| Staffordshire University Academy | | Academy Policy Document | | | |
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| **Approved by:** | **LAC** | **Issue date:** | **Sept 2026** | **Review date:** | **Sept 2027** |
| **Policy Title** | **Attendance Policy** | | | | |
| **Policy owner** | **DSL & Senior Attendance Champion** | Page **1** of **28** | | | |
| **Audience:** | **Staff Students LAC Parents** | | | | |

# Attendance at SUA 2026-2027

**Policy statement**

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

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

This policy is aligned with statutory guidance, including Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2026), Education Act 1996, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026).

**Roles and responsibilities**

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

**Staffing structure**

- **Strategic lead for attendance:**
  Miss S Randle (Assistant Principal)
- **Operational lead for attendance:**
  Mr S Handy (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Attendance Champion)
- **Daily monitoring:**
  Attendance is recorded and monitored each day by form tutors and the attendance team, this is monitored via SIMS and Attend.
- **Ongoing tracking:**
  Attendance is tracked closely by pastoral leaders, including Heads of Year, as well as Heads of Faculties and subject leaders. This is tracked via SIMS and Attend.
- **Reporting:**
  Attendance data is reported to form tutors, the pastoral team, the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Academy Council. Reports are produced by SIMS and Attend.

The Senior Leadership Team and Senior Attendance Champion work together to ensure attendance remains a strategic priority via the academy development plan. They oversee the implementation of this policy, monitor patterns of attendance across the academy and ensure interventions are properly coordinated. The academy's Senior Attendance Champion is Mr S Handy. Mr Handy can be contacted by emailing attendance@suacademy.co.uk or by telephoning 01543 224 700.

Day-to-day management of attendance is carried out by the Admissions and Attendance Officer and Admissions and Attendance Assistant. This role involves monitoring registers, contacting and supporting parents and carers when students are absent, and following up with families where concerns arise. The Attendance Officer works closely with form tutors, pastoral leads, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Attendance Champion. Together, they analyse attendance data, identify emerging trends at individual, group, and whole-academy level, and coordinate responses that are timely and effective. Day-to-day attendance enquiries, including reporting an absence or providing information about lateness, should be directed to Mr Bate Attendance and Admissions Officer and or Mr Lloyd Attendance Admissions Assistant by telephoning 01543 224 700, selecting Option 1, or emailing attendance@suacademy.co.uk .

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

Parents and students requiring more detailed support with attendance should contact their Head of Year, the Attendance Team or the Senior Attendance Champion. Where appropriate, the academy will identify a consistent member of staff to work with the student and their family.

Parents and carers are expected to ensure that their child attends the academy every day, arrives punctually and is properly equipped for learning. Parents or carers must contact the academy as soon as possible and before 08:30am on the first day of an unexpected absence. Parents must provide the student's name, tutor group, the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. Parents should continue to update the academy on each subsequent day of absence unless another arrangement has been agreed.

Where the academy has not received a reason for absence, the Attendance Team will contact the student's parents or carers on the first day. Where contact cannot be made, further attempts will be made using the emergency contact information held by the academy. The academy will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student wherever reasonably possible. If an absence remains unexplained, the academy may contact other appropriate adults or professionals, including foster carers, social workers or youth offending team workers. Depending on the circumstances and the academy's assessment of risk, further action may include a home visit, a safe and well check, consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a referral to Children's Social Care or the Police.

Any unexplained absence code will be replaced with the correct attendance code as soon as the reason has been established and normally no later than five working days after the session. Where the academy is unable to establish a satisfactory reason, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In most cases, the academy will accept a parent or carer's explanation for illness without requesting additional medical evidence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where the academy has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of an illness, or where there is a prolonged, recurring or complex pattern of health-related absence and further information is needed to understand the student's needs and arrange suitable support. Where evidence is necessary, the academy will be flexible about what is accepted and will not routinely require a doctor's letter for a short-term illness that would not normally require medical treatment.

