Attendance Policy and Procedures

Parent Summary



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| **Policy Author:**  | **Unity Schools Partnership** |
| **Date of Policy:** | **October 2024** |
| **Date approved by Governors:** | **October 2024** |
| **Next annual review date:** | **October 2026** |

At Samuel Ward Academy we want all pupils to aim for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all and expect pupils to be in school every day that school is open unless they are too unwell to attend. This is really important so we can give your children the best education we can, and the education that they are entitled to.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and we will work together with parents, carers, guardians, pupils and any relevant partners to remove any barriers getting in the way of pupils attending regularly. Pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance will be fully supported by our school, in partnership, where necessary, with any health or external professionals. Promoting and supporting excellent attendance is everybody’s concern within our school and community.

The provision of a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school where all pupils feel that they belong, and want to be, is of paramount importance to us. We will work together with you to explore and support any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly.

# Key Attendance Contacts – Full List

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| **School Attendance Champion Name:** | Daisy Hopkins |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | DHopkins@samuelward.co.uk |

Please see the end of the document ([***Appendix 1***](#_Key_Attendance_Contacts)) for a full list of our school’s attendance contacts.

# Why is attending school regularly so important?

Excellent attendance is important for pupils to feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This supports each pupil’s all-round development, mental health, and well-being.

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| If attendance over the school year is: | …a pupil will miss this many days: | …and this many lessons:  |
| 100% | 0 | 0 |
| 95% | 10 | 50 |
| 90% | 19 | 95 |
| 85% | 29 | 145 |
| 80% | 39 | 195 |
| 75% | 49 | 245 |
| 70% | 58 | 290 |

On the day of your child’s absence please call the school to inform the attendance team that they will not be in school that day. Please give as much information as possible so that the team can liaise with other members of staff should more support be needed.

If we have not heard from you regarding your child’s absence, we will call you and all of the contacts on the system until we have spoken to someone who can confirm the reasons as to why they are not in school on that day.

# How do we reward good and improving attendance

Celebrating Good Attendance – each week we award the school attendance mascot to the tutor group with the highest weekly attendance, this is celebrated during Monday morning Muster. Furthermore weekly year group awards are also awarded to the highest attending tutor group in each year. We have attendance awards posters to capture this visibly within the school too. We recognise that some children may be affected by health or special educational needs which can impact on attendance, we are mindful of this and ensure that these students are also included in attendance reward by recognising individual progress.

# Absence requests

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take a child out of school during term time for any reason, including a holiday.

Only in very, very exceptional circumstances will absence requests be authorised.

We need parents/carers to complete the leave of absence request form as far in advance as possible of the requested absence an no later than two weeks in advance.

These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Attendance Champion and Headteacher who will, in turn, liaise with Headteacher(s) of siblings’ schools, if the sibling attends a Trust school, and will endeavour to do the same for siblings’ schools not in the Trust. The Headteacher will consider every request individually.

The decision of the Headteacher is final and, if the leave of absence is not agreed, the child’s/young person’s absences will be marked as unauthorised.

# Unauthorised absence

An absence will be unauthorised if your child is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst as parents you can provide explanations for absence, it remains the school’s decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

* Absences which have never been properly explained
* Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
* Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips, errands
* Absences whereby parents state they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
* Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless in very, very exceptional circumstances as agreed in advance by the school)
* If a pupil is kept away from school longer than has been agreed -any additional absence will be unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in the use of penalty notices or prosecution.

# Support for school attendance

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible.

Parents should contact their child’s tutor in the first instance to ask for support, contact details fo tutors can be found at the bottom of this document.

For pupils with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance we will fully support each pupil to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support this.

Again parents should contact their child’s tutor but may also feel the need to contact their head of year too.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents you will work with us to best support your child so this does not need to happen.

If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child’s safety and well-being.

At Samuel Ward Academy we want your child to thrive, be able to achieve their potential and be happy. School attendance is foundational for academic success, personal development, and for future opportunities and at Samuel Ward Academy we want to support all our families to ensure that every pupil can make the most of their time at our school.

Appendix 1

# Key Attendance Contacts – Full List

Below is a list of our key contacts for Attendance Support out our school. We will keep this document up-to-date and it will reflect staff changes when they happen. If you have printed this document, please see our school website for the most up-to-date version of this document.

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| **School Attendance Champion:** | Daisy Hopkins |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | DHopkins@samuelward.co.uk |

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| **School Attendance administrators:** | Anette Barnes / Louise Cohen |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | attendance@samuelward.co.uk |

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| **Student Services Manager:** | Sian Cripps |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | Scripps@samuelward.co.uk |

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| **SENDCO:** | Vicki Eldred |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | VEldred@samuelward.co.uk |

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| **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** | Kevin Geall |
| **Telephone number:**  | 01440761511 | **Email**:  | KGeall@samuelward.co.uk |

