The SENAD Group

Section 7
Education Attendance Policy

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Contents

School attendance approach at SENAD's schools

It is the DfE and Welsh Government Expectation that schools should continue to clearly and consistently communicate the expectations around school attendance to families and any other professionals who work with the family. Any discussions should have a collaborative approach, focusing on the welfare of the child or young person and responding to the concerns of the parent, carer or young person. This conversation is particularly important for children with a social worker

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all children and young people can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school and in turn, this leads to poor outcomes as adults.

This adverse impact on learning is more profound for children with an additional learning need who may face periods of exclusion from learning, due to not having the right setting for them, or periods of not engaging due to anxiety and their underlying mental health and disability.

There is a strong correlation between attendance and progression for students. Periods of absence disrupts the rhythm of learning and prolonged patterns of absence or lateness for lessons can result in significant under achievement and diminished life chances in adulthood. Absence from education can also signify safeguarding issues around the absent student's welfare and safety. To improve the life chances of young people in our schools, SENAD will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every Student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Act early to address missing from education.

The DfE attendance guidance is: School attendance guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk). Accordingly SENAD and its schools expects:

> - Parents/guardians[1] to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age (Year Groups 1-16)[2] who are registered at school attend regularly;
> - Attendance targets will typically be set at 95% (for compulsory phases) unless there is a structured attendance plan to the contrary; and
> - All students to be punctual to their lessons.

What does the law say and what do parents have to do?

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect those laws and the guidance produced by the Departments for Education in England and Wales. The legislation is set out in the following regulations as follows:

In England, for Alderwasley Hall, Bladon House, Maple View, Pegasus and Rowden House schools, this is set out in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

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[1] Parents includes Corporate Parents, namely Registered Managers of SENAD's children's homes
[2] Compulsory school age is 16, year 11. Legislation therefore focuses on **ages 5-16** attendance. Young people are expected to be in some form of education or training until 18.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk) of 16th December 2021

For English Schools, this policy also meets the expectations of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 policy framework. [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](www.gov.uk)

In Wales, for Aran Hall, this is set out in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013

Each school within the SENAD Group of Schools has developed its own approach to managing attendance but this policy provides the framework for their approaches.

Floor targets – and action plans

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. All schools will work consistently towards a goal of seeking **100% attendance for all children**. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

It is likely that in schools with relatively small numbers of students those targets will be differentiated to meet the ongoing needs of individual students. This may be the most valid response where the outcomes for a single student can skew whole school outcomes. The school will, however, also look at whole school issues within that context. The school will review attendance against the benchmarks as follows:

- **95% expectation** (bench mark – secondary[3])
- **90% floor** (the persistent level of absenteeism which requires intervention)
- **Sub 90%** requiring a specific attendance management plan

When attendance is recorded

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every Student is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or,

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic or paper-based register

Safeguarding: Children Missing from Education

There is statutory duty on all Local Authorities in England and Wales to have systems and procedures in place to monitor Children Missing in Education. The school's safeguarding policy (on the public website) is linked to this attendance policy.

- Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. It is important the school or college's response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems

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[3]   https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term-2016

are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

- schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools **must** provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points can be found in the Department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.
- further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges.
- general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy.

Examples of those most at risk are:

- Young offenders
- Those with homeless parents or parents living in refuges
- Young people in public care
- Young people who are privately fostered
- Those who have been permanently excluded
- Those at risk of radicalisation **(see policy 506.8)**

Each local authority has a named contact for Children Missing from Education.

We are aware of our responsibility to contact the named person in relation to any child / young person who fall into this category for whatever reason.

The golden rule in safeguarding needs to be followed:

"if in doubt tell someone"

Attendance register codes

To aid analysis for our placing Authorities, SENAD will use the national attendance codes as follows:

Official Registers Codes...	
Register Attendance Marks	
/ \	AM and PM attendance
L	Late before register closed[4]
B	Off-site educational activity (approved)
J	Interview with prospective employer, school, college, HE provider
P	Approved supervised sporting activity
V	Education visit or trip
W	Work experience
Authorised Absence Marks	
C	Leave of absence authorised by Head Teacher
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
H	Holiday authorises by the Head Teacher
I	Illness (not medical check-ups), including COVID-19 illness
M	Medical or dental appointments[5]
R	Religious observance (for designated groups)
S	Study leave for Year 11/12/13 pupils
T	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller absence
X	Sessions that children of non-compulsory school age are not expected to attend
Y	School closure – snow/Health & Safety/failure of day-pupil taxi Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic issues
Unauthorised Absence Marks	
G	Holiday not authorised by Head Teacher prior to being taken
O	Unauthorised absence for session
U	Arrived into school after registration (L code) has closed
N	Reason for absence not yet provided (see below)

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided is typically NOT used

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a student's absence. When the reason for the student's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a student's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is

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[4] Session will *typically* close 45 minutes after registration has started for the session
[5] The expectation is that they should be booked **outside** of school day where possible

provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation)

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with school attendance: guidance for schools.

- **Code I** is used where the student is ill with COVID-19.
- A parent or child refusing to attend due to anxiety is an unauthorised absence and **code O** is use.

Clinically shielding students

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHW or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, HB, PHW or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

Remote education

If a student is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19 (that is a Code X), we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

If a child is sick (Code I), then remote education may not be possible for parts or all of the time the student has COVID-19.

Code S: Study leave for Year 11s

Code S: Study leave Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those students.

Part-Time timetables for students of a compulsory age[6] (5-16)

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs, for example:

- where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.
- Sensory dysregulation is resulting in non-engagement and potentially dangerous behaviour

A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

This approach must be shared with the placing Authority SEN officer and social worker, as well as parents.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence under code C or code I (illness).

School days and academic holiday periods

Each SENAD school will set its own academic term dates and we teach 190 days a year which is 380 sessions. Each school will determine its school day/week to best meet the needs of the school's community.

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[6] Key Stages 1 to 4 inclusive

Typically the Head Teacher will plan to align holiday periods with those of neighbouring Local Authorities as far as possible[7].

Holidays in term time

In English Schools, Head teachers will still have the power to authorise leave of absence but only in exceptional circumstances[8]. If the head teacher grants leave, it will be for them to determine the length of time the child can be away from school.

In Welsh Schools, the Head Teacher may grant up to 10 days holiday but this must be exceptional and neither a norm, nor an expectation from parents/carers/guardians. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Typically, absences will be discussed as part of EHCP reviews with the placing authority. Parents must seek permission to withdraw their child for a holiday from the Head Teacher before they take the holiday.

Preservation of the Attendance Register

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register may be held in electronic form as **long as it is backed up**.

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[7] Where there is a misalignment, this is not an exceptional reason for a parent to not send their child to school. Children not present will be marked as unauthorised absence, in line with DfE and WAG guidance.

[8] Exceptional circumstances typically does not mean annual holidays or birthdays in additional DfE guidance notes. If a child's mental health requires a holiday, then this is discussed with the child's social worker and recorded in a LAC/CIN/EHCP review.