Attendance Policy

2025-2026

Our school aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. We achieve this by creating a happy, welcoming and secure environment where children feel valued. We believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils so that they can benefit from what our school has to offer. We aim to help the whole school community to appreciate the importance of good attendance.

Our expectation is that every child who is on roll should attend school every day, when the school is in session, if they are healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is developing positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Academic attainment

- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships

- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils

- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

It is expected that all children will have an attendance record of at least 96%.

If a pupil does not attend regularly (96%) without good reason, initially parents will be contacted by the school. If the child's absence becomes persistent (below 90%) parents will be contacted by a member of the leadership team and/or children's welfare officer. If there is no response or valid reason the school has the ability to inform the Education Welfare Officer that the child's attendance is a concern.

Good punctuality is encouraged, as late arrivals during teaching time can seriously disrupt a lesson.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)](#)
- [The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024](#)
- [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)
- [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

An attendance report is presented to the governing body each term.

We have a link governor for attendance: Laura McBride

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary,
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents
- Overseeing the attendance team with a focus on reducing persistent absence levels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader, Natalie Gyongyosi, is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for improving attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes for tackling absence,
- Having an oversight of absence data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address poor attendance identified through data
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families including engagement with external agencies, where needed
- Working in partnership with the EWO to challenge levels of persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Natalie Gyongyosi and can be contacted via 01706 648174 or FAO N Gyongyosi *office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk*

The family worker for the school, Carole Kelly, works closely with the senior leader when liaising with families who require support to improve attendance.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer, Andrea Parker, is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working alongside the DSL for attendance and the education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Andrea Parker and can be contacted via 01706 648174

3.4 Senior Leadership Team

The senior leadership team is responsible for:

- Supporting the attendance team with conducting home visits
- Monitoring the attendance of phase year groups
- Providing targeted challenge to families where attendance is poor
- Supporting teachers to raise the importance of attending school each day with pupils in their class
- Authorising whether a child should be sent home due to illness

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and 10 minutes after the start of afternoon lessons.
- Informing the office as soon as they are aware of any upcoming absences or reasons for absence

- Gaining SLT authorisation prior to contacting a parent to collect a child due to illness within the school day

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the SLT where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents /Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register for all our pupils at the school.

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 amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made (if needed)
- The initials of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school on time each school day:

	Reception	Year 1, 2 & 3	Year 4, 5 & 6
Morning Session	8.40am	8.45am	8.40am

The register will be taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session and will remain open until 9am and 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

Lateness until 9.30 will be recorded as late (L)

Lateness after 9.30aam will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U)

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by calling school office staff, who can be contacted via 01706 648174 or emailing the school office at office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk.

There is no expectation to speak to your child's teacher, a message can be left with the office staff. However, messages regarding absence should not be passed on by other pupils, for example – siblings, who are attending.

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

If a child's attendance is below 90%, any reported illness will require medical evidence.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and shows proof of the appointment. This can be done by visiting the school office, emailing on office@lowerplace.rochdale.sch.uk, or telephoning on 01706 648174.

However, we encourage parents 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 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 an L code (up to 9.30am)
- After the register has closed will be marked as late, using a U code (from 9.31am onwards). This lateness is classed as 1 session of unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is persistently late, we will meet with parents to discuss how we can support them.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a PING message to pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. A phone call may also be made to parents. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, contact neighbours or family, contact the police and/or children's social care for advice.

  (Parents must ensure that the schools has at least two up to date contact numbers and emergency contacts so we can get in touch with someone if, for example your child does not attend when expected. This is part of our duty to keep children safe.)

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent on each subsequent day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will conduct a home visit and consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be done as a minimum once a term: autumn and spring at parents' evenings and summer in the end of year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from these circumstances. This is in line with the dictionary definition of 'exceptional circumstances'.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's 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 educational provision

Under no circumstances will term-time holiday be granted as authorised absence. We understand that many of our school community will have family members abroad, however, whatever the situation no term-time holidays will be sanctioned by the school.

Below are further examples of reasons for absences that will **not** be authorised:

- Days out and holidays
- Children who arrive late after registers have closed
- Absences not explained
- Looking after siblings
- Celebrating a birthday
- Shopping
- Visiting relatives – in the UK or abroad
- Trips to the airport

5.2 Extended Visits and Legal Sanctions

It is the school's policy, in line with local authority and government guidance, that leave in term time will not be authorised. A request for a term-time holiday is not a parental right. Arrangements should not be made without informing the school in advance. Taking unauthorised leave for 10 sessions (5 school days- or more) will qualify for a Penalty Notice. No warning will be issued from the Local Authority. School holiday dates are available on the school website, with a reminder that holidays should be planned for school holiday times.

Extended visits, of 20 days or more, may result in the child being removed from the school's roll and being reported as a child who is missing in education. We will work with the local authority and education welfare officer if we are concerned about where the child is or when they will return to the country/school.

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

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of unauthorised absence of five or more days (10 sessions), in a 10-week school period.

- If issued with a first penalty notice for either term time absence of unauthorised absence, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days for each child.
- If issued with a second penalty notice (within three years) for either term time absence or unauthorised absence, each parent must pay £160 within 28 days for each child.

- If issued with a third penalty notice (within three years) for either term time absence or unauthorised absence, the case will be presented directly to the Magistrates' Court and a fine up to £2,500 can be issued.

