



Attendance Policy

Policy adapted from (if applicable):

Governing Body Sub-committee

Name: Student Matters Equality & Community

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Full Governing Body

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations concerning school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student 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:

- 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) 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 Governing Body

The school governing body (SMEC Committee) is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a regular basis. It also holds 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 students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team consists of a First Day Response Officer, an Attendance Officer, with an Assistant Head as line-manager:

- The First Day Response Officer monitors student absence on a day-to day basis
- The Attendance Officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- The Attendance Officer ensures registers are completed on a day-to-day basis
- The Attendance Officer meets fortnightly with Heads of Year regarding the monitoring of student attendance
- The Attendance Officer acts as point of contact for parents, teachers and external agencies
- The Attendance Officer reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Head and advises when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The Attendance Officer monitors attendance and arranges for the parent to be informed when their child has dropped below 95% attendance
- The Assistant Head i/c Attendance is responsible for policy, procedure and the oversight of attendance

3.4 Head of Year

The Head of Year:

- Maintains an overview of the attendance of students in their year group
- Liaises with external agencies and Attendance Officer around the attendance of their year group
- Acts as point of contact (along with the tutor) and offer appropriate support around improving the attendance
- Praises students for punctuality and good attendance

3.5 Tutors / Teachers

Tutors and teachers:

- Record attendance accurately on a daily basis using the correct codes, submitting this on Cloud School
- Praises students for punctuality and good attendance
- Plays their part in the monitoring of student absence and act as a point of contact for a parent who is concerned about their child's health/attendance
- Liaises with the Attendance Officer as appropriate around reasons for student absence

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will take calls from parents daily about absence and record. This on Cloud School.

3.7 Parents/Carers and Students

- Students should attend regularly, punctually and be ready to learn
- Students should attend morning registration and all lessons on time. Students should be in school by 8.35am ready for morning registration which begins at 8.40am
- Parents/Carers should ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and ready to learn – REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT
- Parents/Carers should notify the school office of any absence before 8.40am on the day of the absence
- Parents/Carers should take family holidays during the school holidays
- Parents/Carers should try to book routine medical appointments outside of school time
- Parents/Carers should ensure contact details are kept up to date and inform the school of any changes as soon as possible

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

To meet our legal obligations we will must take attendance registers twice each day, once in the morning (8.40am) and once in the afternoon (1.00pm), although registers are also routinely taken every lesson during the day.

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Please contact the school on 01773825281 or email attendance@belperschool.co.uk.

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 student's parent/carer 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 may be recorded as unauthorised until appropriate evidence is provided by the parent/carer.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Please contact the school on 01773 825281.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student 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

If lateness becomes a habit, without good reason, this may result in disciplinary action (currently a 30m after school detention on the following day).

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. This will initially involve a phone call or text (parents/carers can reply via text) from First Day Response, followed up by a letter if there is no reply. The Head of Year or the Attendance Officer may follow this up if there is still no response.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance will be reported to parents annually in the Summer Term via the Cloud School portal.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Example of 'exceptional circumstances' may include: wedding/bereavement relating to close family member or serious terminal illness of close relative.

The government encourages schools to look at each request on an individual basis. As a guideline, exceptional circumstances' may refer to:

- The leave being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value
- The benefit of the leave would outweigh the loss of teaching and learning time

The Head may grant compassionate leave as an authorised absence.

It is reasonable to say that unless the request meets this type of criteria then it is quite likely that the request will be turned down, and if the student still takes leave of absence, there is the possibility of the Local Authority issuing a penalty notice.

The school reserves the right to refer any case where a student takes a holiday during term time to the Local Authority with a view to issuing a penalty notice. However, the circumstances around any absence of this nature will always be examined on an individual basis before any decision to request a penalty notice is taken. This is not a decision that the school will take lightly and all aspects will be thoroughly considered and taken into account.

The Local Authority may use a Parenting Order, Education Supervision Order, School Attendance Order or fine if they think a child is not getting a proper education or is missing in education. You would then get 15 days to provide evidence. You must show your child has registered with a school or you are providing a child with home education.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail) – this includes isolation due to infection during the pandemic
- School grants students 'study leave' during examination periods
- Unable to get to school due to emergency breakdown, snow, or other unforeseeable reason
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence is when a student's absence reaches 10% or more across the school year, **whatever the reason**. Absence at this level is severely damaging to a child's education and the school will require the full support of parents in order to correct this. If the persistent absence is due to medical issues, we may request medical evidence in order to confirm authenticity.

Parents will be notified if their child reaches this mark. At this stage, attendance will be carefully monitored through our pastoral system and this will involve meetings with the student on a regular basis. An action plan may be put in place in order to secure improvement. If no improvement is made this may be referred to the local authority who may issue a fine.

Where appropriate attempts will be made to support students with persistent absence through:

- Adjustments to the child's curriculum / alternative provision in school
- Alternative provision externally

- Referral to school nurse or safeguarding
- Signposting to external partners and organisations who may offer appropriate support

5.3 Legal sanctions

The 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 the 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 student 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

Strategies for rewarding and improving attendance include:

- Ensuring students and parents are given clear messages with regard to the importance of good attendance through regular channels
- Monitoring of whole school data to identify patterns of absence
- Reporting on attendance / absence to all stakeholders
- Developing support for students with genuine medical / mental health issues or other specific need
- Clear rewards and sanctions relating to attendance

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team at our school monitors student absence on a daily/weekly/monthly basis.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent/carer is expected to call the school each day if their child is ill. Where illness is severe and long term we would expect the parent to keep the school updated on a regular basis.

If a student's absence goes above 10 consecutive days without good reason given, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a student's absence continues the school will contact the child's parent/carer, This will be a staged process which would ultimately require the involvement of the local authority (see Appendix 2).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-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 body.

Our school collects and stores attendance data, and may use it for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Assistant Head (i/c Attendance). At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Body Student Matters, Equality and Community Committee.

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)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend (this could be due to Covid symptoms prior to PCR test, self-isolation, or quarantine following travel abroad)
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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Attendance Intervention

Stage 1

- **Attendance below expected 95%**
Letter informing parents

Stage 2

- **Attendance below 90% Concern**
Letter to parents expressing concern

Stage 3

- **Attendance below 85% Serious Concern**
Letter / Attendance Panel
Targets Set
Monitoring Period

Stage 4

- **Attendance remains below 85%**
Letter risk of prosecution
Continue to monitor

Stage 5

- **Attendance does not improve**
Refer to LA for prosecution