



## Attendance Policy

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## **Aims**

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

- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every learner 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 learners have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality, wherever possible.

## **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](#)
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Those in Governance***

Those in governance are 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 Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

### ***The Principal***

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to those in governance.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

### ***Teachers***

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the system (Arbor).

Teachers will:

- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Record and monitor attendance data for their learners.
- Report concerns attendance of the principal.
- Works with the Local Authority professionals to tackle persistent absences/ attendance issues, as required.
- Effectively communicate with parents/ carers via messaging, emails, calls and meetings to work to resolve attendance issues.

### **Parents or carers**

Parents or carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every school day and on time, if possible.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00 a.m. 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.

### **Learners**

Learners are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, wherever possible.
- Attend learning activities.

## **Recording Attendance**

### **Attendance Register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all learners 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 learner 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 circumstances where a learner 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.

### **Unplanned Absence**

The learner's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00 a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

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 learners parents or carers 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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents or carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the learner's parents or carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The parent or carer should notify their child's teacher of the planned absence.

However, we encourage parents or carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of the education centre for the minimum amount of time necessary. *We do understand that our learners often have multiple health appointments which can be difficult for parents/ carers to organise.*

The learner's parents or carers 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.

### **Lateness and Punctuality**

A learner 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.

We do recognise that lateness can be out of parents/ carers control e.g., taxi issues. These issues are noted.

### **Following Up Unexplained Absence**

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

- Call the learners parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, the school's parent carer lead will continue to try and contact parents or carers.
- 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 parents or carers 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/ or an Early Help referral.

Teachers provide parents/ carers with annual attendance reports, these are within the written end of year learner report. Attendance data is also included within the statutory review of a learners Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **Approval for Term-Time Absence**

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something which is urgent and unavoidable and where the absence is in the best interest of the student.

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

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learners parents belong. If necessary, the education will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller learners 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 education centre, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision.

### **Reducing Persistent Absence**

The education centre provides a person-centered approach to a learner's education, including their special educational needs and/ or disabilities. We aim to effectively communicate with learners and parents/ carers regarding any persistent absences and work in partnership with learners, parents/ carers, and any relevant professionals to reduce persistent absences. Agreed strategies are applied to improve attendance.

### **Legal Sanctions**

The 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 principal, 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 learner 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.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

#### **Monitoring Attendance**

The school will:

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

#### **Analysing Attendance**

The school will:

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

#### **Using Data to Improve Attendance**

The school will:

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

#### **Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence**

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

#### **Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, or annually, by the principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by those in governance.

#### **Links with Other Documentation**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

### Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Learner has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Learner has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a learner will be absent due to illness.
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment.
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance.
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 learner is on study leave during their public examinations.
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma, and traveller absence	Learner from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school.
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Learner is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Learner 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 learners' absence.
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Learner arrived at school after the register closed.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Learner 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 learner is in custody.
<b>Z</b>	Learner not on admission register	Register set up but learner has not yet joined the school.
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/inset day.