

Attendance Policy

Date established by governing body

Summer Term 2026

Date for full implementation

Immediately

Date for review

Summer Term 2027

1. Aims

This policy reflects a support-first, inclusive and relational approach to attendance, aligned with the school's Strategic Approach to Attendance and current inspection expectations.

We aim to:

- Promote excellent attendance through a culture of belonging, safety and engagement
- Recognise attendance as integral to safeguarding, wellbeing and outcomes
- Work in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance
- Use data to identify patterns, risks and early intervention needs
- Reduce persistent and severe absence through a graduated response
- Ensure attendance systems are consistent, transparent and SEND-informed

2. Principles

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Attendance is everyone's responsibility: staff, pupils, families and governors
- Improving attendance is achieved through engagement—not enforcement
- Pupils attend when they feel safe, feel they belong, experience success and connection
- Responses to attendance concerns are individual, proportionate and contextual
- Support is offered before any formal or legal intervention

3. Building an Attendance Culture

The school actively builds a culture where attendance is valued by:

- Embedding attendance within the curriculum, routines and ethos
- Promoting positive routines and predictable structures
- Using trauma-informed and SEND-aware practice

- Celebrating improved and sustained attendance, not just 100%
- Ensuring every pupil has a sense of connection and belonging

This aligns with Ofsted's focus on personal development and the quality of education, recognising that regular attendance is foundational to positive outcomes.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Designated School Leader responsible for attendance

The Designated School Leader:

- Leads the implementation, development and consistent application of the school's attendance policy and procedures
- Drives a clear, inclusive vision for attendance that prioritises engagement, wellbeing and belonging
- Ensures attendance practice is consistent, transparent and SEND-informed across all staff
- Oversees and quality assures the analysis and interpretation of attendance data to inform timely action
- Monitors part-time timetables, phased returns and flexible provision, ensuring they are lawful, time-limited and regularly reviewed
- Identifies patterns, trends and emerging concerns, and devising targeted, evidence-informed strategies to address barriers to attendance
- Leads early intervention and a graduated response, ensuring support is in place before concerns escalate
- Oversees the delivery of targeted and intensive support for pupils and families
- Leads strategic work with the Education Welfare Officer and external agencies
- Provides guidance, support and challenge to the Attendance Officer and wider staff team
- Reports regularly to senior leaders and governors, evaluating impact and identifying next steps

4.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body:

- Provides strategic oversight and challenge
- Reviews attendance data with context
- Ensures statutory duties are met

4.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher:

- Leads implementation and accountability
- Monitors impact of attendance strategies
- Oversees whole-school attendance strategy
- Ensures systems are consistent and lawful

4.4 Class Leads

Class Leads:

- Accurately record attendance using DfE compliant codes (Appendix 1)
- Ensure registers are completed promptly and in line with statutory requirements
- Submit attendance data to the school office daily within agreed timescales
- Maintain accuracy, consistency and accountability in all attendance records

4.5 School Admin/Office staff

School Admin/Office staff:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record on 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, if appropriate.

4.6 Staff

All staff:

- Promote attendance through relationships and daily practice
- Identify early signs of attendance concern
- Implement agreed support strategies consistently

4.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers:

- Ensure regular attendance and punctuality
- Communicate with school about absence
- Engage with support and partnership processes

5. Recording and Monitoring Attendance

5.1 Daily Registration

The school will:

- Maintain accurate daily registers in line with statutory guidance
- Operate a robust first-day response system
- Follow up unexplained absence promptly as part of safeguarding
- Monitor attendance daily and review patterns regularly
- Analyse both quantitative data and contextual narrative

Attendance data will be used to:

- Identify early dips and emerging patterns
- Understand barriers (e.g. anxiety, SEND needs, family context)
- Inform timely, targeted support

The school recognises that attendance is a safeguarding issue. Any unexplained absence, or patterns of absence, will be treated as a potential safeguarding concern and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

5.2 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.

5.3 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 6 identifies term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and Punctuality

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

5.5 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

5.6 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

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 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

6.2 Extended Absence and Children with Health Need

When it is clear that a child will be absent for 15 school days or more (whether consecutive or cumulative), the school will inform the Local Authority in line with its Section 19 duty.

