

Attendance Policy



Serenity School

Approved by:	Proprietary Board
Policy Holder:	Headteacher
Date Approved	01/09/2026
Next review due by:	31/08/2027

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.

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.

Where a pupil is at risk of persistent or severe absence, the school will meet with the pupil and their parents or carers to understand the barriers to attendance and agree a written attendance support plan. Support will be regularly reviewed and intensified where absence increases. Where voluntary support has not been successful or has not been engaged with, the school will work with the relevant local authority and other agencies to consider appropriate formal support or legal intervention.

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 Education Welfare Officer, in collaboration with the SENDCo and other relevant staff, will monitor attendance regularly. Pupils who have missed 10% or more of possible sessions, equivalent to attendance of 90% or below, are persistently absent. Persistently absent pupils will receive additional monitoring, with action plans developed to support improvements in attendance. This process will involve parents, relevant staff, and where necessary, external professionals.

4 Registration and Recording Absences

On each occasion, the appropriate national attendance or absence code will be recorded for every pupil. Where Code N is initially used because the reason for absence has not yet been established, it will be replaced with the correct code as soon as the reason is known and no later than five school days after the session. If the reason cannot be established within that period, Code O will be used.

Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and *Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, Department for Education, July 2026. Register entries will be retained for six years. Any amendment will preserve the original entry and record the amended entry, reason, date and person making the amendment.

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

- a) **Authorised Absence:** These include illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance, or other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Headteacher. Where illness is affecting attendance, the school may seek appropriate supporting information where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason given, or where this is needed to understand and support the pupil's needs. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely. Where there are welfare concerns, an appropriate welfare check or home visit may be undertaken.

Requests for leave of absence should be made in writing and in advance. The Headteacher will consider each request individually, taking account of the particular facts, circumstances and relevant background. The school will not operate a blanket policy under which leave is granted automatically. A holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively and, where leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine its duration.

- b) **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 severe lateness (after the registers have closed).
- c) **Lateness:** Pupils arriving before 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. Patterns of lateness will be discussed with the pupil and their parents or carers and addressed through appropriate support, intervention and reasonable adjustments where relevant. Where concerns persist, the school will escalate its response in accordance with sections 6 and 8 of this policy.

6 Support, Escalation and Legal Intervention

The school will take a support-first approach, seeking to understand and address the barriers affecting attendance. Initial action may include discussions with the pupil and family, reasonable adjustments, a written attendance support plan, early help, pastoral or therapeutic support, and liaison with the local authority, health services or other relevant professionals.

Where absence persists, the school will hold more formal discussions with the pupil and parents or carers, explain the consequences of continued absence and regularly review the support offered. Where voluntary support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or is not appropriate, the school will work with the relevant local authority to consider formal support or legal intervention on an individual, case-by-case basis. This may include a local-authority attendance contract, an Education Supervision Order, prosecution or statutory children's social care involvement where safeguarding concerns exist.

Serenity School is an independent school and cannot itself use or issue Fixed Penalty Notices under the National Framework for Penalty Notices. Any referral to a local authority for formal intervention will be determined by that authority in accordance with its legal powers and current local arrangements.

Any decision to escalate will take account of the pupil's individual circumstances, safeguarding needs, SEND, disability, reasonable adjustments and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Support will continue to be offered and reviewed throughout the process.

7 Support for SEND Pupils

The school maintains the same ambition for high attendance for pupils with SEND, disabilities or medical needs as for every other pupil. However, some pupils will require additional support and reasonable adjustments to overcome their individual barriers to attendance.

When assessing barriers and planning support, the school will consider, where relevant:

- communication difficulties;
- sensory dysregulation;
- disability;
- anxiety and school avoidance;
- complex medical needs;
- developmental needs;
- changes in placement;
- transport difficulties; and
- difficulties associated with transition.

Support will be planned with the pupil and their parents or carers and, where appropriate, the local authority, health professionals and other agencies. It may include reasonable adjustments, support with routines, changes to the school environment, pastoral or therapeutic support, a phased reintegration plan or access to provision specified in an Education, Health and Care Plan. Plans will be regularly reviewed and adjusted according to their impact.