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

**Support for students and families**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Rewards and incentives for attendance**

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

**Weekly recognition**

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

**Individual rewards**

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

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

**Tutor group rewards**

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

**Academy attendance cup**

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

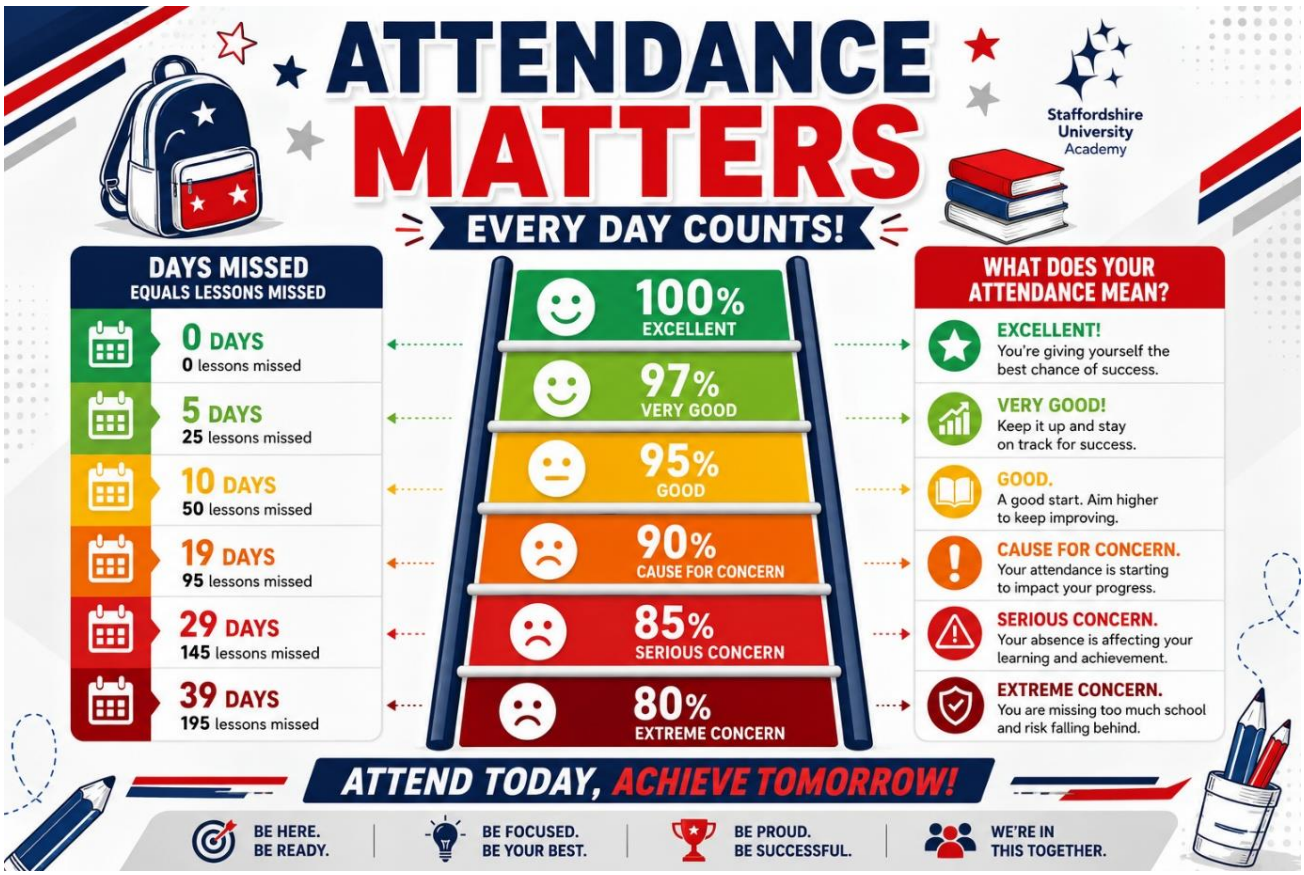
**Attendance expectations and targets**

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

To put this into perspective:

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

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




**Student daily routines**

The academy day begins at 8:30am and ends at 15:20pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday and Fridays the academy day ends at 14:30pm. Students are expected to be on the academy site and in their tutor room ready for registration by 8:30am.

The morning attendance register is taken at 8:30am and remains open until 08:50am. Students arriving after the register has been taken but before it closes will be recorded using code L. Students arriving after the register has closed without a valid authorised reason will be recorded using code U, which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

The afternoon register is taken at during period 3. Attendance registers will be taken at the same time for all registered students at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Every student must be recorded as present or absent during each registration session. Where a student is absent, the academy will use the appropriate national attendance or absence code to record the reason.