The school submits CME returns in line with Local Authority procedures where a child meets CME criteria. This is separate from pupils absent due to confirmed medical needs who remain on roll and in contact with the school.

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

Supporting Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School:

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to health needs, the school recognises its duty to ensure that appropriate education is arranged as soon as possible.

The School will:

- Work closely with the family, medical professionals and the Local Authority to ensure appropriate educational provision is in place
- Follow statutory guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensure that absence is appropriately coded and documented, seeking medical evidence where appropriate and proportionate
- Maintain regular contact with the pupil and family to support continuity of learning
- Arrange for work to be sent home where appropriate and practical
- Facilitate timely access to alternative provision (such as hospital schools or home tuition), through liaison with the Local Authority, ensuring there is no unnecessary delay in education being provided

- Review the situation regularly through multi-agency meetings to plan for reintegration when the pupil is well enough to return
- Consider reasonable adjustments, part-time timetables or phased returns as part of a planned reintegration, ensuring these are time-limited and regularly reviewed
- Ensure the pupil remains on roll and their educational needs continue to be met

All decisions regarding pupils with health needs will be made in partnership with parents/carers, medical professionals and relevant agencies, with the child's welfare and educational outcomes at the centre.

Part-time Timetables

Part-time timetables are used only in exceptional circumstances and are:

- Time-limited
- Reviewed regularly with parents, staff, and external agencies
- Agreed with parents and shared with the Local Authority
- Monitored for impact to ensure the pupil is progressing towards full-time attendance

6.3 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.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Our strategic approach is built on six evidence-informed principles:

- *BUILD A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES ATTENDANCE*
- *DEVELOP CLEAR CONSISTENT POLICIES AND SYSTEMS*
- *USE DATA TO UNDERSTAND PATTERNS AND DIRECT SUPPORT*
- *BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES*
- *TARGET SUPPORT EARLY USING A GRADUATED RESPONSE*
- *WORK WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND AGENCIES*

For full details, please refer to the school's Strategic Approach to Attendance available on the website.

The School:

- Works proactively with parents to understand reasons for low attendance and to remove barriers to support improved attendance.
- Supports pupils with mental or physical health needs through close liaison with therapy team, medical professionals, CYPs, and the LA, ensuring reasonable adjustments are made and reintegration plans are in place.

8. Attendance monitoring and Analysis

8.1 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

8.2 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

8.3 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

8.4 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

9. Graduated Response to Attendance

We prevent absence, identify emerging concerns and provide proportionate, timely support for pupils and families.

Universal (all pupils) – promote, prevent, prepare

- Predictable routines; trauma-informed, autism-aware and sensory-considerate practice
- Daily welcome and check-in systems; swift first-day response; positive reinforcement of improved patterns
- Accessible communication with families; translated/alternative formats if needed; clear expectations and support offers
- Inclusive curriculum and therapeutic offers; reasonable adjustments; transport/arrival planning where required
- Systematic monitoring of patterns (day/time/trigger), with staff alerted to early dips

Targeted (emerging concern) – listen, understand, adapt

- Joint problem-solving meeting with family to understand barriers (health, anxiety/EBSA, sensory, transport, care)
- Short, written Attendance Support Plan with clear goals, adjustments and review date (typically 3–4 weeks)
- Key adult/mentor; timetable tweaks; safe spaces; arrival window; phased build-up of time on site
- Evidence-informed strategies agreed (e.g., graded exposure for EBSA), with staff briefed on consistent approaches
- Data and narrative recorded: what's helping; what's not; next small steps

Intensive (persistent/severe absence) – coordinate, personalise, review

- Multi-agency meeting (e.g., LA attendance, SEND casework, health/MH, social care) to cohere support and remove barriers

- Bespoke reintegration timetable, time-limited and reviewed frequently; remote or off-site elements only where appropriate and quality-assured
- Consider early help, reasonable adjustments to transport/care, and targeted interventions
- Clear criteria for stepping down or escalating; document offers of support prior to any statutory routes

10. Support provision

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

11. 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.

12. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Communication policy

Additional links:

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Strategic Approach to Attendance

13. 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

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
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
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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

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