Temporary part-time timetables: A part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests. It must be temporary and must not be used to manage behaviour. It will:

- be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives;
- form part of a wider support, healthcare or reintegration plan;
- specify the sessions the pupil is expected to attend;
- include regular review dates involving the pupil and parents;
- have a proposed end date and a clear ambition to return to full-time education; and
- remain in place for the shortest time necessary.

Where the pupil has a social worker, they will be kept informed and involved. Where the pupil has an EHCP, the arrangement will be discussed with the maintaining local authority. Sessions which a compulsory-school-age pupil is not required to attend under an agreed temporary part-time timetable will normally be recorded using Code C2. Absence from a session the pupil was expected to attend will be recorded using the appropriate absence code.

Home or remote education may be provided only as a last resort and as part of a plan supporting reintegration. Receiving remote education does not mean that the pupil is recorded as attending school; the appropriate absence code must still be used.

Welfare checks: For vulnerable pupils, including those with EHCPs, welfare calls or home visits may be undertaken when appropriate. Any safeguarding concern will be referred immediately to the DSL.

8 Procedure for Absences

Day 1	• Phone call to Priority 1 contact. • Text message to Priority 1 contact.
Day 2	• Phone call to Priority 1 and Priority 2 contacts and, where applicable, the pupil's social worker. • Text message to Priority 1 and Priority 2 contacts.
Day 3	• Phone call to Priority 1 and Priority 2 contacts and, where applicable, the pupil's social worker. • Send Letter 1: early notification regarding attendance.
Days 3–6	• The EWO undertakes reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and the reason for absence.
Days 6–10	• Complete a formal attendance and safeguarding review. • Notify the relevant local authority attendance/CME service if the pupil's whereabouts or future education cannot be established.

Safeguarding concerns: These timescales are the maximum expected escalation points and must not delay immediate safeguarding action. Where there are concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare, the DSL must be informed and appropriate referrals or welfare checks initiated without delay.

First Day Absence

If a pupil 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.

Day 2-3 Absence

If a pupil 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.

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 to explain absences.

The process outlined above 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 contact cannot be established, the school must escalate its attendance and safeguarding procedures and undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts. The relevant local authority attendance/CME service must be notified where the pupil's whereabouts or future education cannot be established. A pupil who remains registered at the school is not classified as a Child Missing Education solely because they are absent.

3-6 Days of Unexplained Absence

Where a pupil has been absent without explanation and their whereabouts have not been established, the Education Welfare Officer will undertake reasonable enquiries. These may include contacting parents/carers and emergency contacts, conducting a home visit, contacting relevant professionals and checking with sibling schools. Any safeguarding concerns must be referred immediately in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

6-10 Days of Unexplained Absence

Where the pupil's whereabouts or future education remain unknown, the Education Welfare Officer and

Headteacher will notify the relevant local authority attendance/CME service and provide evidence of the enquiries and interventions undertaken. The pupil will remain on the school's admission register and the school will continue its attendance and safeguarding actions.

If the pupil is located but is not expected to return, the school will establish what education the pupil will receive next and liaise with the relevant local authority. The pupil's name must not be removed from the admission register until a lawful ground for deletion has been established and all required enquiries and local authority notifications have been completed.

