SHIRLEY HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

Our Vision:

To develop aspirational learners who strive for excellence academically, creatively and culturally, benefitting from a wide range of opportunities led by inspirational educators.

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

INTENT

"Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners." (DFE)

Shirley High School is committed to working with all stakeholders to improve the attendance and punctuality of all students. We understand the importance of regular attendance to school if we are to ensure the effective safeguarding, personal development and academic progress of our students. Shirley High School subscribes to the statutory guidance of the Department for Education's (DFE) Working Together to Improve Attendance. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a4f9ec6a6586e258d371bd0/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_2026.pdf

In addition, we understand that educating our students on the importance of attendance and punctuality also prepares them for their future prospects after completing their academic journey at Shirley High School.

We also intend to ensure that parents and carers are made aware of their responsibility for their child maintaining the expected level of attendance. The school is committed to holding all stakeholders accountable for the attendance of our students.

Legal aspects of Attendance

"The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school." (ibid)

The school will endeavour to support students, parents and carers but where efforts do not lead to improvement in school attendance, *"the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis." (Ibid)*

All parents / carers have a duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which states that, 'if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at school, the parent is guilty of an offence.

Under the terms of the education related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, parent/carer(s) may be issued with a Penalty Notice if they:

- Fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly
- Allow their child to take leave of absence in term time without a school's authorisation
- Fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after a leave of absence
- Allow their child to persistently arrive late for school after the register is closed

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices

- Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.
- The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If there are problems that affect a student's attendance or punctuality we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times. A similar approach will be adopted with students whose punctuality is considered to be an issue.

What attendance level will the school monitor?

The school will monitor the attendance of all pupils closely and use attendance information to identify where additional support may be required. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil is safe, feels valued and has a strong sense of belonging at Shirley High School.

Attendance below 95% will normally be subject to daily monitoring and review. Where concerns are identified, the school will take appropriate action to improve attendance through a combination of clear communication, early intervention and targeted support. Any pupil below 90% will be managed through our Persistent Absence expectations.

The following actions may be taken:

Actions that the school will use to help to improve attendance.

Stage 1

- Conversations and communications with the form Tutors and Head of Year.
- Informal letters and communication

Stage 2

- Targeted support meetings
- Actions Plans
- Collaboration with external agencies to help improve attendance and family support if required.

Stage 3

- Legal Escalation
- Multi Agency Safeguarding

The school will:

- Adhere to the statutory guidance set out in the DFEs "Working Together to Improve Attendance."
- Conduct home visits for students with three or more consecutive days of absence where possible.
- Conduct home visits to ensure the welfare of absent students where there are concerns about the wellbeing of an absent student.
- Work with the local authority and external agencies to provide support and intervention for parents and students where appropriate.
- Work with the local authority to enforce legal attendance procedures.
- Implement the rewards and sanctions system for attendance and punctuality
- Initiate and implement Attendance Contracts in collaboration with parents and students.
- Maintain regular and consistent communication with stakeholders regarding students' attendance.
- Review the impact of attendance on students' progress and attainment and use this to inform interventions.

IMPLEMENTATION

Pupils:

- Attend school regularly
- Maintain an attendance percentage 96% and above.
- Arrive to school on time
- Maintain a punctuality percentage of 97% and above
- Arrive to all lessons on time
- Communicate any issues that they are having with achieving and maintaining the expected level of attendance and punctuality.
- Cooperate and engage with sanctions, rewards and interventions pertaining to attendance and punctuality (e.g. lunchtime, HOY and Saturday detentions)
- Register with form tutor between 8:40am and 9:10am
- Register at the attendance office if they arrive at school after 9:10am. Failure to do so will result in a Health and Safety detention

Parents/Carers:

- Ensure regular attendance is maintained throughout the child's time at Shirley High School.
- Facilitate their child achieving an attendance percentage of 96% and above.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time.
- Facilitate their child achieving a punctuality percentage of 97% and above.

