



Attendance Policy: **Swallow Grange Independent Special School**

1. Introduction

At Swallow Grange, we understand that consistent attendance is crucial for pupils to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. However, we also recognise that pupils aged 4-11 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs often face significant barriers to attendance that differ from those in mainstream settings. These may include high anxiety, school phobia, sensory sensitivities, or difficulties with transitions.

This policy outlines our commitment to promoting excellent attendance while maintaining a flexible, supportive, and understanding approach that prioritises the well-being and reengagement of our vulnerable pupils. Our aim is to work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers, and the Local Authority to overcome barriers to attendance and ensure every child receives the education they need.

2. Aims of this Policy

- To promote the highest possible levels of attendance for all pupils, recognising the unique challenges faced by our cohort.
- To create a welcoming, safe, and nurturing environment that encourages pupils to attend regularly and engage fully.
- To work proactively and sensitively with pupils and parents/carers to identify and address barriers to attendance.
- To implement clear and consistent procedures for monitoring, recording, and reporting attendance.
- To ensure compliance with legal duties regarding attendance for alternative provisions.
To collaborate effectively with the Local Authority and other agencies to support pupils with persistent absence.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Head of Provision

The Head of Provision has overall responsibility for attendance and will:

- Ensure that this policy is implemented consistently and effectively.
- Foster a positive school culture that values attendance and promotes pupil well-being.
- Oversee the monitoring of attendance data and intervention strategies.
- Liaise with the Local Authority regarding attendance concerns and legal requirements.

3.2 Attendance Lead (Headteacher)

A designated Attendance Lead will be responsible for the day-to-day management of attendance, including:

- Monitoring daily attendance and absence.
- Contacting parents/carers regarding unexplained absences.
- Maintaining accurate attendance records.
- Identifying patterns of absence and triggering interventions.
- Liaising with the SENDCO, and relevant staff regarding attendance concerns.
- Working with the Local Authority's attendance service.

3.3 All Staff Members

All staff play a vital role in promoting attendance by:

- Creating a positive and engaging learning environment.
- Building strong, trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- Being vigilant for signs of non-attendance or emerging attendance difficulties.
- Recording attendance accurately at the start of each session.
- Communicating any attendance concerns to the Attendance Lead promptly.
- Supporting pupils' re-engagement and well-being upon their return to Swallow Grange.

3.4 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and will:

- Ensure their child attends Swallow Grange regularly and punctually.
- Contact Swallow Grange on the **first day of absence** before 9.00am to explain the reason for absence.
- Provide medical evidence for absences where requested (e.g., doctor's note, appointment card).
Inform Swallow Grange of any changes to contact details or circumstances that might affect attendance.
- Work in partnership with Swallow Grange to address any attendance concerns.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.

3.5 Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to:

- Attend Swallow Grange regularly and on time.
- Take responsibility for their learning and re-engagement.
- Communicate any worries or concerns about attending to a trusted adult at Swallow Grange or at home.

4. Recording and Monitoring Attendance

- **Daily Registration:** Attendance will be recorded accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions using the electronic registration system: Bromcom.
- **Attendance Codes:** Standardised national attendance codes will be used to record attendance and absence reasons (e.g., present, authorised absence, unauthorised absence).
- **First Day Calling:** For any unexplained absence, the designated staff members, will attempt to contact parents/carers on the first day of absence via phone/email. As well as this if the child has a social worker or family help practitioner; they are also called to make them aware of the absence. For any unexplained absence or when a child has been absent for three days a home visit will be made by a member of the Swallow Grange team.
- **Monitoring:** Attendance will be monitored regularly, and any patterns of absence (e.g. Recurring absences on specific days, declining attendance) will be promptly identified and flagged.

5. Managing Absences

5.1 Authorised Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Examples of authorised absence include:

- Illness (where the provision has been informed and, for prolonged or frequent absences, medical evidence may be requested).
- Medical appointments (where advance notice has been given and evidence provided).
- Religious observance.
- Approved educational visits or activities outside the provision.
- Exceptional circumstances agreed with the Head of Provision.

5.2 Unauthorised Absence

Absence is unauthorised if:

- No reason is given for the absence.
- The reason given is not acceptable to the Head of Provision.
- The pupil is absent without leave (e.g., truancy).
Holidays are taken during term time without prior approval (see 5.3).

5.3 Holidays in Term Time

- Swallow Grange Alternative Provision discourages holidays during term time.
- Leave for holidays during term time will **not be granted**.
- Parents/carers must make a written request to the Headteacher well in advance, detailing the exceptional circumstances.
- Unauthorised holidays may be referred to the Local Authority and could result in legal action (e.g., Fixed Penalty Notices).

6. Strategies to Promote Attendance and Address Absence

Given our specific pupil cohort, our approach to attendance is highly supportive and proactive:

- **Individualised Support:** We will consider each pupil's unique SEND/SEMH needs when addressing attendance concerns. Interventions will be tailored to the individual, as outlined in their Individualised Learning Plan (ILP) or EHCP.
- **Early Intervention:** Early identification of attendance difficulties is key. We will respond promptly to any emerging patterns of absence. For all children's attendance who is less than 96% supportive intervention will take place. This will be via phone calls, meetings and setting school-based targets.
- **Communication and Partnership:** Open and regular communication with parents/carers is vital. We will work collaboratively to understand the root causes of absence and develop joint solutions.
Swallow Grange will communicate attendance concerns with social workers and EHCP co-ordinators and any other professionals involved, in supporting the family.
- **Re-engagement Strategies:** For pupils who are reluctant to attend, we will offer tailored re-engagement strategies, which may include:
 - ✓ Specific anxiety reduction techniques.
 - ✓ Therapeutic support to address underlying emotional barriers.
 - ✓ Close liaison and referrals to health professionals.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** We will celebrate improved attendance and sustained regular attendance to motivate pupils.
- **Multi-Agency Working:** Where attendance remains a concern, we will work closely with the Local Authority's attendance service, social care, health professionals, and other relevant agencies to provide coordinated support.

- **Attendance Meetings:** For pupils at risk of persistent absence (defined as attendance below 90%), the Headteacher will arrange meetings with parents/carers to develop an attendance improvement plan.

7. Persistent Absence

A pupil is defined as a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below the national threshold, currently **90%**.

- For pupils deemed persistently absent, Swallow Grange will:
- Implement an intensive support plan, involving the pupil, parents/carers, and relevant agencies.
- Hold regular review meetings to monitor progress and adjust interventions.
- Where appropriate, make referrals to the Local Authority's attendance service for further support or statutory action, student attendance meetings will take place and formal monitoring of attendance when targets are not.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance will be always followed and adhered too.

8. Statutory Requirements

Swallow Grange Independent Special School will comply with all relevant statutory guidance and regulations regarding school attendance, including:

- The Education Act 1996.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- DfE guidance on school attendance.

9. Policy Review

This Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Governing Body/Trustees.

The review will consider:

- The effectiveness of the policy in promoting attendance and addressing absence.
- Attendance data and trends for our specific cohort.
- Feedback from pupils, parents/carers, staff, and external agencies.
- Changes in national or local legislation or guidance regarding school attendance for alternative provisions.

Signed: Headteacher – September 2026

Effective Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027 (Annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, pupil needs, or best practice)