

Sheringham Woodfields School

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Chair of Governors

Registered Charity: Friends of Sheringham Woodfields School - 1127142

Attendance Policy		
Approved by SMT: 29 th September 2025	Approved by Staff: 6 th October 2025	Approved by Governors: Autumn 2025
Next Review date: Autumn 2026	Person(s) responsible for review: HT / AHT with responsibility for Early Years	

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees on Autumn 2025. It is due for review Autumn 2026

Signature

Headteacher

Date:

Signature

Chair of Governors/Trustees

Date:

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1. Introduction

At Sheringham Woodfields School we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We understand that the complex and diverse needs of our pupils can make them more vulnerable to illness and infection and we also realise that attending school full time may be neither realistic nor possible.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2.Promoting Regular Attendance

At Sheringham Woodfields School we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Champion	Nicola Stewart	<u>senco@sheringhamwoodfields.norfolk.sch.uk</u> 01263820520
Attendance Officer	Stuart Dyer	<u>stuart.dyer@norfolk.gov.uk</u>
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance	Alison Williams	07714148417

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.

- Celebrate excellent attendance, where appropriate with individual pupils.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.
- Use the school's family support teams to support families who are struggling to be in school for a range of different reasons which could include: difficulties with morning routines, school refusal, transport related difficulties.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Sheringham Woodfields School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Management Team (including senior attendance champion) at Sheringham Woodfields School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors/Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor/trustee for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Sheringham Woodfields School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.

- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of a attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Sheringham Woodfields School requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours. At Sheringham Woodfields School we understand that due to the complex medical needs of many of our pupils, pupils will be missing school due to medical appointments.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.

- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.
- Use the home/school book or contact school staff of important changes which might be impacting upon their child/young person.

Pupils will: (Dependent upon ability)

- A minority of pupils will be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend.
- Some pupils will be able to speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance. School staff are experienced in observing changes in pupils unable to communicate this and offer support.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn: Some pupils will independently select regulation strategies. All pupils will be assisted by adults in the class rooms to reach a stage of being ready learn through the whole school approach using Zones of Regulation.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.1 Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' (**PA**) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**' (**SA**). Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a

criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

3.2 Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Sheringham Woodfields School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of a member of the Senior Leadership Team and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Sheringham Woodfields School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Sheringham Woodfields School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

3.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be signed out by the office and signed back in. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our

concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.¹

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

3.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Sheringham Woodfields School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child² and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,

¹ This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)

² A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Sheringham Woodfields School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Sheringham Woodfields School in the last 18 months. Parents are expected to register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Sheringham Woodfields School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4. Our Procedures

4.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

Contact the school on the first day of absence before 7.30am. Parents can call the school number, 01263 820520 and choose option 1 (Reporting pupil or staff absence) and leave a message, if we require any further information someone will call you back.

Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9am, unless another agreement is made, for example if a pupil has had surgery and is off for a prolonged period of time and other contact arrangements are made.

Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Nicola Stewart	senco@sheringhamwoodfields.norfolk.sch.uk 01263 820520
School Office administration Team	Kate Banks Tanya Cobb Leia Henderson Rebecca Woodhouse	01263 820520

If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.15 and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a sibling's school may be contacted to check if they have any knowledge of family circumstances, which may account for absence.

We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements.

4.3 Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Sheringham Woodfields School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 9.05am, however parents and transport have a window between 8.45 and 9.05 am to drop pupils off. The school register will be taken at 9.05am. If their arrival is before 9.15am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.15am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the senior attendance champion but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

4.4 Support Systems

At Sheringham Woodfields School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

Telephone calls

Offer supportive meetings with SENCo or the school's family support team

Referrals to other agencies who can offer support
 Referrals to Starfish (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, CAMHs)
 Social Stories
 Reduced timetable
 Home Visits

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. We will offer signposting support to other agencies or services. If we feel there is a safeguarding concern we will refer to an external agency for multi-agency support, or consult with the Children's Advice and Duty Service(CADs) or the police if we feel a pupil is at immediate threat of harm.

If a pupil is missing school and we have not been able to make contact on the 10th day (or sooner if deemed appropriate) we will refer to the Local Authority for joint enquires to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.