- Ensure that all the contact details we hold on our records/systems are always up to date and that the emergency contact details are current and correct.
- Maintain communication with the school as required and appropriate.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Contact the attendance and welfare office if their child is to be absent or late to school attend@shirley.croydon.sch.uk or 0208 656 9755 ext 163 to provide a reason for absence.
- Provide sufficient evidence confirming the reason for their child's absence.
- Provide medical evidence on request to allow sickness related absences to be authorised.
- Complete the student absence request form should an emergency absence be required and supply the necessary supporting information, including telephone and email details

Form Tutors:

- Register students electronically during AM tutor time, between 8:40am and 9:10am.
- Issue late detention for students arriving after 9:10am.
- Reinforce the attendance and punctuality procedures operating within school and reinforce that poor attendance and punctuality has a detrimental effect on the learning of all pupils
- Reinforce that students' average yearly attendance should not fall below 96% and that pupils' average yearly punctuality should not be above 3% lates and the importance of good punctuality and regular attendance.
- Where possible, contact parents where there is a cause for concern regarding absence (more than 2 absences in a week) or poor punctuality (more than 2 lates in a week)for any pupil in their tutor group and record notes on SIMS.
- Follow up/action as appropriate / have an overview of all rewards and sanctions related to attendance & punctuality of your pupils, so you have a full picture of this in relation to your tutor group.
- Place pupils on tutor monitoring reports for attendance and / or punctuality as appropriate to facilitate improvement in these areas
- Liaise with the HOY regarding attendance and / or punctuality of pupils in their tutor group.

Classroom Teachers:

- Register their pupils electronically for each lesson in accordance with school procedure
- Take an accurate and timely register and follow up on students' absences to their lessons
- Direct students to sign in at the attendance office if they arrive at school after the AM or PM register closes.
- Use agreed coding to register the attendance or absence of students (/, L, N)
- Apply sanctions (according to the behaviour policy) to any pupil who arrives late without a note of explanation;
- Apply sanctions (according to the behaviour policy) to any student who truants their lesson
- Refer pupils to the appropriate middle leader if a problem with attendance and/or punctuality persists
- Operate procedures which allow absentees or late comers to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members
- Be consistent in their demonstration and communication of the school's expectation for attendance and punctuality.
- Use comments on SIMS to communicate information and context related to students' punctuality and attendance.

Curriculum Leaders:

- Ensure teachers in their departments are taking accurate registers and address any issues via line management

- Ensure that cover/supply teachers are aware of expectations for taking accurate registers
- Promptly and robustly address truancy from lessons
- Respond to subject-related school avoidance and provide necessary interventions
- Meet with students, parents/carers and teachers where necessary to promote and improve attendance to lessons and school
- Initiate punctuality and attendance monitoring interventions (e.g. report cards).
- Track, monitor and communicate the impact of attendance on students' progress and attainment
- Be consistent in their demonstration and communication of the school's expectation for attendance and punctuality.

Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year:

- Reinforce the expectations for all stakeholders
- Track and monitor the attendance of students in their year groups.
- Arrange and manage suitable interventions to improve the attendance of students in their year group
- Report and escalate matters to the Deputy Principal
- Ensure that the AWO is made aware of students who are absent due to sanctions or special statutory arrangements (e.g. suspension, Off Site Directions, Respite, Off Site etc).

