

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Approved by: Admissions & Pupils Committee

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Next review due by: March 2029

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

Aims

Our school policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance. We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to 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

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

This policy reflects Sinai's Jewish ethos and our commitment to every child. The DfE sets high expectations for attendance for primary age pupils. For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so.

The school sets attendance targets each year as part of the School improvement Plan. These targets are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are aspirational yet realistic, and are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Sinai School expects primary age pupils to attend school for a minimum of 97% of the school year.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. [School census guidance](#)

School procedures - recording attendance

Attendance register

By law, all schools 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 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
- 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, 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 for lessons to begin by 8.40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.15. The register for the second session will be taken at; 1.00 for EYFS and KS1 (and closed at 1.15) and 1.30 for KS2 (closed at 1.45). Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am, at the latest. The explanation of absence must be given by:

- email to absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk giving details of your child's name, registration group and reason for absence (parents are also asked to inform school if the absence affects the coach, after school club or sibling club).
- Calling the school and leaving a detailed voicemail on the absence line.

If your child is absent on grounds of illness, please provide details of the illness.

A pupil's absence will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this.

Medical or dental appointments

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.

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.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (at 9.15) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Code L: Late arrival before register has closed.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Code U: Arrival after registration, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate,

All pupils who are late must report to the school office where a note will be made of their name and their time of arrival. This will then be recorded on the school's system. An explanation may be sought from parents. Parents entering the school to speak to the admin department or to bring a child in late must come through the front entrance to be signed in.

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school would adopt a flexible approach in these instances and work with the child and parents/guardians to help in any way possible.

Persistent lateness is defined by the school as five or more days in a term.

Following up absence

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

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call 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 contact social services, in conjunction with the DSL.
- 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.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Reporting to parents

Reports of attendance are issued to all parents/guardians regularly as part of termly reports. Attendance, including lateness, issues will be discussed at termly Parents Evenings with parents/guardians, if the school deem attendance to be unsatisfactory or a cause for concern.

If a child's attendance drops below the school target then the following action will be taken –

- If attendance drops below the school target of 97% the attendance officer will monitor the reasons for absence.
- If attendance drops below 95% then the attendance officer will continue to monitor the reasons for absence. They may talk to the class teacher or contact parents to discuss the reason for this and any necessary action will be agreed.
- If attendance drops below 90% then this will be classed as persistent absence. Parents will be contacted by the attendance officer and may also be asked to meet with the Headteacher/deputy Headteacher. Regular monthly meetings/ telephone calls will continue until attendance improves.

If there is no improvement after the second monthly meeting, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for admission to another educational institution
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances
- Religious observance

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted. Before authorising an absence the Headteacher will consider: the impact on the pupil's progress, the pupil's annual attendance rate, whether the period of absence falls during any national tests or exams.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Close family bereavement
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Parents/guardians are advised of the importance of their children attending school and are encouraged to take their holiday during the break periods. The DfE has specified that parents/guardians should not

normally take children on holiday during term-time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time. The school does not authorise absence for holidays. The school has a zero tolerance on term time leave.

Requests for absence during Year 6 will not be approved and is discouraged during Year 2.

Permission for absence may be granted in an emergency, which is unavoidably in school time, provided a parent/guardian has made a request to the Headteacher. Permission for an emergency medical appointment must be made by emailing absences; absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk.

Absence on the last day of term/early Friday closing counts as a full day if the pupil is not present for the taking of the register both in the morning and after lunch.

Should an absence occur when it has not been authorised, or no request has been made, this will be recorded as unauthorised.

Contacting the school about anticipated absences:

Parents/guardians should email absences; absences@sinai.brent.sch.uk. Permission for absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Headteacher after taking into consideration the nature of the request received.

Any absences where permission has not been sought in advance will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence, even if it is an absence that would normally be approved.

Requests for absence should try to be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested first day of absence.

Parents/guardians should not book flights or hotels until permission for the absence has been granted by the Headteacher.

Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

Legal sanctions

The headteacher, local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Strategies for promoting attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is ensuring that school is a place where children want to attend and learn: a place where children are treated with respect and feel valued; where their individual needs are recognised and addressed; and where all children can experience success through a rich, relevant and diverse curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot be responsible for ensuring their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the life of the school and to support and promote their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff actively promote the importance of good attendance, and children are recognised and praised for excellent attendance.

Regular assemblies, the awarding of attendance certificates, as well as information in newsletters, ensure that all parents and children are informed of the school's attendance expectations, and understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a Persistent Absentee (PA). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/guardians fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- 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 to; discuss attendance and engagement at school, listen and understand barriers to attendance, explain that help is available, explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for persistent and severe absence and review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Identified pupils (those with an attendance below 90% or those identified as a cause for concern) will be monitored on a daily/weekly basis. The office staff have a priority call list and will ensure these children are called before 9.30 on their first day of absence, with no reason given and each day thereafter.

Children who are identified as a cause for concern may also have a member of staff designated to them to call daily if they are not in school or not on time. This member of staff will also be responsible for awarding praise when children are in school and arrive on time.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis could be regarded as a safeguarding matter.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

The school recognises that some pupils experience barriers to regular attendance. Where barriers are identified in relation to a pupil's needs, the school will work in partnership with families and relevant agencies to remove or reduce these barriers. Where appropriate, and in line with statutory guidance, the local authority will be informed.

For pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health, the school will adopt a supportive and flexible approach, working closely with families and professionals. Reasonable adjustments may be made, including phased returns, timetable adaptations and access to pastoral or specialist support, to support pupils to re-engage with education as soon as possible.

The school also supports pupils whose attendance may be affected by SEND, disadvantage, involvement with children's social care, or other vulnerabilities such as caring responsibilities. In line with DfE and Ofsted guidance, interventions are timely, appropriate and targeted. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and attendance is a concern, the local authority will be notified.

Pupils returning after a lengthy or unavoidable absence are supported through a planned reintegration process, which may include pastoral support, academic catch-up and close monitoring to promote sustained attendance.

In the EYFS, prolonged or unexplained absence is followed up promptly. The school will contact parents and emergency contacts and consider patterns of absence, family circumstances and safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding procedures are followed in accordance with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy, including referrals to children's social care or requests for welfare checks where necessary.

Attendance monitoring/analysis

The school will:

- Monitor all attendance and absence data (including punctuality) on a monthly, half-termly, termly and yearly basis across the school and at an individual pupil level to ensure quick and early intervention is actioned if a problem is identified.
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to identify pupils whose absence may be a concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence and 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
- Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.
- 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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/phase leaders, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis and will hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Their responsibility also includes:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance and ensuring dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

Link Governor, responsible for monitoring pupil attendance, is Mr M Jacobs.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for;

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

- supporting other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

The Headteacher and governors will make the decision to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

Is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of absence data and data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues, building close and productive relationships
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families,
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is C. Gough and can be contacted via email: cgough@sinai.brent.sch.uk.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance of to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher as well as the designated safeguarding lead
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Liaise with the Headteacher about issuing fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is S. Jacobs and can be contacted via email sjacobs@sinai.brent.sch.uk.

Teachers

All teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a pupil's attendance, when this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such.

Teachers will alert the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher if the school identifies patterns of behaviour in relation to attendance and punctuality which may not bring their attendance below 90%, but is still a cause for concern.

Parents

Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is the parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

A pupil should only be absent from school if the reason is 'unavoidable'.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Email the school to report their child's absence before 8.40 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting sjacobs@sinai.brent.sch.uk or cgough@sinai.brent.sch.uk.

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parent's evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution

E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		

D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.