



Attendance Policy

Principles

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children.

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result they thrive and make outstanding educational progress.

We endeavour for children to take responsibility for their own attendance, recognising the link between attendance and good learning.

Legal Requirements

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five and, where a parent has elected to register their child at school, they must start school in the term following their fifth birthday at the latest (although parents of many children choose to send them earlier). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach the age of 16. After this age, the legal requirement to participate in education or training will fall to the young person.

Class teachers -It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Government expects:

Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time. Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent, both parents, or the carer with whom the child resides.

- Schools, academies and local authorities to:
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
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Promoting Good Attendance

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

99-100 %	Excellent –Well done! This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
96-98%	Good
93-95%	Becoming unsatisfactory
90%	Cause for Concern – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. This is described as Persistent Absence
Below 85%	Serious Cause for Concern – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. We will work with you to improve your child's attendance. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Only the school can 'authorise' absence. The school will not assess all reasons as 'valid'.

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded.

- Weekly Class Attendance – Attendance cup awarded to the class with the highest attendance. This encourages the children to work as a team towards good attendance. 100% class attendance awarded with a treat
- Yearly Individual Attendance - a 100% Certificate and a treat is given.
- Children's attendance levels will be shared and discussed with parents at parent's evenings and reported in the end of year report.
- Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly, in the school prospectus and through newsletters and the website. Attendance targets and levels will also be shared regularly through newsletters and the website.

In order to ensure high levels of attendance the school will:

- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- Irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance will be investigated and discussed with the parents. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- Have a named member of the Senior Leadership team responsible for attendance (Family Care Manager and Executive Headteacher);
- Inform the local governing body termly on the overall attendance figures

Notifying Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school **before 9.30am** on the first school day of his/her child's absence from school by phone, email or ParentMail. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues - or is likely to continue - for more than a week, medical evidence should be obtained and submitted to the school.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child. If a child is absent and a parent fails to inform the school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Other Points

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital should be shown when possible. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- c) If your child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for **the next 48 hours** after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- d) Medical certificates may be required for absence greater than seven days.

Authorised Absence

e.g.

- genuine illness of the pupil
- hospital/ dental/ doctors appointment for the pupil;
- major religious observances;
- visits to prospective new schools;
- external exams or educational assessments.
- family emergencies eg bereavements, house fire, close family wedding

Unauthorised Absence

e.g.

- shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;
- a birthday treat;
- oversleeping due to a late night;
- looking after other children / other family member;
- appointments for other family members
- family holiday.
- truancy
- unexplained absences
- arriving too late to get a mark

Holidays During Term Time

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that heads may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed **very rarely**. The financial factor (of taking holidays during term time) will not be taken as constituting an 'exceptional circumstance'.

Any unauthorised leave of absence could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued. A penalty notice involves a fine of £60 per child per parent/carer if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per child per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom a notice is served fails to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where on conviction a sentence of a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed.

Parents should complete the 'Application for Leave of Absence from School During Term Time' if they are considering a holiday in term time **at least 2 weeks** before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.

Persistent Absenteeism

The school will continuously monitor each child's attendance record with support and advice from the Education Welfare Officer. The school follows a process for any children who are persistently absent for any reason:

1. If a child's attendance falls below 95% the Head / Family Care Manager may write to the parents to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen below 95%. Parents will be reminded of their legal duty and of the school's policy and expectations;

2. If attendance does not improve **and falls below 90%** the Head may send a second letter and will invite parents to a meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school every day;

3. If a child's attendance level continues to fall further, the head will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting and when necessary other professionals if the need for support is identified. A **Parent Contract** will be put in place. If persistent absence from school continues and attendance continues to fall the Head has the right to unauthorise any absence without the support of medical evidence;

4. In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve action which may then be taken can include court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an education supervision order on the child. There could be a significant financial penalty and/or imprisonment as a consequence.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, this can be embarrassing for the child. The school day starts at **8.40am**. Doors close and registers are marked by **8.45am**. Any children arriving after this time **must report to the school office** to be marked in.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after this time – for reasons not considered acceptable by the school – they will be recorded as 'Late after registers closed'. They are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an **unauthorised absence** and affect their attendance record.

Persistent Lateness

The school follows a three step system for children who are persistently late:

1) When a child is considered to be persistently late (this is at the discretion of the Head) then the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns.

2) If a child continues to be persistently late the school will send a second letter to the parents/carers requesting a meeting to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.

3) In the event that the child's punctuality still does not improve the school will then agree with you a plan of action to improve your child's attendance. This may involve further support in school or from other agencies such as Health or Social Care.

