

School Based Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations concerning school attendance by:

- Promoting and expecting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Promoting punctuality;
- Preparing students for the world of work;
- Conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

Improving school attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex. We will 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.

"The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school." Working together to improve school attendance May 2022.

For the purpose of this guidance, a parent means:

- all-natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

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:

- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- [School Attendance: main guidance \(updated May 2022\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance Applies from 19th August 2024](#)

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of registration in the morning and at the start of period 4 in the afternoon. 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

The DfE attendance codes can be found within 'Working together to improve school attendance' pages 86-88.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day and in their registration rooms by 8.25am.

The register for the first session will be taken at the beginning of registration at 8.25, and will remain open for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.15 and will remain open for 30 minutes.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day and every subsequent day of unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.35am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents must ring the school phone number and select the appropriate attendance office or email in to the appropriate attendance office.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Absence of three or more days will require appropriate medical evidence – for example appointment card or prescription.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily; for all children whose attendance is lower than 95% and or has historic low attendance this will be requested.

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.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who is late on 2 occasions will receive a detention. If the lateness persists this is result in further sanctions and parental meetings to plan for improvement.

Parents are encouraged to monitor punctuality through the SIMS parent application.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are able to view up to date information on their child's attendance through the SIMs parent app; attendance data for their child is recorded on school reports and includes an attendance grade to help parents see how their child's attendance sits compared to national data. Students receive regular notification of their attendance through their tutor and our school '100 Score'. 100 Score stickers are placed in the student planner on a frequent basis. We also report on attendance at each track-point and follow up with academic counselling where this is promoted in tutor time.

3.7 Free school meal provision

During periods of school closure, the government may release Free School Meal access in the form of supermarket vouchers. The school will administer such provision where it has the capacity to. However, access to FSM provision cannot be drawn down retrospectively or cumulatively. To support high levels of school attendance, free school meal provision will be accessed via the canteen only and must be accessed on a daily basis in person.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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 educational provision

'Term time holiday requests' will not be authorised, and, other than in the most exceptional of circumstance, will be subject to a penalty notice issued by the local authority. Please note that the price of holidays and flights is not an exceptional circumstance.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A 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.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Progress Leaders oversee the 100 Score, which is the base for the main reward system across the school. Attendance is one significant pillar of this. This leads to: whole school trips, golden event invitations and certificates. The 100 Score is used as a basis for academic counselling and promoted as being important for attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.

Special consideration is given to students where there are exceptional circumstances, e.g. long-term medical conditions, bereavement, medical injury and mental health which we recognise will impact on their attendance.

The importance and impact of attendance is also promoted through tutor time and assemblies by Progress Leaders and other pastoral staff. Attendance key workers are present at parents evening and careers events to work alongside parent to promote good attendance.

Progress leaders and Attendance officers rigorously monitor attendance. In order to reduce the impact of absence on academic progress and pastoral wellbeing students are sometimes required to catch up on any class and homework missed. This is monitored by the tutor and other pastoral staff. Students who have sustained periods of absence, authorised or unauthorised, may be required to attend a 'Return to School Interview' to establish if a specific plan is required to support their return.

Progress Leaders will work alongside external agencies to promote attendance and will make referrals to ensure that parents and students receive support from wider agencies as quickly as possible.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence and punctuality on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health and each subsequent morning until the child returns (see section 3.2).

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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Progress Leaders monitor and analyse attendance on a fortnightly basis through their Year Group Attendance meeting. This will ensure that attendance is monitored for individual students and particular focus groups across the school. The ANT meeting is held to monitor focus groups across the school and

with a focus on punctuality. The Safeguarding meeting focuses on priority cases where attendance and safeguarding concerns cross over.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

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

The governing body select a representative link governor to meet with the SLT link for attendance and have an overview of the schools' practice.

7.2 The Headteacher and SLT link

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is consistently, implemented across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The SLT link reports on attendance matters to the headteacher.

7.3 The Progress Leader

The progress leader:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level;
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT link;
- Works with wider agencies to tackle persistent absence;
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Advises the SLT link when to issue fixed-penalty notices or to consider other legal pathways;
- Run attendance rewards across their year groups;
- Work with the Deputy DSL and DSL to ensure safeguarding concerns are monitored and referred to appropriate agencies.

7.4 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information through SIMs or in paper form if requested.

Teachers and tutors are responsible for promoting good attendance and punctuality, in particular through the 100 score and the rewards system. Tutors are expected to complete the academic counselling form each tracking point and to use this as an opportunity to discuss and promote good attendance. Academic counselling forms are located in the planner.

7.5 Attendance support staff

Attendance support staff are expected to:

- Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system;
- Work with the progress leader to monitor attendance data at school and individual pupil level;

- Complete home welfare visits to check on the welfare of absent students;
- Hold meetings with students to encourage attendance and challenge falling attendance;
- Make referrals to wider services and agencies to ensure
- Oversee attendance strategies on an individual basis bespoke to their needs.

8. Monitoring Meetings

Team meetings are set to ensure all PA students are planned for and monitored on an individual basis. Additionally, strategies for whole school work is actioned through the following meeting pattern.

Meeting Type	Invited	Frequency	Location
Year Group Attendance Meeting	Progress Leader, Attendance Manager, Attendance officer,	Fortnightly (1 hour per year group)	Attendance Office
AnT Attendance Team	Assistant Headteacher, Progress Leader, Attendance Manager, Attendance officer, SLT	Weekly	SLT Area
Safeguarding Meeting	Assistant Headteacher (Deputy DSL with focus on Attendance) Safeguarding Lead for Attendance DSL Deputy DSL	Fortnightly	SLT Area
Attendance Manager's meeting	Progress Leader, Attendance Manager, Local Authority Representative (if available)	Half Termly	Attendance Office
Attendance Audit	Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher Local Authority Representative (if available) Attendance Manager,	Termly	SLT Area

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. *X code was previously used when a student was not attending due to showing symptoms of COVID-19 (this is now coded as I)
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