Attendance and Welfare Officer (AWO):

- Receive absence calls and emails and record information on the school system
- Update registers to reflect the appropriate codes for absence or attendance
- Track and monitor the accuracy of registers taken.
- Send automated text messages to parents of students whose absences have not been reported by 10am.
- Liaise with all stakeholders according to their roles and responsibilities for attendance
- Provide relevant data to Heads of Year and Deputy Principal regarding attendance
- Initiate attendance plans and contracts
- Have oversight of the effectiveness of attendance contracts and interventions
- Make referrals to relevant external agencies
- Manage legal attendance procedures
- Liaise with the Local Authority.
- Respond to concerns regarding persistent absence as necessary.
- Conduct home visits, meetings, referrals and all other interventions as necessary.
- Report to the Deputy Principal regarding attendance and welfare of students.
- Complete relevant and appropriate actions delegated by the Deputy Principal

SENDCO:

- To support and advise stakeholders regarding the implementation of this policy in relation to students on the SEND register
- To advise on reasonable adjustments that can be implemented to support the attendance of students on the SEND register.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of any barriers faced by students that may affect their attendance.
- To manage the review of support and intervention offered to students on the SEND register and on an attendance improvement plan.
- Report to the Deputy Principal regarding the attendance of students on the SEND register.

SLT:

- Communicate and reinforce the expectations of this policy through the line management process
- Be consistent in their demonstration and communication of the school's expectation for attendance and punctuality.

Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal (safeguarding, pastoral and attendance) is responsible for the implementation of this policy and will report to the Principal and Governing Body.

They will also oversee:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;

Governing Body:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies
- Support school leaders to fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- Ensure that staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy
- Link governor for attendance to meet termly with the Deputy Principal to undertake monitoring of pupil attendance

Additional Information regarding attendance and punctuality:

Leave of absence:

"All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- ***Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad:*** *in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see Code C1)*
- *Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.*
- ***Study leave:*** *for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.*

- ***A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:*** *where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable)*
- ***Exceptional circumstances:*** *All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school." (Ibid)*

Bullying Issues and Complaints:

It is important that any issues or concerns regarding bullying are reported immediately to the respective Head of Year. The school cannot deal with situations they are unaware of. All of our pupils are encouraged to report and call out bullying and harassment but it may be that they feel more comfortable talking to you and you then alerting us.

Allowing a pupil to not attend school due to bullying is counterproductive and may lead to further social, emotional and mental health issues. It also empowers the pupils who are engaging in bullying behaviours. The school will deal with all issues/concerns raised by a pupil or their parents/ carers. The school will always work with the family to ensure the pupil feels safe as well as minimise any disruption to their education.
It is important to understand that the process for dealing with situations of this type is an individual one and the length of time taken to resolve a situation and agree a method for resolution cannot be set. Ensuring we work in partnership will ensure that the situation is resolved with minimum disruption to the pupil's education.

Additionally, absence from school due to a grievance (e.g. with a member of staff, curriculum content or unresolved incident) will not be authorised. We urge you to use the school's procedures to resolve complaints or issues and avoid these issues impacting on the attendance of your child.
Elective Home Education (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is when a parent chooses not to send their child to school full-time but assumes responsibility for making sure their child receives a full-time education other than at school. EHE requires parents to take full responsibility for their child's education.

With the exception of those whose children are on a Child Protection (CP) plan, all parents have the legal right to home educate their child. The school requires you to make a formal notice of your intention to electively home educate before we remove them from our school roll. Refusal to attend school is not sufficient notification of a parent/carer's intention to electively home educate and persistent absence from school will be referred to the Local Authority (LA).

We advise that parents discuss their EHE decision with the school and local authority to ensure that they are fully informed before making their decision to home educate.

Once notice has been provided by parents/carers, the school will notify the LA and the child will be removed from roll. The school will no longer have responsibility for their education or attendance to school.

In Year Admission/School Transfers
An in-year school application is when an application is made for a child to attend a school after the school year has started. Parents have the right to express their preference for a child to attend a particular school and to apply for a

school place while their child is enrolled at another school. However, parents must ensure their child attends the school allocated to them by the LA regardless of whether it is their preferred school or not. When a parent makes an in-year application, they are still expected to send their child to school until they are accepted and start their new school. “Waiting to hear from” a preferred school is not an authorised reason for absence and persistent absence will be dealt with accordingly.