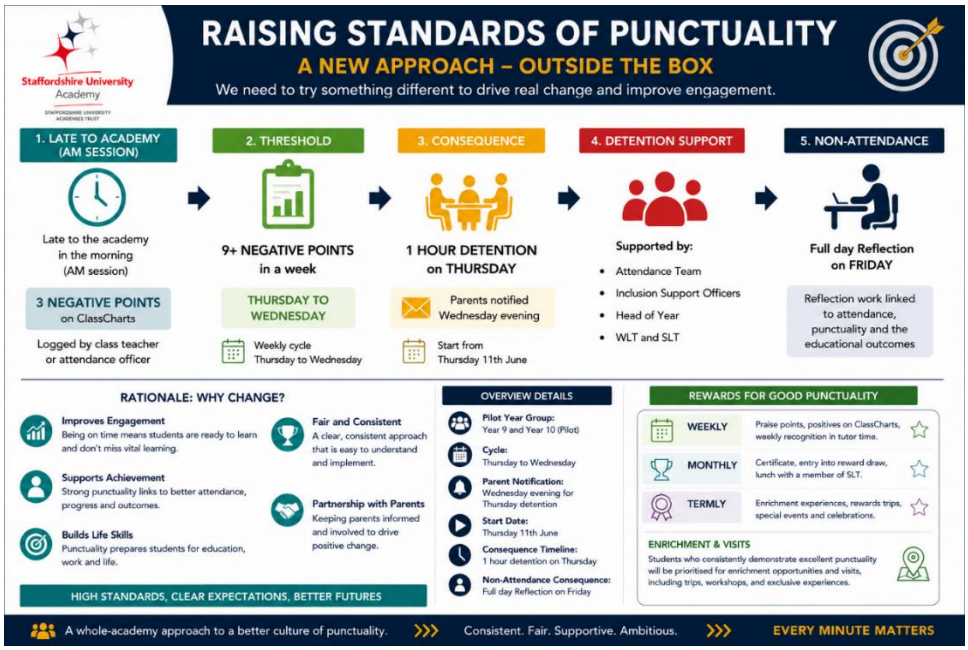
Staff ensure that all late students are registered immediately, both for safeguarding purposes and to comply with fire safety regulations. Students who arrive late will also be recorded by a member of the attendance team at the late gate, ensuring a complete and accurate record of punctuality each morning. Persistent lateness will be addressed and challenged as part of the academy's commitment to high attendance standards. Late arrivals are tracked daily through the academy's attendance system, enabling early identification of patterns and timely interventions. It is important to note that even minor lateness has a significant impact on learning; for example, a student who is 15 minutes late every day effectively misses the equivalent of 10 full academy days over the academic year**.**

The government expects academies to take a proactive and consistent approach to managing U codes (unauthorised absence for arriving after 08:50am). Under the national "10 in 10" expectation, academies must not allow students to accumulate repeated U codes without intervention. The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 academy weeks. Meeting this threshold does not automatically result in a penalty notice; the individual circumstances of the case, support provided and the Local Authority Code of Conduct will be considered. If a student receives ten unauthorised sessions within a ten-week period, this can trigger formal processes such as penalty notices or referrals for further action. Registers are taken promptly each morning, recording late arrivals accurately and follow up immediately with students and families to address the reasons behind persistent lateness. Our approach reflects the DfE's wider emphasis on early intervention, safeguarding and accountability, ensuring that all students understand the importance of punctuality and regular attendance.

**Raising Standards of Punctuality**

Good punctuality supports strong attendance, positive engagement, academic achievement and the development of important life skills. Students are expected to arrive at the academy and to lessons on time, prepared and ready to learn. The academy recognises that persistent lateness can result in significant lost learning over time. We will therefore proactively identify and address patterns of lateness, work with students and families to understand any barriers affecting punctuality, provide appropriate support and maintain clear and consistent expectations.

