

ATTENDANCE POLICY - PUPILS

November 2023

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Contents

1. Aims.....	1
2. Legislation and guidance.....	1
3. Roles and Responsibilities.....	2-3
4. Recording Attendance.....	3-4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	4-6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	6
7. Attendance monitoring.....	6-7
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	7
9. Links with other policies.....	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8-9
Appendix 2: Application for leave of absence.....	10

1. Aims

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

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The school committee

The school committee is 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising and monitoring the impact of 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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.3 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using StudyBugs
- Speaking to parents initially about concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- alerting the headteacher to any concerns they have about a child's punctuality or attendance.

3.4 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls/collate emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Inform the Headteacher if any child with a social worker is absent from school or if no reason has been given for a child's absence by 9.35 am.

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time as long as they are fit and healthy to do so.

- Report their child's absence before 9.15 am on the day of the absence either on StudyBugs or on the absence-line and then 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

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time so long as they are well enough to do so.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils 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 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00 am. The register for the second session will be taken by 1.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by recording the absence on StudyBugs calling the school absence line or 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 or if absence is a concern, the school may ask the pupil's parent/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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. A request for absence form will need to be filled in and proof of the appointment shown to a member of the office staff who will record that they have seen this on the form.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed at 9.00 am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 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 by 9.35 am, a member of SLT will be informed and if there is still no contact by 11.00 am someone will go round to the home address to check everything is OK.
- 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 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 consider involving an Inclusion officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in the Annual written report to parents. If there are any concerns about a child's attendance, this will be discussed with parents as the situation arises and on an individual basis. Children who are classed as being a persistent absentee (below 90% attendance) will be invited to discuss the situation with the Headteacher and sent a letter outlining our concerns and parents may be asked to provide medical evidence if their child is absent.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 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's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account 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. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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 pupils 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
- Other exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday
- Flexi-schooling requests - these will be discussed on an individual basis

5.2 Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no reason has been given.

Examples of Authorised Absences:	Examples of Unauthorised Absences:
*genuine illness of the pupil; *hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil; *major religious observances; *visits to prospective new schools; *external exams or educational assessments.	*shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park; *a birthday treat; *oversleeping due to a late night; *looking after other children/other family member; *appointments or illness of other family members; *holidays

Each child's attendance can be broadly summarised as:

97%+	Well done! This will give your child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
94% - 96%	Strive to build on this. Your child's attendance is below the school target and will be monitored.
90% - 93%	Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school and Inclusion Officer may work with you to improve your child's attendance and/or punctuality.
Below 90%	This level of absence is known as PERSISTENT absence and is unacceptable. Absence is affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child's learning. Your child's attendance is now a major concern. A formal referral to Inclusion Officer may take place and a letter of concern will be sent home.

The school and their Inclusion Officer work closely together and regularly monitor both attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

5.3 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.

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 headteacher, 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 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 or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Half termly certificates for children who have achieved at least 95% attendance
- Each week, children who have been on time and in school every day (excluding medical appointments) will be given a 'Golden Ticket.' This will then be put in a jar and one will be drawn out at the end of each half-term and the winner in each class will get a special prize
- Individual discussions with parents to find out what the barriers to a child's attendance may be and how we can work together to improve it.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 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 strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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:

- Monitor the attendance of children weekly who are persistent or severely persistent absentees
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding 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)	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

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, children are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is **£60 (per child per parent/carer)** if paid within **21** days of receipt of the Notice, rising to **£120 (per child per parent/carer)** if paid after **21** days but within **28** days of receipt of the Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, you may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please complete the form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Please attach evidence of medical appointments to the form.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request and will notify you of the decision. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

To be completed by the parent/carer

Name of child:		Class:
First day of absence:		Number of school days:
Date of return:		In for lunch: (11:45-12:45) YES NO
Please outline the special circumstances for which leave is requested:		
Name:	Date:	Signature:

To be completed by the Headteacher

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:		
N.B. Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.		
Name: Ms Nicki Starling	Signed:	Date:

office use only

Sims ☐

Proof appointment seen ☐