

# Attendance policy

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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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2 Legislation and guidance

This policy 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](#). 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.

## 3 Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The trustee board

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

### 3.2 The principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 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 principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 3.4 Form tutors

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 reception staff

School reception 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 8.40am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:25pm and will be kept open until 2.25pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

In the case of a child being absent from school due to illness, parents have three options to report their absence:

- Text 01604 420132 with details of your child's full name, form, reason for absence and expected date of return
- Leave a message on the school's absence line, 01064 344744 option 0.
- Email SC9414005a@schoolcomms.com each morning of the absence.

*Please note, if your child is suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, they must stay off school for 48 hours until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.*

Parents who have failed to inform the school of their child's absence will receive a text message; parents then have the remainder of the school day to contact the attendance line through one of the methods listed above. If no contact has been made by 3:30pm, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absences due to illness will normally be authorised once you tell us. Please note that in cases of absence more than five days, we may need the support of medical evidence.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Absence due to the funeral of a close family member, medical appointments, music exams and driving tests (up to half a day) will be authorised at the principal's discretion and provided advance notice is given to the school. Please submit a 'request for absence form, found on our website or at reception.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where 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

If a student arrives late to school (from 8.40am onwards), they will be expected to attend a 30-minute same day detention, parents will be notified of this. If a student fails to attend their 30-minute detention, a 60-minute detention will be set for the next school day, which parents will again be notified of.

Failure to attend this will result in the student being referred for meeting with Attendance officer and parent to determine reason for 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 on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by text message, email or a phone call by attendance officer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not Identify the correct attendance code to use

### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents receive their child's attendance record. termly via census written reports (autumn, spring and summer.)

## 5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The 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 principal's discretion.

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** may include:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs"
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; (Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a principal is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance)
- In difficult family situations the principal may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
- 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 educational provision)

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

School work with students and parents to ensure students do not become persistent absentees, however, if a student drops below 85% attendance, parents will receive an email expressing our concerns and an invite to discuss a way forward. If there is little or no positive change at this point, parents will receive a letter from the school, inviting them to a targeted professionals meeting with the attendance officer, pastoral team, progress team and additional third parties to discuss support and interventions required. If no improvement or alternative solution can be agreed, a referral for irregular attendance will be made to the Inclusion Officer at the Local Authority

## 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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a 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

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

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance throughout all year groups, the school presents certificates at the end of Term 2 and Term 6 for 100% attendance during celebration assemblies.

During the year individual rewards and House points to form groups and individuals are allocated for excellent attendance, students with improved attendance are also recognised and rewarded with communication to parents/carers. Attendance and absences are also included in Form Tutor reports home on a termly basis.

## 7 Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

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.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the trustee board.

The school collects and stores attendance data, and how it may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 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 officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the principal.

## 9 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Admissions 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



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

Other absence		
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