As part of the academy's commitment to raising standards, a structured punctuality approach may be implemented for identified year groups, cohorts or individual students. Under the current academy approach, lateness to the academy during the morning session will result in 3 negative ClassCharts points being recorded. Where a student accumulates 9 or more punctuality-related negative points during the weekly monitoring cycle, they will be required to attend a one-hour Thursday detention. The monitoring cycle will operate from Thursday to Wednesday, enabling students to begin each weekly cycle with a clear opportunity to demonstrate improvement. Parents/carers will normally be notified of the Thursday detention on Wednesday evening. Consequences are only one part of the academy's approach. Where punctuality concerns emerge, staff will seek to understand why the student is arriving late and identify any barriers that may be contributing to the concern. Support may include conversations with the student, contact with parents/carers, punctuality targets, morning check-ins, support with routines, consideration of transport or family circumstances, attendance support planning and referral to wider academy or external support where required. The academy's approach will remain supportive, fair, consistent and proportionate, while maintaining the expectation that students arrive on time.



**Wave approach to attendance support**

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

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

If attendance continues to be a concern, a wave two letter will be issued, parents or carers may be invited to a meeting in school to discuss ongoing barriers and jointly agree on an action plan. A wave three letter will follow if attendance does not show improvement, indicating a heightened level of concern and outlining additional support measures. Finally, a wave four letter signals that, despite previous interventions, attendance remains a significant concern, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will become involved to provide further support, where necessary and implement statutory measures.

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

**Wave 1 – Tutor support**

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

**Wave 2 – Inclusion support officer**

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

**Wave 3 – Head of Year intervention**

Heads of Year provide targeted pastoral leadership for students whose attendance continues to cause concern despite earlier support. They review attendance patterns and previous interventions to identify underlying barriers, meeting with students and parents or carers to listen to their concerns and agree the next steps.

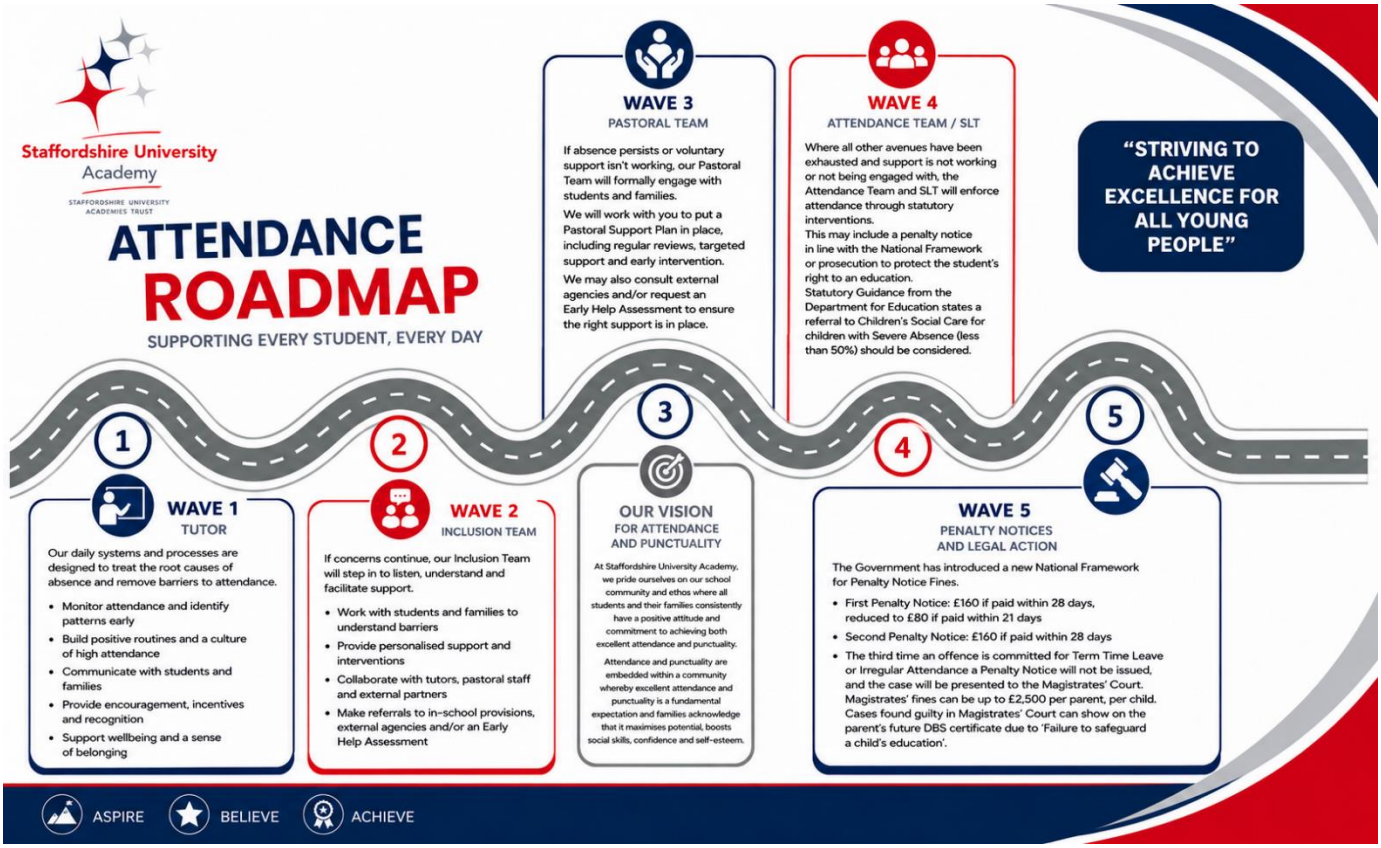
Where appropriate, the Head of Year will coordinate an attendance support plan containing clear actions, targets, responsibilities and review dates. They will work closely with tutors, Inclusion Support Officers, the Attendance Team, SEND staff and safeguarding colleagues to ensure that support is coordinated and regularly evaluated.

