



Attendance Policy

Date of document: October 2026
Date for review: October 2027
Lead reviewer: Kim Brewer
Approval by: Governing Body approval

This Policy was written in accordance with [Working together to improve school attendance](#), updated July 2026) and the **National Framework for Penalty Notices**.

1. Rationale and Vision

For a child to achieve their full educational potential, high school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all feel valued, safe, and welcome.

In line with DfE statutory guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance](#), we recognise that **absence is often a symptom of underlying challenges**. Improving attendance requires a whole-school culture built on partnership, early identification, support, and communication.

Parents, pupils, staff, and local authority partners share responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent attendance and punctuality. Every child has a right to access the full-time education to which they are entitled.

Key Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Anti-Bullying
- Admissions
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

2. Expectations and Whole-School Culture

Expect, Listen, Support, Formalise

Our approach follows the DfE's support-first framework:

- **Expect:** High standards of attendance from all pupils and families.

- **Listen & Understand:** Work collaboratively with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance (e.g., emotional health, SEND).
- **Support:** Put in place targeted early support, working with external agencies where necessary.
- **Formalise:** Use formal agreements (such as Voluntary Attendance Contracts or Education Supervision Orders) or statutory legal measures where support is declined or uncalculated absence persists.

Attendance Expectations & Definitions

- **School Target:** 96%+ overall attendance.
- **Persistent Absence (PA):** Missing **10% or more** of school (attendance below 90%).
- **Severe Absence (SA):** Missing **50% or more** of school.

Note on Medical & SEND Needs:

Where absence relates to long-term health needs, emotional health, or SEND, the school will actively consider reasonable adjustments (e.g., structured, time-limited phased return plans) in consultation with the SENDCO and external health partners. Remote education is strictly used as a temporary last resort.

It should be remembered that 90% attendance is equivalent to one day absence every fortnight. Over an academic year this amounts to four weeks of absence.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher & Senior Leadership Team

- Oversee and co-ordinate the strategic delivery of the attendance policy.
- Monitor attendance patterns across cohorts, identifying early trends using MIS data.
- Ensure all registration entries and attendance codes conform strictly to national DfE guidance.
- Determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Classroom & Pastoral Staff

- Take registers accurately at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session at the required time.
- Create a welcoming classroom environment that promotes regular attendance.
- Raise pastoral or academic concerns that may account for absence with the Attendance Lead and Headteacher.

Parents and Carers

- Under **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996**, ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education.
- Contact the school by **8:45 AM** on the first day of an unexpected absence and on every subsequent day.
- Provide clear reasons for absence and work proactively with the school to resolve barriers.

- Schedule non-urgent medical appointments outside school hours where possible.

4. Daily Registration and Punctuality

Session	Time	Details
School Start / Bell	8:45 AM	Doors open / morning start.
Morning Register Taken	8:55 AM	Taken simultaneously for all pupils.
Morning Register Closes	9:15 AM	Arrival after 8:55 AM but before 9:15 AM is marked as L (Late) .
Late After Register Closes	Post 9:15 AM	Arrival after 9:15 AM is marked as U (Unauthorised Late) . Counts as an unauthorised absence for the session.
Afternoon Register Taken	1:10-KS1 1:30-KS2	Taken at the same designated time across Key Stages

Medical Appointments

- Appointments during school hours should be kept to a minimum.
- Routine medical/dental visits should be booked outside school hours.
- Unavoidable visits will be coded as **M (Authorised Medical)** upon provision of appropriate evidence (appointment card/letter).

5. Absence Procedures & Safeguarding

Missing school without notification is treated as a safeguarding concern.

- Day 1: Unexplained Absence- Contact parent/carer via email/phone call before 10:00 AM.
- Day 2: Continued Absence-Secondary contacts phoned; welfare check initiated if no contact made.
- Day 3: CME Risk Assessment-Multi-agency enquiries / home visit considered if child remains unseen.
- Day 10: Statutory LA Escalation-Formal notification to Local Authority as Child Missing in Education (CME).

Collection at the End of Day

Parents must collect pupils promptly at the end of the school day. Persistent late collection may result in pupils being placed into wrap-around care at the parent's expense or escalation to Children's Social Care or Police.

