

Attendance Policy 2024/25



Approved by:

Hugh Stolliday

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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
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Board of Trustees

The governing board 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
- The link governor responsible for attendance is Chris Baker and can be contacted via 0191 2325496

2.2 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- The Head Teacher is Sam Henzell and can be contacted via 0191 2325496 /ourladyadmin@olsa.org.uk

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- 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

The designated person responsible for attendance is Sarah Keenan and can be contacted via 0191 2325496.

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher and authorised by the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Lyndsay McMenzie and can be contacted via 07494721226.

2.5 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 each morning and afternoon registration period.

2.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

3. Recording attendance

3.1 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 at school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's 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 staff (see also section 7).

If your child's absence has not been reported, school will then send a first day response message to parent/carers, asking them to contact school and provide a reason of absence.

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 as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence of appointment.

Parents/carers are to advise school as soon as possible with regards to requesting a planned absence. School will ask parents/carers to provide proof of appointment, for the absence to be authorised.

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 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.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session

School monitors lateness and punctuality weekly, parents/carers are invited into school if persistent lates occur. School will then draw up an action plan to encourage positive punctuality.

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 ask the school attendance officer to follow up and/or carry out a home visit.
- 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 education welfare officer

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via half-termly written reports, if there are concerns regarding low attendance, the parent/carers will be invited to a meeting in school, to discuss strategies and support to improve attendance.

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 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 4 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. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 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.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

100 percentage attendance certificates are issued at the end of each term, and also 100 percent attendance certificates are issued for children that have not been absent from school, the whole academic year. These certificates are handed to children during achievement assemblies.

Attendance monitoring

Attendance reports run on a weekly basis, and recorded in the assembly book, to which is mentioned in achievement assemblies.

If a child falls under 95% attendance, this will then be triggered to monitor the child attendance in school. Parent/carers will be notified via telephone and letter to advise on their child's current attendance and strategies to improve their attendance. The children will be monitored for 4 weeks to allow improvement, if no improvements are made within the monitoring period, the case will then be referred to the local authority for legal monitoring.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data 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 levels 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.

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 strategies to address these patterns

6.3 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

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
- Hold regular meetings with the 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- 4 weekly internal monitoring
- Attendance contract to be issued to parents/carers
- Referred to the Local Authority for legal monitoring.

7. Monitoring arrangements

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

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.

- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- 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 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 2023](#)

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 |
| 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 access 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 |