

## **SUTTON HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY (414)** **Including EYFS**

### **GDST Statement on School Attendance September 2023**

*Absence, whatever its cause, is detrimental to any student's academic, social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, with a cumulative effect. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue.*

*Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school. The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Heads may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. As is required by law, the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The local safeguarding partners will also be informed if absence amounts to a safeguarding concern.*

*In order to maximize our students' potential, the GDST is committed to ensuring students do not miss out on their education through poor attendance rates. We expect all GDST schools to at least meet the national attendance average, and school attendance rates are monitored accordingly. A member of SLT is expected to review and analyse attendance across the school as a whole on a regular basis, following up on trends or patterns of concern, and reporting to the School Governing Board/GDST as required.*

*Class teachers and tutors are expected to monitor and review the attendance record of the students for whom they are responsible. An individual attendance record of below 90% must be followed up by the school, as will noticeable patterns, or sudden or unexplained absence.*

### **Sutton High School**

At Sutton High School we see student attendance as a substantial contributing factor to social integration, happiness and success in our vibrant school community. We have a duty to monitor attendance rates on an ongoing basis and teachers, tutors and heads of year will act if a student's absence becomes a concern.

We ask parents' or guardians to familiarise themselves with our policy and help us to promote the standards of attendance and punctuality which are essential for success in an educational Setting.

At Sutton High School we expect all students to aim to be in school every school day. However, we realise that this is not always possible and that students may fall below a 100% attendance rate. We treat attendance rates of below 93% as a cause for concern and rates below 90% as a serious cause for concern.

### **Key contacts**

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The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the school is Elizabeth Clark, Deputy Head: Pastoral. For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact your child's form tutor. For more detailed support with attendance contact Assistant Head: Pastoral in the Prep School or the relevant Head of Year in the Senior School.

### **Planned absence: Leave of absence**

Leave of absence is the term used to describe all planned absences that are known about in advance. Permission to take students out of school can only be given by the Head and is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave of absence in the Senior School must be submitted in writing to the Head via the attendance officer who can be contacted on

Telephone: 020 8642 0594

Email: [attendance@sut.gdst.net](mailto:attendance@sut.gdst.net)

In the Prep School, requests should be made to the Prep Attendance Officer via [prepoffice@sut.gdst.net](mailto:prepoffice@sut.gdst.net) or 020 8225 3072.

Travel arrangements should not be confirmed until permission has been received from the Head. If leave of absence is authorized, parents and guardians will be notified and an absence note will not be required on return.

### **Unplanned absence**

On the first day of unplanned absence it is the parents' and guardians responsibility to telephone or email the attendance officers (as outlined above) of the school concerning the reason for a student's absence on the first day of absence.

On subsequent days of unplanned absence parents and guardians must also provide information to the school attendance officer via the phone or email by 8.30 am on each day of subsequence absence, until the pupil is well enough to return.

The school will remain in contact with parents on a regular basis until the student returns.

When reporting an absence parents' and guardians are requested to give details of the pupil's illness or reason for absence. If this is not forthcoming the absence will be investigated. If the nature of the absence is not disclosed to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents and guardians are informed if absences are recorded as unauthorised.

If an absence occurs, it is the responsibility of the student to make up any lost work in the first instance; however if the absence is for a long period of time catching up work will be facilitated and monitored by the pupils' Head of Year in senior School or class teacher in Prep School. If an absence is known in advance, the student must approach individual members of staff for guidance in their subject area.

### **Reasons for planned absence**

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### Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, optician etc., should where possible be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours.

For medical and dental appointments that have to occur during the school day permission for absence should be requested in advance via the attendance officer.

### Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a student's parents belong; an email in advance to the attendance officer is still required.

### Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned as leave of absence, such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding.

Attending sports events or concerts do not constitute reason for leave of absence.

### Study Leave

Study leave may be authorised during the official examination period for Years 11 and 13 only. Parents will be informed in advance of arrangements for study leave and there will be study facilities available in school for those who wish to work in school, rather than at home. Study leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn if a student seems unlikely to use the time profitably.

### Work Experience

Work Experience is an important part of a student's experience in Years 11-13. Students are usually given a period of time away in which to complete work experience during term time. Requests for permission to undertake work experience during term time outside of the time allocated by the school, should be made via the attendance officer.

### Family/Domestic Problems

Looking after other children, minding the house, or shopping within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence under law.

## **Sixth Form**

### Flexible day

Sixth formers sometimes have a flexible day, recognising their growing maturity and bridging the gap between formal schooling and post 18 study or work. They must attend school every day, arriving in time for morning registration and form time. They must attend all timetabled lessons, but, on some occasions, will be able to leave the school during their non-taught sessions in Period 7 and 8, signing in and out via Inv-Entry. All regular appointments, driving lessons etc. must be scheduled for these times, or other times when the pupil is not in school. Permission to miss taught lessons will not be given, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any student who does not attend lessons or whose progress is not good will have the privilege of a flexible day removed. Should a student be unable to attend school, parents/careers should notify the school in the usual way.

### Interviews

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Sixth formers will be given permission to attend interviews at Universities and Colleges at times and dates allocated by the institutions. We ask that parents and guardians make the attendance officer aware of the dates as soon as they receive them.

### Open Days

Sixth Form students will be given time during term time to attend University and College Open Days. Permission to attend Open Days outside of the time allocated by the school should be requested via the attendance officer.

## **Unplanned absence**

### Illness

Parents or guardians are requested to inform the school via the attendance officer on the first day if a pupil is ill, and each subsequent day.

### Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer students sympathetic support. Absence under such circumstances will, of course, be authorised.

## **Returning to school**

Sometimes a student who has been off school for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances it is of paramount importance that parents contact the Deputy Head Pastoral to or Head of Prep School to discuss procedures for supported reintegration.

## **Action if attendance falls to a level that is of concern**

The Head of Year and Assistant Head: Pastoral in Prep monitor attendance rates for all students in their year groups. When attendance falls to a level of concern the school will work with students and parents to improve attendance. This may involve working with outside agencies.

## **Punctuality**

Students are expected to be prompt for registration. If a pupil is late, they must register with their class teacher if possible. Otherwise, they must sign in as soon as they arrive. If a pupil fails to do this, the school will assume they are absent. Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. Lateness after 9.30am will be deemed as an absence and will require a note of explanation from a parent or guardian.

## **Persistent or severe absence**

Where absence or a pattern of absence appears to be at risk of becoming problematic, the school will meet with the parents to discuss how to support the pupil and remove barriers to attendance where possible. This may include referrals to external services and other organisations. These actions will be regularly reviewed, and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. Ultimately if voluntary support is not effective the school will work with the local authority to put more formal measures in place. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a safeguarding risk.

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## Students with individual needs

Whilst good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health issues. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such pupils and their parents, and will develop individualized support approaches that meet their specific needs where appropriate.

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