

September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

At Smith's Wood Academy, we place a very high importance on attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance allows children to thrive academically, socially and emotionally, and we expect every pupil to attend school at least 98% of the time. These expectations apply to all pupils, including those with additional or special educational needs. While we are committed to providing support when difficulties arise, consistent attendance remains essential for every child.

### Reporting Absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, it is your responsibility to contact the Academy by telephone first thing in the morning on each day of absence. Please remember that minor ailments such as coughs, colds, sore throats or runny noses are not usually sufficient reasons to miss school.

For some children, anxiety about attending can also be a challenge. However, remaining at home can often increase that anxiety, whereas attending school helps to alleviate worries and build resilience. We encourage parents to speak with us at the earliest opportunity if their child is struggling.

### Daily Checks and Safeguarding

Registers are checked every morning. If we have not received any communication regarding your child's absence, a member of staff will telephone the contacts provided to establish their whereabouts. Messages will be left where possible, and it is important that these calls are returned promptly so that we can fulfil our duty to safeguard all pupils.

If there are concerns regarding a child's attendance, or if the reasons given are not acceptable, you may receive a call from the Attendance Team and, if necessary, a home visit will be arranged. In some cases, these visits may take place unannounced.

### Medical Appointments

Medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible. If an appointment during the school day cannot be avoided, we require proof such as an appointment letter, slip or screenshot. Pupils are expected to attend school both before and after their appointment when circumstances allow.

### Term-Time Leave

Leave during term time will not be granted for family holidays and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made on the Academy's leave of absence form at least four weeks in advance. You will receive the Principal's decision in writing, and in some cases, a discussion may be required before a decision is made.

If leave is taken without authorisation, you may be at risk of receiving a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

### Persistent Absence

The Academy monitors attendance and punctuality regularly, whether absence is authorised or unauthorised. When a pupil's attendance falls below 98%, we will begin intervention. This may involve letters, phone calls, meetings or home visits, depending on the level of concern.

**Missing 19 days of school within a year results in a child being classed as persistently absent for the remainder of that school year.** If interventions do not lead to improvement, the Academy may refer the case to the Local Authority, which can result in legal action. It is therefore essential that parents inform us quickly if their child is experiencing difficulties, so that we can provide appropriate support either within school or by referral to external services.

### Punctuality

Morning registration takes place at 8:30am. Pupils arriving after this time, without good reason, will receive a 15-minute detention at lunchtime. Failure to complete this detention will result in an escalation to a 30-minute detention after school.

Pupils who arrive after registers have closed at 9:00am will be recorded as unauthorised absent for the morning session, which, if repeated, may lead to referral to the Local Authority. Being late to school not only disrupts learning for the individual pupil, but also for the wider class.

### Penalty Notices – National Framework

We are required to follow the national framework for penalty notices. A penalty notice will be considered when a child has accrued ten unauthorised sessions (equivalent to five school days) within a ten-week period, even if this spans different terms.

The fine is set at £160 per parent or carer per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. No more than two penalty notices can be issued within a three-year period for the same child. If the threshold is met a third time, the case will proceed directly to alternative action, which may include prosecution.

The table below shows the amount of valuable learning time that is missed due to poor school attendance:

Attendance during the school year	Days absent = lessons missed	Action
Below 98%	4 school days missed = 20 lessons	Notification sent home - below Local Authority target (98%)
96%	7 school days missed = 35 lessons	First letter sent home, your child is now at risk of being persistently absent. Meeting will be arranged with Pastoral team to offer support and identify barriers.
95%	10 school days missed = 50 lessons	Second letter sent home, your child's attendance will continue to be monitored. If your child has one more absence then you will be invited in for a formal meeting with the attendance team.
93%	15 school days missed = 75 lessons	Absences will not be authorised without medical evidence, you will be invited in for a formal attendance meeting to complete an attendance contract.
90%	19 school days missed = 95 lessons	You will be invited in for a second meeting to review the attendance contract, one more days absence will trigger Local Authority involvement and you may be at risk of receiving a penalty.

We firmly believe that good attendance is a team effort, built on strong partnerships between home and school. By working together, we can ensure that every child has the best possible chance of succeeding.

If you would like to view the full Attendance Policy, it can be viewed on our website - [Policies and Procedures – Smith's Wood Academy](#)

Yours sincerely

Miss Y Akay