

Shavington Primary School



Policy for Attendance

Written by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher for
Shavington Primary School
September 2024

Signed: _____ (Chair of LGB)

Signed: _____ (Interim Headteacher)

1. Aims

Shavington Primary School aims to work together with parents to ensure that children of compulsory age attend both regularly and punctually. We recognise that every stakeholder has a role and responsibilities to play in attendance and this policy aims to make these clear.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance, aiming for 100% attendance or as close as possible
- 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

‘Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence’.

2. Legislation

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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 Governing Body (Local Governing Board)

The Local 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
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Sean Houlston is the LGB member responsible for attendance and reviews the data termly as part of the safeguarding audit.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

3.3 The (interim) designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The interim designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Brock and can be contacted via the school office on (01270) 661527 or via email: admin@shavingtonpri.cheshire.sch.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer 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 (Headteacher)
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Miss Le’Gallienne, supported by Miss Prawl and can be contacted via the school office on (01270) 661527 or via email: admin@shavingtonpri.cheshire.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This needs to be by 9.00am each morning.

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 (arbor)
- Signpost parents to the attendance team 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 8.35am 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
- Ensure that pupils can access a full day’s learning and are not collected early

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Parents Roles and Responsibilities

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Parents should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness (giving specifics eg sickness), they should contact the school as soon as possible on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a child-minder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence. Any subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted. (See Appendix 1 – first day contact guidelines).

Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. If parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful, for example, if a child has been reported ill and the school is informed that the child has been on holiday. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.

Parents should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration at 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8:55am should enter the school via the main reception and the parent should sign the child in on the digital screen (Inventory) and explain the reason why they are late. In the case of older unaccompanied children, the child should follow this procedure. Persistent lateness will be discussed with parents.

Parents should not book any family holidays or visits during term-time. These holidays and visits will **not** be authorised. (See Appendix 2 – Absence requests).

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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Doors open for pupils at 8.40am each morning and pupils must arrive in school and be settled to learn by 8:50am on each school day. Classroom doors will close at 8:55am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm. Any child arriving after 8.55am until 9.20am will be marked as late (L code). Any child arriving after 9.20am will receive a U code (unauthorised).

If a child arrives after the doors have closed at 8:55am, they must report to the Main Office where they will receive a late mark and need to provide an explanation for why they are late.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

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 as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, 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 and pupils must always attend school prior to the appointment and again afterwards if this is practical to do so.

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 (8.55am to 9.20am) the pupil will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (after 9.20am) the pupil will be marked as a U

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 text message to the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit or make contact with Children's Services, or the police if there are concerns about the child's safety or welfare
- 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/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers can access their child's attendance data at any time by viewing the dashboard on their Arbor account. A paper copy of the child's attendance data is provided at parents evening and with the end of year report.

Letters will be sent out when pupil absence triggers concerns. This includes if a child is late on more than five occasions in a term.

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.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and submitted via the admin email address to the headteacher. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** (that are defined as exceptional circumstances) 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 educational provision

Further details can be obtained in the ‘Absence request during term time’ document.

5.2 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 £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If a second penalty notice is issued within a three year period, each parent must pay £160.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, 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, or the threshold for a penalty notice is reached three times in a three year period, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Class attendance reported to parents each week in the weekly update newsletter and percentages are colour coded according to the traffic light system
- Attendance letters sent out when patterns are noted or if a child arrives late on more than 5 occasions in one term.
- Attendance meetings with parents if things do not improve
- Referral to the education welfare officer if a child’s attendance is becoming a concern

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Shavington Primary will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 Local Governing Board (LGB).

7.2 Analysing attendance

Shavington Primary will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

Shavington Primary 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 in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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 are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance including the education welfare management service commissioned by the academy
- Introduce reasonable adjustments for pupils whose attendance is affected by ill health, both physical and mental

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 90%. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 96% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Local Governing Board (LGB).

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Relationships policy

Appendix 1 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at Shavington Primary is as follows:

1. As soon as the registers are returned to the office, staff will check absentees against messages received.
2. For persistent absentees, see the relevant section above. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, office staff will send a text message between 9:45-10:30am. If there is no reply to the text message, a call will be made to the parent.
3. If no contact has been received by the parent, the school may take the decision to complete a welfare check/home visit.
4. When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
5. In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. (NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).
6. Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is not possible to leave a message, a note should be sent.
7. Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

Appendix 2 – Requesting Leave of Absence in Term Time

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment. It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if children attend regularly. There is a direct correlation between achievement and attendance.