**Wave 4 – Attendance Officer/Attendance team**

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

## Wave 5 - External agency support

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




## Why this approach works?

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

### Attendance monitoring systems and processes

We use the 'Attend' school attendance software to monitor student attendance in real time. This enables a responsive and proactive approach, allowing staff to intervene early and tailor support to individual students. Attend helps us identify patterns of concern, respond quickly to emerging issues and provide targeted support where needed. Accurate, up-to-date attendance monitoring is vital not only for safeguarding but also for supporting academic progress and overall wellbeing. The system provides a centralised, user-friendly platform that ensures all staff can access current information,

take appropriate action and maintain high standards of attendance management across the academy.

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

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

**What is Attend?**

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

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

**How we use Attend at SUA?**

**1. Daily registration and oversight**

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

**2. Live alerts and safeguarding**

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

**3. Tracking and intervention**

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

**4. Reporting and review**

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

**Procedures, monitoring and intervention**

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

The system also supports the generation of formal intervention letters, attendance contracts and personalised attendance reports, ensuring a clear chronology of actions is recorded. This enables senior leaders and LAC members to

monitor the impact of interventions and provides the Local Authority with the evidence required should formal action become necessary.

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

Where illness-related absence becomes a concern, the academy will work with the student and family to understand barriers and provide appropriate support. Medical evidence will not be required automatically because attendance is below a particular percentage; it may be requested only where there is genuine and reasonable doubt or a prolonged, recurring or complex pattern of health-related absence. Non-urgent medical or dental appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged outside the academy day.

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

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

| Code | Correct description |
|---|---|
| **/** | Present at the academy – morning session |
| **** | Present at the academy – afternoon session |
| **L** | Late arrival before the register is closed |
| **K** | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| **V** | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| **P** | Participating in a sporting activity |
| **W** | Attending work experience |
| **B** | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| **D** | Dual registered at another academy/school |
| **M** | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment |
| **J1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| **S** | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination |
| **X** | Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend |
| **C1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad |
| **C2** | Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| **C** | Absent with leave for other circumstances |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance |
| **I** | Illness – not medical or dental appointment |

| Code | Correct description |
|---|---|
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made |
| **Q** | Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements |
| **Y1** | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the academy premises being closed |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to the whole academy site being unexpectedly closed |
| **Y5** | Unable to attend because the student is in criminal justice detention |
| **Y6** | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| **Y7** | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the academy |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| **U** | Arrived after the register closed |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on the admission register |
| **#** | Planned whole academy closure |

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

Where a student is absent from the academy but is receiving remote education, they will continue to be recorded as absent from the academy. The appropriate national attendance code will be used according to the statutory reason for the absence. The provision of remote education does not, in itself, determine the attendance code.

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

**Authorised and unauthorised absence**

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

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

**Attendance and the link to safeguarding**

At SUA, we recognise that good attendance is not only essential for academic success but also a safeguarding matter. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) makes clear that:

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

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

**Statutory attendance information for parents and carers**

At SUA, we are legally required to monitor and report student attendance in line with the Department for Education (DfE) regulations and Staffordshire County Council guidance. Parents and carers play a vital role in ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually. The following statutory information is drawn from Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026).