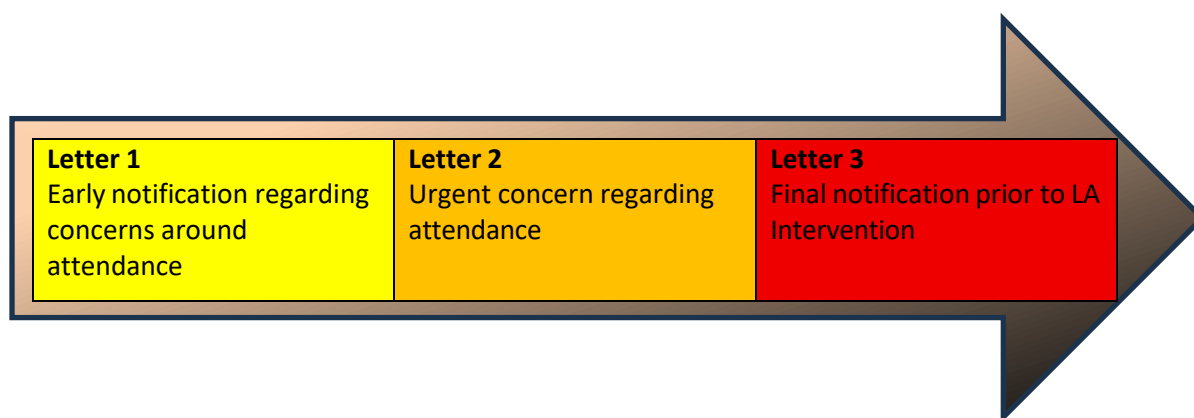
The Office Administrator, EWO, and Headteacher will work and liaise closely throughout this process, however the overarching responsibility will be that of the Headteacher.

Statutory Register returns

The school will make all required returns to the relevant local authority. This includes a New Pupil Return, submitted within five days whenever a pupil's name is added to the admission register outside a standard transition point, and a Deletion Return whenever a pupil's name is removed outside a standard transition point. The school will also make an attendance return where a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent without authorisation for ten consecutive school days, and a sickness return where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a pupil will be absent because of illness for a total of at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutively or cumulatively. A pupil's name will only be removed from the admission register when all the requirements of a lawful ground for deletion under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 have been fully met.

Letters

Where absence remains unexplained, letters will be issued at the appropriate stages of the attendance process. The timing of each letter will reflect the individual circumstances, previous attendance concerns, contact already undertaken and any safeguarding risks. A meeting with the parents/carers may be requested where concerns remain unresolved.



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

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 Education 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.

9 Procedure for Supporting and Reviewing Sickness Absence

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 (codes 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 there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason provided, or supporting information is needed to understand and support the pupil's needs

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
- seek appropriate supporting information where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason given or where it is needed to understand and support the pupil's needs; medical evidence will not be requested routinely
- 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.

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions, irrespective of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. A pupil is severely absent when they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions.

Persistent and severe absence are identification thresholds, not automatic sanction thresholds. Where a pupil is at risk of becoming persistently absent, targeted support will be agreed with the pupil and family and regularly reviewed. Where a pupil is severely absent, the case will be treated as a priority and the school will coordinate more intensive support with the relevant local authority and other agencies.

Where severe unauthorised absence continues despite appropriate support and provision, the school will consider whether this indicates neglect or another safeguarding concern and will make an appropriate referral to children's social care. Formal or legal intervention will be considered in accordance with Section 6.

10 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, absence and punctuality.
- Recording each session using the national code that accurately reflects the reason for absence. SEND, disability or medical need will not, by itself, determine whether an absence is authorised.
- Developing and regularly reviewing an individual attendance support or reintegration plan.
- Making reasonable adjustments and ensuring that provision specified in an EHCP is available.
- Undertaking welfare calls or home visits where appropriate.
- Working with parents, the local authority, health services and other agencies to address barriers and secure suitable educational provision.
- Making a sickness return to the local authority where the pupil is expected to miss 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of illness.

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

11 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.

Any attendance recognition or reward will be applied sensitively and without discrimination, taking account of disability, medical needs and individual circumstances.

12 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.

13 Use of data

Attendance information will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's privacy notices.

Attendance and absence data will be analysed regularly at individual, cohort and whole-school level. Weekly monitoring will identify emerging concerns and pupils requiring early support. Half-termly, termly and annual analysis will consider patterns relating to pupil groups, punctuality, particular days and the use of attendance codes. The school will monitor the impact of interventions and report relevant trends and outcomes to senior leaders and the Proprietary Board.

