

Attendance Policy

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly (as long as they are fit and healthy), and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

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

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (8:55) 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.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:15. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 in EYFS/KS1/LKS2 and 1:15 in UKS2 .

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school office via the main contact number 01924 303525 on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). If parents/carers fail to contact school then the school will contact parents as part of the ‘first day response’ measures.

Absence due to 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 in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

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

However, we encourage parents to make medical 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.

Notifying school can be made using a note via the class teacher or a phone call to the office (01924 303525)

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

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

The school doors open at 8:30 in EYFS and 8:40 in KS1 and KS2 and we encourage children to arrive at this time in order to settle and complete a morning work activity before registration closes. We believe that this prepares children more effectively for the day.

If children are late on a regular basis then the school will seek to meet parents/carers in order to discuss how we can move to ensure that children arrive at the appropriate time.

If a parent/carer fails to collect a child on time then the school will endeavor to make contact with the parent/carer. Should this happen regularly then we will seek to meet with parents/carer to seek a solution. If a child is not collected by 6pm then we will attempt to make contact with all named contacts. Should

contact still not be made then we will refer to social services and follow any advice. The child will not be left unattended.

3.5 Following up absence

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

This may be via communication from the class teacher via a note or conversation. Failing this then the attendance officer will endeavor to make contact with parents/carers in order to establish a reason for absence.

The school will use a phone call as a method of first response. If the absence continues without reason then we may call at the house and if there is no answer then we will leave a card stating that we attempted to call.

If no reasons are gained and if the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

3.5.1 Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff will be aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

All pupils will be placed and removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law.

We will collect, where possible, at least 2 emergency contact numbers for each pupil.

We will inform the local authority of any child removed from our admission register. We will inform the local authority of any child who fails to attend for a continuous period in line with local Wakefield procedures.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be notified of their child's attendance as a minimum termly via parent consultation evenings. Class attendance data will also be made available via newsletters each Friday so parents can see how their child's class is performing against others.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' which will be considered on their own merits on a case by case basis.

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.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller 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 pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Holidays in Term Time

Due to a change in legislation by the Government which came into force from September 2013 the school has been required to change its policy of granting up to 10 days holidays in term time due to 'special circumstances'.

The amendments made by the Department for Education mean that the law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in 'exceptional circumstances' and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. According to the new legislation, parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. The Local Authority is responsible for this, not the school.

The Governing Body updated the school policy to reflect the new legislation for term time holidays in conjunction with local schools. As a result from September 2013 the school is unable to authorise term time holidays. Any holiday taken during term time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless it meets the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances would include armed forces set holidays and fixed annual leave by employers.

Although the school recognises the many benefits of holidays for children and the challenges parents/carers face when taking out of term holidays, however, we can not authorise term-time holidays unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any holiday requests should be made in writing.

4.3 Legal sanctions

School will always endeavor to work with parents/carers to improve attendance and punctuality but as a last resort parents/carers should be aware that the school can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We believe the best way to get children to want to attend school is for them to enjoy their education. To this end, we seek to implement an inspiring, varied curriculum promoting opportunities for all children to succeed; a curriculum that offers challenge and interest to all learners.

As part of our positive approach to attendance we will reward children with certificates for 100% attendance, 97% +attendance and those who are significantly improving their attendance. The class in EYFS/KS1 and KS2 with the highest weekly attendance will both be awarded a non- uniform day on the Monday of the following week.

Other methods of celebrating class attendance are determined by the children. Examples of class choices include;

- Additional Swimming sessions
- Additional Forest School sessions
- Additional PE sessions
- An additional Golden Time session

Weekly attendance % is recognised for every class within the weekly newsletter.

An information booklet for parents/carers is distributed and available online to support parent/carers in recognising the impact of lost learning time.

Parents/carers are actively encouraged to talk to their children about the benefits of attending school regularly and should let the school know at their earliest convenience of any potential issues that may prevent a child from attending and vice versa. It is also important that contact details are kept up to date in order for the school to follow up on any attendance issues that may arise.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

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

If after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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

Absence data is collected each half term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors each half term.

The school collects and stores attendance data as a requirement set out by the local authority and in line with our GDPR policy. The data collected will be used to internally track individual and groups of pupils.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 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.

7.2 The headteacher

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

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

7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Liaises with the AHT for Safeguarding
- 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

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Officer.

7.6 Office staff

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

8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection, safeguarding policy, behaviour and GDPR policies.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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