

Attendance Policy

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to promoting and encouraging good attendance. The majority of pupils attending will not be of statutory school age, however the school is committed to developing a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This policy will detail the good practices and procedures the school has in place to promote, support, record and monitor the attendance of all children in the EYFS.

The policy also details how the school will meet its obligations for pupils who are statutory school age as laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#).

The school is committed to:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils including those who are not yet statutory school age
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Why good attendance is important

We are committed to promoting good levels of attendance to enable children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Whilst attendance is not statutory for nursery aged children, if they are to develop good habits, build secure relationships and benefit from the high-quality learning opportunities on offer, good attendance is essential.

Good attendance promotes:

Good habits

Good attendance instils in young children the notion that attending school is a natural part of their routine and helps develop a positive attitude towards school.

Self-esteem

Children who consistently attend school and arrive on time are more likely to have a positive self-image. They feel more confident with adults and peers, understand the routine, and have more opportunities to be recognised and praised for their unique contributions.

Secure relationships

Regular school attendance helps young children build and maintain a variety of social relationships. These relationships support children's learning as they interact and play with peers and through interactions with skilled adults who actively support their learning.

Learning and development

Staff carefully plan every session for each child and want to take every opportunity to help them thrive; experiences gained in one session are developed further in following sessions. Good attendance allows children to build on their learning and gain further knowledge and skills in readiness for primary school.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance for children of statutory school age:

- 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

4. Roles and responsibilities

The school is committed to a whole-school approach to promoting good attendance and success involves all stakeholders including staff and parents.

4.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all stakeholders
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts to support pupils' individual needs
- Making sure the school fulfils its statutory duties, including making sure the school records attendance accurately, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Monitoring attendance levels and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes

4.2 The headteacher is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and monitoring effective systems for tackling absence
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices for pupils of statutory school age
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND
- Communicating with the LA when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to parents/carers through all available channels

4.3 The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Maintain the systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Liaising with parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The school's Assistant Headteachers are the designated senior leaders responsible for attendance.

4.3 Class teachers/Room Leads are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office once the register has closed.

4.4 Senior Administrator will:

- Take calls from parents about absences on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Assistant Headteachers where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Report any absence of pupils on a Child Protection Plan to the DSL and child's social worker on the day of absence
- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance data
- Provide regular attendance reports to the designated leader responsible for school attendance and the Headteacher
- Provide parents with a written attendance summary each half term

4.5 Parents and carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day or timetabled session on time
- Call or report their child's absence on the school app 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the designated attendance lead.

5. Recording Attendance

To support good attendance and maximize learning and development the school will accurately record and monitor attendance. Monitoring attendance is important for all children, but especially for those who are most vulnerable. Knowing when children have attended school provides vital information to keep children safe and help tackle underachievement. Before a child starts school, information is shared with parents/carers about the importance of regular attendance and how attendance is monitored and the action taken if there are any attendance concerns.

The school will:

- Put in place systematic and rigorous monitoring of registers by senior leaders who will ensure accurate recording, identifying and addressing attendance issues and engaging parents.
- Monitor attendance and identify and analyse patterns of absence and the number of sessions missed
- Be rigorous and persistent in seeking and recording explanations for absence
- Develop good relationships with families making sure that appropriate means of communication to meet family needs are always used
- Make sure that all staff know what to do, and who to tell, if a child is absent or late or has a changeable or deteriorating pattern of absence or lateness

5.1 Recording Attendance

We will take our attendance register at the start of each session for part-time children and at the start of the day and after lunch for full-time children. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 if the child is present or absent.

We will also record whether the absence is authorised or not and 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. The school register will close 30 mins after the start of the session.

6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. The school provides an absence reporting facility on the School app to allow parents to report absence. Alternatively, parents can telephone the school office and leave a message on the school answer machine.

The headteacher will 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, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Where absence is not authorised this will be recorded on the school register and if appropriate sanctions will be taken.

6.1 Medical Appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised. Parents should notify the school in advance of the appointment. To support good levels of attendance, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

6.2 Illnesses

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 other appropriate form of evidence particularly if the child is of statutory school age. If children experience high levels of absence due to illness the school will liaise with the School's designated Health Visitor to offer advice and support to families.

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.

6.3 Family holidays

The school recognises that many families take holidays during term time when the costs of holidays are reduced and prior to their child being statutory school age. To enable the school to safeguard pupils, parents are required to complete a leave of absence request form to request authorised absence.