**Legal duty to attend school**

Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability, and to any special educational needs they may have. Parents have a legal responsibility under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child receives such an education, either through regular attendance at an academy or otherwise.

Where a child of compulsory school age is registered at Staffordshire University Academy, their parents have an additional legal duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that the child attends regularly. Regular attendance means attending every session for the full duration of that session, unless there is a statutory reason for absence or leave has been granted in advance by the academy.

Compulsory school age normally ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which the young person turns 16. Young people are required to remain in education, employment with approved training, or another recognised form of training until the age of 18. This participation requirement is separate from the parental duty to secure regular academy attendance for a child of compulsory school age.

For the purposes of education law, a parent includes all natural parents, whether married or not; anyone who has parental responsibility for the child; and anyone who has day-to-day care of the child.

**Persistent and severe absence**

The Department for Education defines clear thresholds for concern:

- Persistent Absence (PA): A student is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions (in other words, attendance is below 90%).
- Severe Absence (SA): A student is severely absent when they miss at least 50% of their possible sessions (in other words, attendance is 50% or below). Severe absence is treated as a significant safeguarding concern.

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

The guidance also reminds schools to:




"Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support." (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2026).

**Children missing education**

The academy recognises that unexplained or repeated absence may indicate a safeguarding concern. Where a student's location cannot be established or the academy has reason to believe that the student may be missing education, the matter will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The academy will make reasonable enquiries to establish the student's whereabouts and safety. This may include contacting parents and emergency contacts, speaking to known professionals, checking information held by the academy, conducting a home visit and contacting the local authority, Children's Social Care or the Police.

The academy will not remove a compulsory-school-age student from the admission register solely because their whereabouts are unknown. Any deletion will only take place where a statutory ground applies and after the academy and local authority have completed the required reasonable enquiries. The academy will follow current Children Missing Education and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance throughout this process.

**Part-time timetables**

All students at compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the student's best interests and is necessary to meet their individual needs. A part-time timetable will not be used to manage a student's behaviour or as an informal exclusion.

Any part-time timetable must be agreed by the academy and the parent with whom the student normally lives. It must form part of a wider support, healthcare or reintegration plan; identify the sessions the student is expected to attend; include regular review dates; and have a proposed end date. The timetable will remain in place for the shortest period necessary and will have a clear ambition to return the student to full-time education as soon as appropriate.

The student and their parents will be involved in reviews. Where the student has a social worker, the social worker will be kept informed and involved. Where the student has an education, health and care plan, the academy will consult the local authority so that the plan and associated support can be reviewed.

The academy will continue to take the register for students receiving a part-time timetable and will record agreed non-attendance sessions using the appropriate national attendance code, normally C2 for a compulsory-school-age student subject to an agreed temporary part-time timetable.

**Holiday requests and Staffordshire County Council guidance**

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the academy's leave of absence request form. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively. Applications should explain the reason for the proposed absence and provide any supporting information available.

The Principal may grant leave of absence only in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Applications for leave because of exceptional circumstances will be considered individually, taking account of the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background of each case. The academy will not apply a blanket policy that automatically approves, or refuses leave because of a particular event or circumstance.

A family holiday, leisure activity, lower holiday price or availability of accommodation will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. Where leave is granted, the Principal will determine the number of authorised sessions. Any additional absence taken beyond the period authorised by the academy will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where an application is refused and the student is absent, the absence will be recorded using the appropriate unauthorised absence code and may result in a referral to the local authority for consideration under the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

**Penalty notices and fine fees**

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 academy weeks. A school week is any week in which there is at least one academy session. The threshold may be met through any combination of unauthorised absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, other unauthorised absence and arriving after the register has closed. The 10-week period may span different terms or academic years.

Reaching the national threshold does not mean that a penalty notice will be issued automatically. The academy and local authority will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate, whether sufficient support has been provided, whether a penalty notice is likely to change parental behaviour and whether issuing a notice is consistent with the Equality Act 2010 and Staffordshire County Council's local code of conduct.

Where support is appropriate but has not been successful or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually be issued before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve will normally provide an improvement period of between three and six weeks and will explain the attendance improvement required, the support available and the consequences if sufficient improvement is not achieved.