If attendance deteriorated following the above actions with will have to refer the matter the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions.

4.5 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

This chart is guidance but Sheringham Woodfields School recognise that some pupils will have lower attendance due to known medical conditions, we will therefore make a dynamic risk assessment of when to intervene.

DAYS ABSENT	Percentage of attendance	Staff Responsible	Actions
0 – 2 DAYS OFF	99 – 100%	Class Teacher and SLT	<i>Examples:</i> • Warm welcome/all pupils greeted by name. • Praise • Weekly attendance data evaluated and notes requested for unauthorised and update MIS.

 4 – 7.5 DAYS OFF	96 – 98%		
 9.5 – 17 DAYS OFF	92 – 95%	Attendance Lead and SLT	• Weekly monitoring by Attendance Lead and signposting to relevant support. • Records kept on MSI register and on weekly monitoring sheets. • Meet with parents to discuss any issues and if needed put together an attendance plan. (If absence is due to medical reasons inline with medical diagnosis no plan will be put in place).
 19 + DAYS OFF	Under 90%		<i>Examples:</i> • <i>Review of plan and review it every three weeks</i> • <i>Support from school family support team or behaviour team.</i> • <i>Involvement from LA and external agencies with consent from parents</i> • <i>Attendance support panel</i> • <i>No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention</i>
 80 + DAYS OFF	Under 50%		<i>Examples:</i> • <i>Formal support such as attendance contracts will be in place</i> • <i>Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement</i> • <i>No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention</i>

Our current academic year attendance target for 2025/2026 is - 96%

Attendance is reviewed weekly and discussed fortnightly in DSL meetings. Although the Attendance Lead will work with the majority of the parents on attendance, if another member of the leadership team already has regular contact with a family then they will take the lead to support the pupil's return to school. Communication with parents and carers is recorded on pro-forms.

At Sheringham Woodfields School we will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

4.6 Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

5. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of

unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction. For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

6. Deletions from the Register

At Sheringham Woodfields School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Sheringham Woodfields School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. Permission must be given by the local authority to home educate any pupil in a special school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Sheringham Woodfields School will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

7. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medication and medical conditions policy
- admissions
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- home school agreement

8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2025)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2025)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)

9. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Sheringham Woodfields School our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The important legal information – New from August 19th, 2024

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance.**

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact Nicola Stewart, Assistant Head/SENCo/Attendance Lead.

Appendix 2: Leave of absence request form.

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend



Sheringham Woodfields School
Holt Road
Sheringham
Norfolk
NR26 8ND

Leave of Absence to allow Pupils to Accompany Parents on Annual Holiday or other Planned Absence

To the Deputy Head of Sheringham Woodfields School,

Name of Pupil:

Class:

I request permission for the above named child to accompany me to
..... during the school term.

From (insert first date of absence):

To (insert last date of absence):

Number of school days:

Signed:

Date:

CONFIRMED

Deputy Head Teacher:

Date:

This form is to be completed by the parent and forwarded to the head teacher of the school attended by the pupils as long as possible before the period of absence.



every child matters
a brighter future for Norfolk's young people



WE PROMOTE STAFF WELL-BEING

We are a member of



Help to support us by registering with www.easyfundraising.org.uk/sheringhamwoodfieldsschool
You can donate to the school by visiting <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/friendsofsheringhamwoodfieldsschool>

Appendix 3: Parent Information Attendance Leaflet

How can I help my child get the best out of school?

- Be aware of the impact of regular absences - missing school means missing out.
- Make sure your child arrives at school on time.
- Don't let your child stay away from school for reasons like going shopping, birthdays or simply saying they don't feel well.
- Avoid taking family holidays in term time.
- Try to make non-urgent medical and dental appointments out of school time.
- Be involved with your child's education and school - ask questions.
- Build up good habits of punctuality and attendance.
- Only keep your child at home in accordance with Health Protection Agency infection control guidelines (contact the school if you are unsure) and send them back to school as soon as they are better, even if it's only for one day - every day counts.

How can school help?

