




Attendance Policy

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Ratified	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Work with LA's to improve attendance

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the context of our school and meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for pupils of compulsory school age. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2.1 Students above the compulsory school age

We follow a similar approach to improving attendance for students above the compulsory school age. For these students, regular attendance is important to support their progress and attainment. The school collects and collates attendance data following the same process as the pupils of compulsory school age.

We recognise that responsibility for attendance sits with the student, rather than their parents/carers, therefore all communication around attendance and interventions to improve attendance will be made with the student (unless there are specific reasons to liaise with others). Attendance data will be shared with funding LA's as per our SLA.

Regular and punctual attendance is actively encouraged by all staff. This is supported by the Behaviour policy and rewards that can be earned. Where attendance is poor the student will be informed that if this attendance does not improve their college place may be at risk.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Deputy Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the proprietor and governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Liaising with the LA education welfare team, where appropriate
- Advising the proprietor where a fixed-penalty notice may be appropriate

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Deputy Principal (and DSL where appropriate)
- Works with LA education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Deputy Principal where fixed-penalty notices may be appropriate

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 10:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 10:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7) by telephoning the school office number.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, it is the school's expectation that routine/non urgent appointments are made outside of the school day wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate

code.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality by:

- Emphasising the importance of punctuality to limit lost learning opportunities

- Raising awareness of punctuality issues among all staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand their responsibility in relation to making sure their child attends regularly and punctually
- Equipping pupils with the life skills needed to take responsibility for punctuality
- Effectively communicate with parents/carers regarding punctuality
- Support pupils with any difficulties they may be experiencing
- Support parents/carers with any difficulties they may be having
- Use data to continually monitor, report and intervene in cases of persistent lateness

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up, by telephone or home visits to the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for the absence
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken, including informing the DSL, where necessary
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will receive their child's attendance record via termly written report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Deputy Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Deputy Principal's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something that is in the best interest of the child, when weighed against the impact of lost learning.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending another educational provision
- Study leave
- Short-term reduced-time timetables, where appropriate

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The school targets unauthorised absence by,

- Closely monitoring and analysing the attendance data to identify trends in authorised and unauthorised absence for individual pupils and cohorts.
- Telephone contact with parents / carers on the first day of absence
- Additional monitoring will be put in place and attendance support interventions enacted

- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Issuing letters where there are concerns about attendance
- Alerting the LA Early Intervention team where there are continuing concerns about attendance
- The Attendance Lead will conduct home visits as per Raise Safeguarding Policy

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The school will always make every effort to work collaboratively with pupils and parents/carers to improve attendance. Fines, or penalty notice, that require each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days to the local authority. The school will only consider this approach as a last resort, taking the whole context into account.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Deputy Principal, 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
- The context of the unauthorised absences

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school has a culture of high expectations in relation to pupil attendance. Regular messages are conveyed to pupils about the importance of their education. The Behaviour Policy outlines rewards that can be earned whilst in school, to motivate pupils to attend.

The school understands that some pupils may have medical or social needs that negatively affects their attendance. We work with agencies to understand the pupils support needs to help them to access Where this occurs, we work with parents/carers and professionals to develop strategies and reasonable adjustments to enable them to access the curriculum.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to full-time education. However, we acknowledge that in very exceptional circumstances, and where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. These are likely to fall in to one of three categories;

1. Where a medical condition or family bereavement prevents a pupil from attending full-time education
2. Where there are behavioural difficulties, and the school is seeking an alternative to permanent exclusion,
3. Where a pupil joining the school has significant needs and a reduced timetable would help them get used to the school and its routines

In all cases this is discussed with parents/carers and the placing local authority. These arrangements are regularly reviewed.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence daily.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2) and each day that the child remains unwell.

If a pupil's absence goes above 1 day without communication from the parent/carer, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil daily to discuss the reasons for this. On the 3rd day of absence, the school will advise parent/carer to seek medical attention.

If a pupil has pre-existing welfare concerns, the school will conduct a home visit on the 3rd day of the absence.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the LA's Early Intervention team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The school collects and store attendance data to be used for internal purposes. This includes:

- Tracking the attendance of individual pupils
- Identifying whether there are particular cohorts of pupils whose absence is of concern
- Monitoring and evaluating those children identified as requiring intervention and support
- Delivering interventions, including supporting parents/carers where appropriate

7.1 Attendance Monitoring recording absences relating to Coronavirus:

The Attendance Team / SLT to ensure that the latest guidance is used by checking the Department for Education (DfE) website regularly for the most up to date guidance relating to Coronavirus Absences.

Recording non-attendance related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

The DfE have defined a set of sub codes for schools to use to consistently record non-attendance related to COVID-19 and help them to complete the educational settings status form. These can be found in Appendix 1.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