No leave of absence will be granted in term time with the exception of:

- Religious observation
- Bereavement at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher
- Any other 'exceptional circumstance' at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher

Only the Headteacher is able to authorise a leave of absence in term time. If any parent would like to take their child out of school during term time, the following procedure needs to be followed:

1. Parents must email the Headteacher via admin@shavingtonpri.cheshire.sch.uk with their request for leave, attaching any evidence to support the request.
2. The Headteacher will review the absence request.
3. A copy of the communication for the request will be uploaded to the child's attendance on Arbor.
4. If the Headteacher approves the leave of absence for the reasons above then authorisation will be returned by email. The office staff will reply to the original email request to inform parents of the Headteacher's decision.
5. If the Headteacher does not authorise the leave of absence then the parents will be informed by the Office staff via email that if the child is taken out of school their absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.
6. If the absence is to be recorded as 'unauthorised' then a fixed penalty notice may be issued if the criteria is met to do so.

Appendix 3 - Issuing fixed term penalty notices for unauthorised absences

Fixed term notices will be issued if any of the following criteria apply to the absence:

- There are 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period – these absences include arriving late and can span different terms or school years.

Unauthorised absence- Fixed penalty notices

Parents/carers should be aware that Shavington Primary may contact Cheshire East Borough Council (Educational Welfare Service) if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in a termly period, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £80 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. Nonpayment of the Fixed Penalty Notice after 28 days may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school. A second penalty notice issued within a three year period is £160 per parent.

Lateness and punctuality

Registers are taken at 8.50am and 1.15pm. The school gates (both at Southbank and Main road entrance) open at 8.40am to ensure that children can be in school on time, ready and settled for the start of their day. Classroom doors will be closed at 8:55am. If a child arrives after 8:55am, they must be signed in at the Main Office, with an explanation of why they are late. If a child arrives after 9:20am when registers close, they will be coded 'U' which equates to an unauthorised absence.

What will happen if a fixed penalty notice is issued?

If the school decides that a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued:

You will receive a letter from the school advising that it has referred the matter to the Local Authority and that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

The school will inform the Local Authority that a Fixed Penalty Notice needs to be issued.

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be sent to you, accompanied by an explanatory letter; the Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 28 days	£80 per parent	£80 per child → £160 per parent
After 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child → £320 per parent
After 42 days	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance
A second penalty notice issued within a three year period	£160 per parent	£160 per parent → £320 per parent

Please note that the fixed penalty notices are per parent with parental responsibility.

If one parent with parental responsibility is taking the child out of school both parents will be issued with a fixed penalty notice unless there is evidence that this decision is not supported by the other parent.

Appendix 4: 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


Appendix 5: Fixed Penalty Notices

ATTENDANCE WHAT THE NEW RULES MEAN FOR ME


1 I'm a single parent of one child and we want to go on holiday for a week.

Your holiday will not be authorised and you must talk to the school before you book anything. Because your child will miss 5 school days you will be given a penalty notice fine. The fine is £160 but if you pay it in 21 days it will be reduced to £80.

£160



2 FOR EVERY CHILD A PENALTY IS GIVEN.



+ £160 + £160 + £160 + £160
4 children & 1 parent = £640
 Reduced to £320 if paid in 21 days

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE


10 IN 10

5

If your child is absent for 10 or more sessions in 10 weeks and their absences are unauthorised. The school will consider prosecution.

1 Day = **2** Sessions

3 FOR A FAMILY OF TWO PARENTS



+ £160 + £160 + £160 + £160


4 children & 2 parents = £1280
 Reduced to £640 if paid in 21 days

4 If in any period of not more than 3 years, your child has a 2nd and 3rd leave of absence or pattern of irregular attendance...

2ND TIME

2 parents and 1 child = £320
 2 children = 640
 3 children = 960
 4 children = 1280

No discount for early payment



3RD TIME

A penalty notice fine will not be given. Instead, your case will be taken to court. A magistrate can fine each parent £2500 for each child

1 parent & 4 children = £10,000
2 parents & 4 children = £20,000

Reviewed Summer 2024
 Reviewed January 2024

Reviewed March 2020