6. Term-Time Leaves of Absence

Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

- **Holidays in Term Time:** There is no legal entitlement to take holidays in term time. Taking a holiday for cost or convenience is **not** an exceptional circumstance.
- **How to Apply:** Submit a written request to the Headteacher well in advance of the proposed absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** If leave is taken without approval, or if a child remains absent beyond the agreed date, absences will be marked as unauthorised (**G code**) and referenced to the Local Authority under the **National Framework for Penalty Notices**.

7. Legal Measures & Statutory Action

Where informal support fails or is declined, and unauthorised absence reaches statutory thresholds, legal sanctions will be applied.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

The statutory regulations establish a consistent national framework for penalty notices across England:

- **National Threshold:** A Penalty Notice must be considered when a pupil accrues **10 sessions (5 school days)** of unauthorised absence within a rolling **10-school-week period**. This 10-week window can span across terms or school years.
- **First Offence Penalty Rate:** **£160 per parent, per child** if paid within 28 days, reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.
- **Second Offence (within 3 years):** **£160 per parent, per child** flat rate (no 21-day discount).
- **Third Offence (within 3 years):** A Penalty Notice will **not** be issued. Case escalates directly to **Magistrates Court prosecution** under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Magistrates Court Action (Section 444 Education Act 1996)

Continued or persistent unauthorised absence may lead to direct prosecution:

- **Section 444(1):** Fine up to **£1,000** per parent.
- **Section 444(1A):** Fine up to **£2,500** per parent, a **Community Order**, or **Imprisonment up to 3 months**.

8. Special Groups and Specific Circumstances

Public Performances & Elite Sport

- Absences for public performances or elite sporting events require advance Headteacher permission and appropriate licensing.
- Performance absences are coded as **C2** or **C** (Authorised).

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, and Showman Families

- Absences for occupational travel are coded as **T (Authorised)**, provided the pupil has attended at least 200 sessions in the preceding 12-month period.
- Dual registration arrangements will be supported where applicable.

Register Maintenance

In accordance with regulations, all entries in the Admission and Attendance Registers must be preserved for a minimum of **3 years**.

Appendix: Communication Templates

Template 1: Early Attendance Warning (Trigger Letter 1)

Subject: Attendance Awareness Notice – [Child's Name]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

I am writing to update you on [Child's Name]'s school attendance, which currently stands at **[XX]%**.

Our school target is **96%** or above. We monitor attendance closely because regular attendance is directly linked to academic progress, confidence, and social wellbeing.

If there are any underlying circumstances or barriers affecting [Child's Name]'s ability to attend school regularly—such as health or emotional needs—please contact us so we can work together to provide appropriate support.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Attendance Lead

Template 2: Medical Evidence & Targeted Support (Trigger Letter 2)

Subject: Attendance Support and Unauthorised Absence Warning – [Child's Name]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

Following our recent communication, [Child's Name]'s attendance has fallen to **[XX]%**, with **[XX]** sessions recorded as unauthorised absence.

As a result of this persistent pattern, the school can no longer authorise further illness-related absences without supporting evidence (such as prescription labels, appointment cards, or medical letters).

We want to work in partnership with you to avoid formal measures. Please contact the school to arrange an Attendance Support Meeting so we can establish a support agreement.

Please note that if unauthorised absences reach **10 sessions within a 10-school-week window**, the school is required to refer the case to the Local Authority under the **National Framework for Penalty Notices**.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Attendance Lead

Template 3: Persistent Lateness Notice

Subject: Persistent Lateness Warning – [Child's Name]

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

I am writing regarding [Child's Name]'s punctuality. Between **[Date]** and **[Date]**, [Child's Name] was late on **[XX]** occasions.

Arriving late disrupts learning, causes embarrassment for the child, and results in missed instructions. Please note that arrival after the register closes at **9:15 AM** is recorded as a **U code (Unauthorised Late)**.

Under the National Framework, **10 sessions of unauthorised absence (including U codes)** within a 10-school-week period may trigger a Local Authority Penalty Notice.

Please contact the school office if you require support in establishing morning routines.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Attendance Lead