# Attendance Policy

| Date established by governing body |
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| Autumn Term 2025 |
| **Date for full implementation** |
| Immediately |
| **Date for review** |
| Autumn Term 2026 |

The Policy was revised to reflect changes in national guidance and legislation that came into force on 19 August 2024.

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office.

We recognize the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full on at least an annual basis. The policy was updated in the Autumn Term 2025 and agreed by the Governing Body. It is due for renewal in September 2026.

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| **Written by:** | Karyn McMahon |
| **Last reviewed on:** | September 2025 |
| **Next review due by:** | September 2026 |

1. **Aims**

   We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

   - Promoting good attendance
   - Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
   - Monitoring attendance data
   - Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
   - Acting early to address patterns of absence
   - Promoting the importance of arriving to school on time to support punctuality

2. **Roles and Responsibilities**

**2.1 Governing Body**

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and procedures
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Identifying a link governor responsible for attendance who feeds back to the Governing Body

**2.2 Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy and procedures across the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

**2.3 Designated School Leader responsible for attendance**

The Designated School Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance policy and procedure across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance strategies and improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations
- Having oversight of data analysis
- Having oversight of pupils with part time timetables

- 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
- Strategy meetings with Education Welfare Officer
- Supporting Attendance Officer role

## 2.4 Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer works along the designated school leader for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher

## 2.5 Class Teachers/Leads

Class Teachers/Leads are responsible for recording attendance, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office daily according to statutory expectations

## 2.6 School Admin/Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record this on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the member of staff best able to provide them with more detailed support on aspects of their child's attendance

## 2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 9am 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## 3. Recording attendance

**3.1 Attendance register**

School will keep an attendance register for pupils.

Teachers/Class Leads will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day. 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.

The register will be taken when children are in class and will be kept open until 9.30am.

**3.2 Unplanned absence**

The parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am 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 pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

**3.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 5 identifies term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late will be marked as late in the register, using the appropriate code

### 3.5 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 make a welfare check or ask Education Welfare Team to support or contact the police if concerns persist
- 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
- 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 discuss next steps with the Education Welfare Officer

### 3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

School reports to parents on their child's attendance record regularly as part of the annual reporting to parents/carers schedule.

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels more frequently if trigger points are met


### 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 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 discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

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 pupil's parents belong

## 4.2 Extended Absence

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (15 school days or more) the school will inform the Local Authority (Section 19).

Absence may be due to children who cannot attend school due to health needs.

School informs the Local Authority of those children missing education (CME) through monthly CME returns

## 4.3 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.

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

Further information can be sought from the Local Authority.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Please refer to schools Strategic Approach to Attendance available on the website and from the school office.

School work proactively with parents to understand reasons for low attendance and to remove barriers to support improved attendance.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

School monitors and analyses attendance and absence data along with the Education Welfare Officer every 3-4 weeks to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. School tailors our approach to our school context and the needs of our cohort of pupils.

### 6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor every pupil's absence daily and attendance/absence data every 3-4 weeks with the Education Welfare Officer
- Filter and monitor termly using the DfE 'View Your Education Data' dashboard
- Compare school attendance tables

- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- Share attendance data termly with the Governing Body as part of the Head teacher's Report

### 6.2 Analysing attendance

The school 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 supportive strategies to address these patterns, involving multi-agency support as required

### 6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher/leads and other school leaders following EWO monitoring visits to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

### 6.4 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
- Inform and work together with parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Signpost families to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### 7. Monitoring arrangements

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

### 8. Support

The school will:

- Build pastoral and trusted relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance
- Analyse and use data and information to prevent regular absence
- Using resources (school-based and external services as possible) to support timely intervention
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences

**9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour is Communication policy

**10. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of 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
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

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

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

**Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024'

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

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-----------|----------|
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **C1** | Leave of absence | The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad |
| **C2** | Leave of absence – Part-time timetable | For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded | The pupil has been suspended or permanently 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 | The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **J1** | Leave of absence | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | The 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 |

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|---|---|---|
| **T** | Parents travelling for occupational purposes | The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade |
| **Q** | Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements | The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of travel arrangements made by the local authority |
| **Y1** | Unable to attend due to lack of transport | Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed | Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly |
| **Y5** | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing |
| **Y6** | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health |
| **Y7** | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |

| G | Unauthorised holiday | The 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 | The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session |

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

**Author:** Karyn McMahon
**Headteacher:** Mike Jackson
**Chair of Governors:** Tim Chrisp
**Date:** Autumn 2025