The school is unable to authorise term-time holidays for children who are statutory school age and will issue penalty notices as appropriate if children are taking out of school for holidays during term-time.

6.4 Religious observance

Absence for the purpose of religious observance will be authorised where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

6.5 Travelling for Occupational Purposes

Absence for pupils who are absent due to travelling with their families for occupational purposes will be authorised. This will include Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers.

6.6 Lateness and punctuality

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

We recognise that for some families the challenge of having older children attending schools across the borough and in some cases in more than one other school, means that they are unable to drop their child at nursery on time. In some cases, the school may be able to offer some flexibility or arrange before school provision where family circumstances or long-term issues will affect punctuality. Parents must discuss these issues when accepting a school place or as soon as these issues occur to prevent unauthorised absences.

6.7 Early Collection

We recognise that at times parents may need to request to remove their child from school before the end of the nursery session if their child needs to attend appointments or when emergencies arise and we aim to accommodate these occasional requests.

We actively discourage parents from collecting their child early from nursery on a regular basis unless parents can provide a reasonable justification for their child missing part of their education. We recognise that the end of the school day for neighbouring Primary Schools is earlier than the end of the nursery session therefore parents may need to collect early. Arrangements will be made with individual families and the decision to permit children to be collected from school early will be made at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

6.8 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 first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. A message will be left asking the parents to contact the school if they can't be reached.
- If the child is absent for a second day and further calls to the parents have been unsuccessful, contact will be made with the child's emergency contacts.
- The school may contact the police to carry out a welfare check if repeated attempts to contact the family and emergency contacts are unsuccessful.
- Once contact has been made with the parent and the reason for absence obtained this will be recorded.
- Continue to contact the parent/carer if the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

7 Attendance Monitoring

Although attendance at Nursery school is not compulsory, to promote good attendance, instil good habits and promote the development of a positive attitude towards school we use this definition as a guide when monitoring absence the absence of all pupils including those who have not yet reached statutory school age. We therefore expect nursery aged children to have at least 90% attendance if they are fit and able to attend, which equates to no more than 19 absences in one school year.

7.1. Monitoring Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level across the federation to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.1 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers/room leads, to facilitate discussions with parents and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and EYPP leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8 Reducing Absence

8.1 Persistent absence and severe absence

The government defines a pupil to be persistently absent if he/she is away for over 10% of school sessions 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
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary, including the removal of a child's place

8.2 Continuous absence

Paragraph 3b of regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 lists the circumstances in which a pupil who is not of compulsory school age can be removed from an admissions register. These include continuous absence for 20 school days or more, where:

- The absence was not authorised by the Head Teacher
- The Head Teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe the child cannot attend the school through sickness or any unavoidable cause
- The Head Teacher has failed, after reasonable enquiry, to determine where the pupil is

A school can therefore legally remove a child from the roll if an absence lasting 20 or more school days is taken without consent being given for any period of this leave. If contact with parents is unsuccessful or a

reasonable reason for non-attendance has not been given, parents will be informed in writing of the removal of their child's nursery place.

9 Sanctions

All parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance as part of our induction process. The school will apply formal sanctions for children who are statutory school age but the school will also work closely with families of our nursery aged pupils.

9.1 Sanctions for Nursery aged pupils

Where a child's attendance drops below acceptable levels the child's parents will be invited into school to discuss the absence. The school will offer advice and support or suggest ways that attendance could be improved, which may include changing the sessions a child attends or a parent accessing additional hours.

If absence levels do not improve and additional support is not effective, or parents choose not to engage with the school they may be given notice of the removal of their child's place at nursery.

9.2 Sanctions for pupils of statutory school age

The school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These

penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Approved by the Governing Board on 14th March 2025

Appendix A: 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
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

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
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
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

Appendix B - Monitoring Attendance Levels

Role of Administrator

Inform the Headteacher if:

- Absence of five continuous days where no reason has been given and all attempts to contact the parents have failed.
- Absence of any child on the Child Protection Register on the day of absence where no reason is given or contact made

Monitor attendance by:

- During the last week of each half term print and check each child's attendance.
- Colour code each child's record using the guide below
- Ensure Headteacher receives coded copies of attendance reports before the end of the half term.

Green	No Concern	80-100%	Acceptable level
Yellow	Risk of underachievement	60-80%	Persistent absence
Orange	Severe risk of underachievement	30-60%	Poor Levels
Red	Extreme concern	0-30%	Unacceptable – Place removed