As a school, we want to help families who are struggling with getting their child to school. We can offer a wide range of support including support from the family support team, the behaviour team, support around difficulties that may be arising on transport and much more. Please do not hesitate to contact us to explore the wide range of support we can offer.

Attendance

Research shows that good school attendance impacts upon children's success in learning: good attendance helps them to **fulfil their potential and gives them a chance of a better future.**

Every day that your child is absent from school is an opportunity missed. Schools and parents/carers have a **shared responsibility** to ensure that children attend school regularly. As a school we understand some of our pupils are more likely to have unavoidable medical appointments which is why it is even more important we work with parents to maximise their attendance at other times to help them reach their potential.

Punctuality

Sheringham Woodfields School starts at 9.00 a.m. every morning. It is essential that your child is dropped off at school between 8.45 and 9.00am. If your child is persistently late, parents will be asked to attend a meeting at school, if it is then not resolved, legal action may be taken.

Absences from School

If your child is absent from school you need to:

- Contact the school on 01263 820520
- Give the reason for absence.
- Say when you expect your child will return to school

If your child is in the amber or red zone, please send in any appointment cards, prescriptions, details of medical attention or documentation that may allow us to authorise the absence on their return.

Phoning school to say your child is absent does not authorise the absence. School must make that decision based upon the evidence we have.

Why is good attendance important?

- The law states that all children and young people aged from 5 to 16 must receive a suitable full time education.
- With high attendance your child gets the chance to make friends and learns to get on with others. Communication skills are vital for your child's development.
- Children and young people who don't come to school regularly will be at risk of not achieving their full potential.
- Children and young people who stay away from school for no good reason are at risk of becoming victims of crime or abuse. They may also be drawn into anti-social behaviour.
- Parents/Carers of children and young people with poor attendance can be prosecuted.

If you are experiencing any difficulties with your child's attendance or punctuality, please don't hesitate to contact Nicola Stewart (Assistant Head).

Traffic Light System

At Sheringham Woodfields School, we work closely with Norfolk County Council Attendance Team and we have adopted the local authority procedures for school attendance. These are based on a Traffic Light System.

Attendance above 96% = Green (safety zone) The government expects attendance to be 96% or above.

It's fantastic if your child is in the green.

Attendance between 90 and 95.9% = Amber This is considered to be the "at risk zone". If your child is in the amber, your child's attendance is below the standard set by the government. As a school, we will look at ways to support you in improving your child's attendance; this may be through

- meeting with you to put together an attendance plan.
- monitoring your child's attendance over a 4-week period.
- discussing your child's attendance with the Local Authority Attendance Team.

Attendance below 90% = Red (danger zone)

If your child's attendance falls below 90% the school will look at the reasons for the absence and will arrange a meeting. We fully understand that for some of our pupils with complex medical needs their absence will be higher and nothing further will happen. However, for pupils who do not have complex medical needs we will have to use the Local Authority's Fast Track System and inform our Attendance officer. Your child's attendance will be closely monitored along with any absences and we will ask you to sign an attendance plan. If there is no improvement in your child's attendance, it could lead to prosecution.

SHERINGHAM WOODFIELDS SCHOOL

Attendance Information for Parents and Carers

September 2025



Please be aware that both authorised and unauthorised absences are included in your child's attendance percentage.

Having 90% attendance means that your child is absent from school on average half a day every week.

80% or lower attendance means that your child is missing on average at least one day of school every week.

Holidays

At Sheringham Woodfields School we understand and fully recognise the stress and sensory overload that some children can experience in crowded situations from high levels of noise, needing to queue etc. When children are stressed this places additional strain on the rest of the family. This means that for some families to have a relaxing, restful holiday it needs to take place outside busy school holiday periods. We also acknowledge holidays that are to be taken in specifically adapted accommodation, may not be available at any other time. In 2013 the Department of Education changed the legislation relating to holidays during term time. This legislation does not give any entitlement to parents/carers to take children on holiday during term time. Applications for leave of absence can only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**. Full details of this can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence

A **leave of absence request** must be completed prior to the absence, so that school can decide whether the proposed absence is an **exceptional circumstance** and therefore can be authorised. Parents/carers can be fined for taking children on holiday during term time without consent from the school.