Information will be shared with local authorities, safeguarding partners and other agencies where there is a lawful basis and where this is necessary to support the pupil, meet statutory register-return requirements or safeguard their welfare.

14 Conclusion

This policy aims to promote high attendance rates, while providing flexibility and support for pupils with SEND and those 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 1 – Registration codes

From *Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, Department for Education, July 2026.

Code	Meaning	Statistical Treatment
#	Planned whole-school closure known and planned in advance, for example school holidays, bank holidays, weekends where required by the MIS, non-educational days or planned whole-school use as a polling station	Not collected for statistical purposes
/	Present at school (AM)	Present
\	Present at school (PM)	Present
B	Attending other approved educational activity e.g., transition day to a pupil's next school, or an agreed college course	Present
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence for regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil on a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another school – used only for a session when the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered	Not a possible attendance
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by school	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness	Authorised absence
J1	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Present
L	Late before register closes	Present
M	Medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
N	Reason not yet established	Unauthorised absence (until resolved)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Present
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	Not counted in possible sessions
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Arrived after register closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Present
W	Work experience	Present
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible

Code	Meaning	Statistical Treatment
		attendance.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of school premises closed	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	This code is not collected for statistical purposes.

Appendix 2 – Site-specific attendance details

Site	School starts	AM register opens-closes	PM register opens-closes	School ends	Senior Attendance Champion	Day-to-day attendance contact
Coulston	0900	0900-0930*	1245-1300	1430	Saron Eyob (DSL & EWO) seyob@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4517 0920	Saron Eyob (DSL & EWO) seyob@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4517 0920
Crawley Primary	0830	0830-0900*	1200-1215	1400	Emma Richardson (DSL & EWO) erichardson@serenityschool.org.uk 01293 698294	Deepak Surada (Office Admin Assistant to EWO) dsurada@serenityschool.org.uk 01293 698294
Crawley Secondary	0900	0900-0930*	1245-1300	1430	Emma Richardson (DSL & EWO) erichardson@serenityschool.org.uk 01293 698294	Deepak Surada (Office Admin Assistant to EWO) dsurada@serenityschool.org.uk 01293 698294
Croydon Primary	0830	0830-0900*	1230-1245 (YrR 1200-1215)	1400	Andrew Fox (DSL & EWO) afox@serenityschool.org.uk 0203 504 2280	Sabrina Perry (EWO & Safeguarding Officer) sperry@serenityschool.org.uk 0203 504 2280
Croydon Secondary	0900	0900-0930*	1230-1245	1430	Andrew Fox (DSL & EWO) afox@serenityschool.org.uk 0203 504 2280	Sabrina Perry (EWO & Safeguarding Officer) sperry@serenityschool.org.uk 0203 504 2280
Eltham Primary	0830	0830-0900*	1200-1215	1400	Linda Cappa (DSL & EWO) lcappa@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4529 1960	Latifa Armstrong-Carew (Assistant to EWO) larstrongcarew@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4529 1960
Eltham Secondary	0900	0900-0930*	1245-1300	1430	Linda Cappa (DSL & EWO) lcappa@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4529 1960	Latifa Armstrong-Carew (Assistant to EWO) larstrongcarew@serenityschool.org.uk 020 4529 1960
Maidstone Primary	0830	0830-0900*	1200-1215	1400	Alice Haffenden-Boyce (DSL & EWO) ahaffenden-boyce@serenityschool.org.uk 01622 916940	Alice Haffenden-Boyce (DSL & EWO) ahaffenden-boyce@serenityschool.org.uk 01622 916940
Maidstone Secondary	0900	0900-0930*	1245-1300	1430	Alice Haffenden-Boyce (DSL & EWO) ahaffenden-boyce@serenityschool.org.uk 01622 916940	Alice Haffenden-Boyce (DSL & EWO) ahaffenden-boyce@serenityschool.org.uk 01622 916940

*The attendance register remains open for the maximum 30 minutes permitted by DfE guidance. Pupils arriving after the published start time but before closure are recorded as late using Code L