A Notice to Improve may not be appropriate where support would not address the reason for absence, such as an unauthorised holiday in term time. In such circumstances, a penalty notice may be considered without a Notice to Improve, subject to the national framework and Staffordshire County Council's code of conduct.

For a first penalty notice issued to a parent for a particular student, the fine is £80 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Where a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same student within three years of the first notice, the fine is £160 and must be paid within 28 days. There is no reduced amount for early payment of a second notice.

A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same student within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, a further penalty notice cannot be issued. The case may instead be considered for prosecution or another attendance intervention. Prosecution is not automatic and will be determined by the local authority after considering the circumstances and evidence.

Other statutory interventions may include an attendance contract, an Education Supervision Order, prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and following conviction, a parenting order. The academy will work with Staffordshire County Council when deciding which intervention is appropriate.

**Medical and persistent absence procedures**

At SUA, we take attendance seriously and recognise that medical or illness-related absence must be managed carefully. Academies have the responsibility to decide whether an absence can be authorised on medical grounds. For students whose attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence that their child is too unwell to attend. In most cases, the academy will accept a parent's explanation of illness without requesting additional medical evidence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where the academy has genuine and reasonable doubt about the

authenticity of an illness or where a student has a prolonged, recurring or complex pattern of health-related absence and further information is required to understand their needs and arrange suitable support.

Where evidence is necessary, the academy will be flexible about the evidence accepted. This may include prescriptions, medication, appointment information, communication from a healthcare professional or other evidence reasonably available to the family. Parents will not routinely be asked to obtain a doctor's letter for a short-term illness that would not normally require medical treatment.

Where illness-related absence is prolonged or recurring, the academy will work with the student, their parents, healthcare professionals, the local authority and other relevant services to identify barriers, provide appropriate support, consider reasonable adjustments and plan the student's successful reintegration.

**Managing medical/illness absence**

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

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

**Religious observance**

Parents and carers are asked to notify the academy in advance of an absence for religious observance wherever reasonably possible and to provide sufficient information for the academy to apply the correct attendance code. Advance notice is an administrative request and is not an absolute condition of the statutory religious-observance absence category.

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

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

**Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence**

Where a student's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes. Parents are asked to notify the academy as far in advance as reasonably possible where occupational travel is anticipated, so that the academy can determine whether the statutory conditions for Code T are met.

**Governance**

The academy Trust and Local Academy Council will recognise attendance as a strategic priority and will provide appropriate support and challenge to academy leaders. Governors will review attendance and punctuality data regularly, including information about persistent and severe absence and the attendance of vulnerable groups.

The Trust Board and Local Academy Council will satisfy themselves that the academy is meeting its statutory attendance duties, that this policy is implemented consistently, that attendance improvement is appropriately resourced and that staff receive suitable attendance training.

The Principal and Senior Attendance Champion will provide Governors with sufficient information to identify trends, evaluate the impact of the academy's attendance strategy and challenge areas where further improvement is required. All teaching and non-teaching staff will receive appropriate information, training and professional development so that they understand their attendance responsibilities, apply registration processes accurately and communicate consistent messages to students and families.

**Policy publication and review**

This policy will be published on the academy website and made readily accessible to staff, students, parents and carers. It will be provided or signposted to families when a student joins the academy and families will be reminded of the policy at the beginning of each academic year and whenever significant amendments are made. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local authority arrangements or academy procedures. The academy will consider the views and experiences of students and parents when reviewing its attendance policy and improvement strategy.

**Legal framework**

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

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

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- DfE (July 2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance
- Attendance toolkit for schools
- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DFE (March 2026) Working together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions and Education for Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School
- DFE (July 2026) Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – Early Help Assessment Guidance for Professionals

Staffordshire University Academy will have regard to this legislation and statutory guidance when making attendance decisions. The academy will apply this policy fairly and consistently while considering the individual circumstances of each student and family, including its duties to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. Where

attendance or punctuality is relevant to participation in an optional enrichment activity, any decision will be made individually, fairly and proportionately. The academy will consider the reasons for absence, safeguarding factors, SEND, disability and health-related circumstances, and its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Students will not be penalised for absence that is authorised or arises from circumstances beyond their reasonable control.

