Attendance policy

Approved by:	[Name]	**Date:**	[Date]
Last reviewed on:	[Date]		
Next review due by:	[Date]		

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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 pupil 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, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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 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.

The school day begins at 9:00am and ends at 4:00pm. Doors open to all children at 8:45am to promote good habits and punctuality. Morning registration is at 9:00am and it closes at 9:10am. Afternoon registration is at 1pm and closes at 1:10pm

DfE guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school.

• All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

• Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and **coded U** as per DfE guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.

 • If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, **coded M.**

• Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

How to report your child's absence:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

• Contact us by phone as soon as early as possible on the first day of absence call into school and report to reception.

• Send an email to the school office on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.

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.

If your child has an appointment during the school day, please complete an 'Authorisation for leave during term-time' and submit to the school office for approval. Please also attach a copy of the confirmation of the appointment.

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

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

It is important for pupils to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If a child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

• The school day begins at 9:00am and ends at 4:00pm. Doors are open to all children at 8:45am to promote good habits and punctuality.

• Morning registration is at 9:00am and it closes at 9:10am.

• Afternoon registration is at 1pm and it closes at 1:10pm

DfE guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school.

• All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

• Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and **coded U** as per DfE guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.

• If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, **coded M.** • Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays

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.

• We will **telephone or text you** on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

• If absence continues on the second day, then a **second attempt** to call will be made.

- If absence continues for a third day, then the school will make a **home visit**. If no contact is made, then a letter will be left.

- Where appropriate a request for a safe and well check conducted by the Police/PCSO will be made. If a Social Worker is involved with the family then they will be informed. If there are concerns relating to safeguarding, then a CSC referral will be made.

- We will invite you in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or pastoral leaders or senior member of staff if absences persist.

 - We will refer the matter to the local authority's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%

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3.6 Reporting to parents

You will be notified about your child's attendance record at parents meetings (autumn term, spring term and summer term) and you will receive an end-of-school report with your child's annual attendance record in the summer term of each academic year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

 - Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:

o parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings

o truancy before or during the school day o absences which have not been explained.

 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. A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented.

Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday. Please see Registration of Pupils Policy for further guidance on the recording of absence

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools 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

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

• Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular/fortnightly home school newsletter.

• Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and progress.

• Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements at weekly and termly assemblies.

• Reward good or improving attendance through class events.

• Run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school

• Liaise closely with the families of children with low or declining attendance in order to bring about improvements.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and termly 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 and call on the morning of each day of absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Please be aware that the Trust expects its schools to report this unexplained absence sooner than the 10-day period, if it is deemed that there are significant concerns of harm. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are expected to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

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.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

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 Principal

The Principal 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 Principal 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

- 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 The Class Teachers

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

Ensure that all students are registered accurately.

- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.

- Liaise with the attendance lead on matters of attendance and punctuality.

- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

7.5 Office staff and attendance lead

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

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed.

(S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised.

The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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