

# Attendance policy



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## **‘Love, Laugh, Learn’**

*Resourcefulness, Reciprocity (Teamwork), Reflectiveness, Resilience*

Our school is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all children. We believe that, if children are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school and nursery, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all children. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school. Our school will actively promote and encourage the goal of 100 per cent attendance for all our children.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and children the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a children’s attendance we will investigate, identify, and work in partnership with parents and children to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at the child resuming full attendance and consistent punctuality.

### **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence in nursery and school.

We will also 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.

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

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](#)

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- [The Education \(Child Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)

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 board

The governing board 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 Chair of Governors attends the school to monitor attendance.

### 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 governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The attendance officers

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and nursery at an individual child level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher.
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

### 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### 3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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We will keep an attendance register and place all children 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 child 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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day (doors open at 8:40am).

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.20am.

However, children arriving between 8:50am and 9:20am will be recorded as late.

Children arriving after 9:20am will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:00pm. Children arriving between 13:00pm and 13:30pm will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 13:30pm will receive an unauthorised absence mark.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The child's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8:50am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

**Parents are required to call the school office on 01952 387860 if no one is available parents should leave an answerphone message.**

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 child'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 if the child'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 child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child'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 child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) meets with the headteacher to monitor school attendance and punctuality. If late marks are above an unacceptable level a letter will be sent and/or the EWO may make a phone call to parents.

## 4.5 Following up absence.

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling the parents if there is no reply the EWO will make a home visit.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are informed about their child's attendance record via a termly written report.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Exceptional circumstances for the child

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

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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 child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller children 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 child is attending educational provision.

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent child on the first morning of absence, we will:

- follow 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information,
- consider making a home visit if an explanation has still not been received within three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL),
- refer to the school's 'Nominated Attendance Person' (NAP) or Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence'.
- where there are safeguarding or similar concerns regarding the child/family additional services should be contacted immediately if the school is unable to contact the family (e.g., social care, strengthening families).
- advice may be to contact the police to carry out a 'Welfare' check.
- invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, child and the NAP/EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the child from attending school or nursery. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding federation attendance,
- support the children's re-integration where a child is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a child returning after a long-term absence then a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of staff involved with the child and will be designed to be as supportive of the children needs as possible.

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- provide Early Help advice and support to the family, undertaking an Early Help Assessment if appropriate and make a referral to Strengthening Families if it is felt the family would benefit from additional support.

### 5.3 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 £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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 child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the 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

- ✓ Teachers are physically present to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure.
- ✓ Our Pastoral support is our attendance champion, and she will make face to face informal contact with parents to discuss attendance or punctuality concerns and identify and resolve barriers.
- ✓ We regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality via our weekly newsletter.
- ✓ Engage children in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards, and sanctions.
- ✓ Make regular contact with families to discuss progress and success.
- ✓ The admin team reinforce the importance of good attendance when parents report absence.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors child absence daily.

A child's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The child's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill unless a different arrangement has been agreed.

If a child's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the child to discuss the reasons for this.



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If a child's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a child's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the child will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Child-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 governing board.

The school collects and stores data to:

- Track the attendance of individual children.
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the NAP. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Relationships and Behaviour policy
- Supporting children with medical conditions

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## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Child is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness

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<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 child is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Child from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Child 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for child's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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 child is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Child not on admission register	Register set up but child has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day