**(Appendix 1) – Wave 1 Attendance Letter**

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**
**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear **#ContactName#**,

**Wave 1 Attendance Concern Letter**

Student name: **#StudentLegalForename# #StudentLegalSurname#**
DOB: **#StudentDOB#**
Attendance: **#Attendance_Attendance_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#**
Unauthorised %: **#Attendance_Unauthorised_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#**
Days missed: **#MissedDaysCount_CurrentAcademicYear_IndividualStudent#**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Academy Attendance Team

**(Appendix 2) – Wave 2 Attendance Letter**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear **#ContactName#**

**Wave 2 Attendance Concern Letter: Attendance under 94%**

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Inclusion Support Officer

**(Appendix 3) – Wave 3 Attendance Letter**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear **#ContactName#**,

**Wave 3 Attendance Concern Letter**

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

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

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

To address this concern, we kindly ask you to:

- Ensure that **#StudentChosenFirstName#** attends the academy every day unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence
- Where appropriate, provide reasonable information or evidence to help the academy understand any prolonged, recurring or complex health-related absence.
- Contact the academy promptly to discuss any barriers preventing attendance.

Where 10 sessions of unauthorised absence are recorded within a rolling period of 10 academy weeks, the national threshold for considering a penalty notice is met. Reaching this threshold does not mean a penalty notice will be issued automatically. The academy and Local Authority will consider the individual circumstances, the support offered and whether further support is appropriate. Where support is appropriate but has not been successful or engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually be considered and will normally set an improvement period of between three and six weeks. A penalty notice or other statutory intervention may then be considered in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and Staffordshire County Council's code of conduct.

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

Kind regards

Head of Year

**(Appendix 4) – Wave 4 Attendance Letter**

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**
**#ContactAddressBlock#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear **#ContactName#**,

**Wave 4 Attendance Concern Letter: Final Warning Letter**

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

Following a review of your child's attendance, the academy remains seriously concerned about the level of absence. Despite the support and interventions offered, sufficient improvement has not been achieved. The academy has therefore decided to refer the matter to Staffordshire County Council for consideration of further attendance intervention.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Mr S Handy
DSL & Senior Attendance Champion

**(Appendix 5)- Attendance Improvement letter**

**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear **#ContactName#**

**Attendance Improvement Recognition**

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

The attendance Team

**(Appendix 6) – Holiday Request Letter (Authorised)**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL
**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

**Name – Student name - DOB:**

Dear Parent name,

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

You will be aware that the Department for Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that leave of absence may only be granted in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where an application relies on exceptional circumstances, it will be considered individually by the Principal. The Local Authority and academy Governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

A family holiday will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. We have considered your application individually and, on this occasion, the Principal has determined that exceptional circumstances apply and has granted leave for the specified sessions.

We are obliged to inform you that future requests for a leave of absence in term time may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct and the, "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19th July 2026). For your information the penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

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

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

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

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

A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same student within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, a further penalty notice cannot be issued and the case may instead be considered by the Local Authority for prosecution or another attendance intervention. Prosecution is not automatic. If prosecution is pursued, the court will determine any penalty in accordance with the relevant legislation. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

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

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

**(Appendix 7) – Holiday Request Letter (Unauthorised)**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

**Name – Student name - DOB:**

Dear Parent name,

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

You will be aware that the Department for Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that leave of absence may only be granted in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where an application relies on exceptional circumstances, it will be considered individually by the Principal. The Local Authority and the academy governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

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

We are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the, "Working Together to Improve School attendance", statutory guidance (effective July 2026). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

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

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

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

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

A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same student within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, a further penalty notice cannot be issued and the case may instead be considered by the Local Authority for prosecution or another attendance intervention. Prosecution is not automatic. If prosecution is pursued, the court will determine any penalty in accordance with the relevant legislation. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

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

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

**(Appendix 8) – Suspicion of holiday letter**

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

**#ContactAddress_BlockFull#**
**#CurrentDate_CurrentDate_0#**

Dear Parent's name

**Name** – **Student name – DOB**

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

- 
- 

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

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

We are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from the academy is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the, "Working Together to Improve School attendance", statutory guidance (effective July 2026). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

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

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

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

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

A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to the same parent for the same student within a rolling three-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within that period, a further penalty notice cannot be issued and the case may instead be considered by the Local Authority for prosecution or another attendance intervention. Prosecution is not automatic. If prosecution is pursued, the court will determine any penalty in accordance with the relevant legislation. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from the academy. Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

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

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