All payments must be paid directly to the local authority, the school does not receive any of the money.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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 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

We aim to promote good attendance through a number of strategies:

- Fortnightly newsletters will celebrate the best attendance in each Key Stage.
- Attendance bears are rewarded to the class with the best attendance across each key stage weekly
- Children with more than 96% attendance at the end of each term will be rewarded with a certificate. A thank you letter will be sent to parents.
- Children with 100% attendance at the end of each term will receive a certificate and a small token prize. A thank you letter will be sent to parents.
- Good attendance and punctuality are discussed and the expectation shared at Class Welcome Meetings
- Discussions in assemblies
- Class door displays show the class attendance for the week
- Attendance is reported at least termly to the school's Governing Body, and the school's link governor for attendance makes regular review visits
- We also look to reward those children who have made significant improvement in their attendance and punctuality. This could include, but is not limited to, phone calls and letters home to thank parents, star of the week certificates and house points.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- We will work with families ad provide strategies for removing in-school barriers. We will involve the education welfare officer and other relevant agencies as needed.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- We will work with families, adjusting, and providing additional support where possible.
- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

- We will work with families, adjusting, and providing additional support where possible for pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will

- monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school, year, class and individual pupil level
- identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a *cause for concern*

Pupil-level absence data will be collected daily 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 its attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as the school nursing team or family workers
- Offer the support of the school's Inclusion Team. This could include but is not limited to DSLs, the Family Worker, the external school counsellor or our ELSA TA.

- The school will write to parents/carers each term at a minimum if their child is a persistent absentee with a personalised attendance percentage. This letter will act as a trigger for closer monitoring initially by the school, followed by the LA/EWO if the child continues to be a persistent absentee for a second term or the attendance pattern does not improve
- The school will hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of persistent absentee pupils and termly panel meetings for target families will be held with the DSL for attendance and EWO

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by SLT. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Attending the school	
/	Present in School AM
\	Present in School PM
L	Late arrival before register is closed
Attending a place other than the school	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent - leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent - other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent - unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2: Actions for Pupils Absent from school

We must always remember that children present in school are safe children. If a child is absent this can be a safeguarding concern. We have a duty of care and we are required to know where children are if they are absent from school and the reason for absence. Parents are required to inform the school of any absence, the reason for absence and must contact the school every day of absence.

When a pupil is absent from school and we have not received any contact from parents/carer with a reason for absence, the following route will be followed:

Day 1 Absence		
PING message sent by 10am. re absence to ALL absentees where no reason has been provided If there are safeguarding or attendance concerns, a phone call is made to parents. If this is not answered the second contact on Arbor will be used to try and establish where the pupil is.	Phone calls home in order of priority made from 9am (if no contact is made via telephone) • Child Protection, • Child in Need, • Children Looked After, • Persistent Absentees, • Vulnerable children Calls made by attendance team, pastoral team, or SLT if appropriate.	Priority home visits identified by SLT and completed by 11.30am. Visiting card left if no answer.
If there are safeguarding concerns about the child or family, Children's Social Care will be contacted. The police may also be contacted and asked to complete a welfare visit if appropriate.		
Marks in the Register: • Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Arbor. • Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an O		
Day 2 Absence		
If the pupil is absent for a second day and no contact has been received a telephone call is made by 10am. If there is no answer, all other Arbor contacts will be contacted to establish a reason for absence.	Home visit is completed by 11.30am (if no contact is made via telephone). Visiting card left if no answer.	If there are safeguarding concerns Children's Social Care will be contacted again or the police will be asked to complete a welfare visit.
Marks in the Register: • Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Arbor. • Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an O		
Day 3 Absence		
If the pupil is absent for a third consecutive day and no contact has been received to give reason for the absence, a phone call is made to parents and then other Arbor contacts if no response	Home visit is completed by 11.30am (if no contact is made via telephone). Visiting card left if no answer.	If there are safeguarding concerns Children's Social Care will be contacted again or the police will be asked to complete a welfare visit.
Marks in the Register: • Where a valid reason is given by parent/carer the correct code will be entered in Arbor. • Where no reason is yet established the mark will remain as an O		

All communication and home visits are logged on CPOMs.

If the parent provides a reason, we do not believe is truthful or a pattern of unauthorised absence emerges then the DSL will contact the parents/carers and request that a medical evidence letter is signed. This agrees that all future absences will require medical evidence or will be logged as unauthorised by the school.

Appendix 3: Ladder Chart used for classroom doors

- At the end of each week, the attendance for each class is recorded on each classroom door. In assembly on a Monday, classes acknowledge how close they are to reaching the top of the ladder.
- **Classes with 100% attendance earn an extra playtime.**

Appendix 4: Learning Hours Lost

What we are aiming for Average attendance would be around 95% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 96%.

The percentage attendance may seem high at 90% (we would celebrate this in an exam) but this is 19 days off school, nearly 4 weeks across a full year, even more scary 95 hours of lost learning. This is why attendance impacts on pupil progress.

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days absent	Learning hours lost
Outstanding	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
Cause for concern	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	77 dyas	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory – classed as persistently absent	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 dyas	25	125
Serious concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 dyas	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190
Severely absent	50% and below	95 days +	95+	475

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE.

In this school, we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%