approaching and reducing persistence absenteeism related to sickness absences, a process has been outlined.

Termly Trigger Framework

A case-by-case approach would be used when managing absences pertaining to sickness. Understandably, it is difficult to judge when intervening and/or challenging such absences is appropriate given the sensitivity of the situation. However, an intervention at school and/or Education Welfare Officer level can be explorative and supportive as opposed to punitive or disciplinary. The view of the intervention initially is to promote pupil attendance and explore the barriers with suggestions of how they may be overcome.

In order to support the school in identifying when it would be appropriate to do this, pupils' absences will be monitored against the Termly Trigger Framework below:

Term 1 - Illness absences exceed 4 days

Term 2 - Illness absences exceed 7 days (cumulative)

Term 3 - Illness absences exceed 10 days (cumulative)

When absences exceed the days listed here, the pupil's attendance would have dropped below 95% giving the school sufficient justification to intervene. Once such a trigger is hit, the school, with support from the EWO if required, would consider the following:

- other absences and reasons for those absences (O, L, U, Es etc)
- historic attendance patterns
- sibling attendance patterns
- pupil's medical history/background
- parental engagement levels
- views of the Tutor and/or other school staff members
- whether explanations provided for absences seem authentic

These considerations can be made internally amongst school staff (and EWO, if required) and next steps can then be discussed. Possible interventions may include:

- to continue monitoring attendance,
- invite parents for an informal meeting,
- attendance clinic with the EWO
- request evidence for future absences
- propose an Early Help Assessment
- meet with the pupil/attendance clinic with EWO and pupil
- meeting between pupil and Tutor
- make appropriate referrals, if relevant/appropriate e.g. counselling., mentoring, etc.
- write to the parent
- send a leaflet regarding sickness absences
- a letter highlighting concerns
- a telephone call to the parent

We will ensure that all interventions are evidenced and that the outcomes of the interventions are shared with all relevant professionals.

Should these suggested interventions fail to reduce genuine sickness absence and it is felt that absences are not for genuine reasons, then they may be unauthorised, consequently triggering the Fast-Track process. This process addresses the accruing of unauthorised absences with the potential of legal action being taken should attendance drop below 85%. If attendance is above 85% but unauthorised absences have been accrued, it may be appropriate to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice following a warning letter to that effect, from the school.

It is valuable to remember that a pupil is considered a persistent absentee once their attendance falls below 85% irrespective of the reasons for absence, whether they are authorised or not. As a result, pupils absent due to sickness are likely to be impacted in ways similar to their peers who may be truanting. This is likely to be reflected in their friendships, attainment levels, levels of motivation, attitude towards their education, importance attached to attendance and increase the possibility of engaging in non-academic activities outside of school.

11. Support

Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate including use of transition and home learning packages offered by Serenity School.
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

The Attendance Officer will collate attendance statistics as required by the SLT.

12. Rewards and Incentives for Attendance

Serenity School believes in recognising and rewarding not just perfect attendance, but also improvements in attendance. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance over a term will receive certificates and prizes, but we will also acknowledge those who have made significant improvements. Satisfactory attendance is also a requirement to achieve our Investor In Me Award.

Pupils with attendance challenges related to their SEND needs may receive recognition for effort and consistency, even if they cannot meet the typical 100% target.

13. Collaboration with External Agencies

The school works closely with local authority services, including the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and social services, to support pupils who experience attendance difficulties. Referrals may be made where persistent absenteeism is identified, or where safeguarding concerns are raised due to non-attendance.

14. Use of data

The governing body is registered with the Data Protection Registrar in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Attendance data is used on reports and in references and in applications to institutes of further education.

15. Conclusion

This policy aims to promote high attendance rates, while providing flexibility and support for pupils facing exceptional challenges. By working together with parents, pupils, and external agencies, Serenity School aims to create an inclusive environment where every child can thrive and meet their full potential.

Appendix A: Attendance Codes

Code	Description	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present (AM)	Student must be in school at AM registration.	Present
\	Present (PM)	Student must be in school at PM registration.	Present
L	Late (before register closes)	Student arrives late but before the register closes.	Present
K	Attending educational provision (LA-arranged)	Educational provision arranged by the Local Authority; student must be present at the provision.	Approved educational activity (Present)
V	Educational visit or trip	Student attending an educational visit/trip arranged or supervised by the school.	Approved educational activity (Present)
P	Sporting activity	Student participating in a school-approved sporting activity, under supervision.	Approved educational activity (Present)
W	Work experience	Student participating in a school/LA-arranged work experience activity.	Approved educational activity (Present)
B	Other approved educational activity	Student attending an activity, approved and supervised by the school or LA, that is educational in nature.	Approved educational activity (Present)
D	Dual registered	Student is registered at another school and is attending that school on the session in question.	Not counted as present or absent
C1	Performance/Employment leave (licensed)	Leave of absence for licensed performances or employment abroad, granted in advance by the school.	Authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave for medical/dental appointments, granted in advance; minimum time required for the appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Leave for an interview, granted in advance by the school.	Authorised absence
S	Studying for public exam	Leave for study granted in advance for public examinations.	Authorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school age	Used for pupils not of compulsory school age who are not required to attend school.	Not counted as present or absent
C2	Part-time timetable (exceptional circumstances)	Temporary part-time attendance agreed due to exceptional circumstances.	Authorised absence
C	Exceptional circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional reasons (not holidays); school discretion.	Authorised absence

T	Parent traveling for work	Absence due to mobile parents traveling for work, dual registration recommended if possible.	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Absence on a day set apart for religious observance by the pupil's religion.	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Absence due to physical or mental health illness; parents should notify school on the first day.	Authorised absence
E	Exclusion	Student is suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision in place.	Authorised absence
Q	Lack of transport arrangements	Absence due to lack of necessary transport arrangements by the local authority.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Transport unavailable	School or LA-provided transport is unavailable for students not within walking distance.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Travel disruption (emergency)	Widespread travel disruption due to local, national, or international emergency.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Part of school closed	Part of school premises is closed, and the pupil cannot be accommodated.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Whole school closed	Unexpected closure of the entire school site (e.g., due to weather); register is not taken.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Criminal justice detention	Student is in criminal justice detention (e.g., police or youth detention).	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Public health guidance	Student's attendance would breach public health guidance or legal restrictions.	Not counted as present or absent
Y	Other unavoidable cause	Absence due to an emergency or unavoidable cause affecting the pupil specifically.	Not counted as present or absent
G	Holiday not authorised	Absence for a holiday taken without school's authorisation.	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason not yet established	Temporary code when reason for absence is unknown; must be updated within five school days.	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (no valid reason)	Absence without a valid reason that would allow an authorised absence code.	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after register closes)	Student arrives after the register has closed, and no valid reason provided.	Unauthorised absence
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on roll	Used for students not yet officially enrolled on the school's register.	Not counted
#	School closed (planned)	School is closed for a planned event (e.g., holidays, INSET days).	Not counted

Appendix B. Flowchart for Procedures of Absences