DfE guidance:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ca21e22e5274a77d9d26feb/EHE_guidance_for_parentsafterconsultationv2.2.pdf

Croydon LA guidance:
https://www.croydon.gov.uk/schools-and-education/parents/educating-your-child-home#:~:text=Croydon%20believes%20in%20the%20value,relevant%20and%20differentiated%20curriculum%20experience.

Child Missing from Education (CME):

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is defined by the DFE as "a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)." In Croydon, referrals for CME are accepted after 10 working days of reasonable checks being carried out by the school.

We will make a CME referral for any pupil who has been missing from school, despite all of our attempts to make contact and undertake welfare checks to the LA.

Part Time Timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil’s best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

The Academy will agree part-time timetables with the Parent the pupil normally lives with. The Academy will regularly review the timetable and include the pupil and their Parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary. Any part-time timetable will have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

The Academy will inform the local authority of any part-time timetable where the pupil has an education health and care plan.

The Academy will inform the pupil’s social worker and a youth offending team worker of any part-time timetable where the pupil has a one.

Persistent and severe absence

Persistent and severe absence means that a pupil misses 10% or more of school (equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year).

In cases of persistent and severe absences, the Academy will work together with the local authority and other relevant services to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. This may include specific support or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

In cases where the additional support has not improved attendance or where there has been no engagement with the support, the Academy will consider any potential safeguarding issues and whether legal intervention is required

Equality Duty

When making any decision that will affect a pupil or staff member with a protected characteristic, having due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share It;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

To create and maintain good relations the school must:

- promote understanding.
- Tackle prejudice

Section 19

Where require the school will work in line with the guidance to manage any pupil that cannot attend school due to health needs

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657995f0254aaa000d050bff/Arranging_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf

Glossary

Expected attendance	-	yearly average attendance of 96% (= no more than 8 school days away from school) expected from all our students
Expected punctuality	-	no more than 3% lates (= no more than 6 lates to school per year) expected from all our students
Persistent absence	-	any student falling below the Government threshold of 90% attendance, is classed as a persistent absentee
Authorised absence	-	absence is acceptable and approved by the school
Unauthorised absence	-	no acceptable reason is given for absence
Absence text	-	absence notification text service
Medical evidence	-	evidence to prove that an absence is due to illness e.g. GP's receptionist medical practice stamp in the student planner, GP appointment card, copy of prescription given, evidence of visit to and / or copy of advice given from a pharmacist.
Medical consent form	-	form allowing the school to obtain medical information regarding a student direct from a GP
Staged intervention	-	intervention used by the school, in distinct stages, to effect an improvement in a student's attendance and / or punctuality. If no improvement is made this is used as evidence for the Local Authority Education and Welfare Service to take legal action.
Penalty notice	-	fine issued by the Local Authority

DFE Attendance Codes

This is a list of attendance codes that come into effect on 19th August 2025 for all schools:

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school

E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an	Attending an educational visit or trip

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code.

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
B	Educated off-site (not Dual Reg)	Attending any other approved educational facility.
K	Alternative provision provided by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Y2	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements

Links with other policies:

This policy has been developed and evaluated with a view to helping children achieve more. It links with the following policies which can be read in conjunction:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Equality Policy

Evaluation and Monitoring:

This policy is a dynamic document and will be updated as new guidance is produced or, in response to research, review or other events that have not previously been covered in depth.

IMPACT

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and in implementing this policy effectively, the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset will be recognised by all members of our community. All will also recognise that good attendance is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture and that good attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all students and is everyone's responsibility.

It is expected that all of our students achieve at least 96% attendance and 97% punctuality and that the school is in line with or above the national average for school attendance and persistent absence percentages.

Appendix 1 - Working together to improve school attendance DFE (updated 2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Appendix 2 - Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance DFE (Updated 2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf301e253aee7aafdbdfea/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

Appendix 3 - Attendance Percentage Impact Chart.



We want all at SHS to believe in and maintain the values of our school:

