



SENDScope

Independent School

Attendance Policy

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Rights Respecting Article 28 - I have the right to an education

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 improve 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 School Governors

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 Principals to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link Governor responsible for attendance is **Sharon Murphy**.

2.2 The Principals

The Principals are 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 Principals are **Natalie Walsh and Jacqueline Bebbington**

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 senior leader responsible for attendance is **Jacqueline Bebbington**.

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 Principals.
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion (authorised by the Principals) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Recording attendance on IRIS on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the schools when a pupil is D coded.

The attendance officer is **Kimberely Perkins**

2.5 Class Teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for speaking to children on return from absence to check on reasons and well-being of the child
- Class teachers are responsible for speaking to parents/carers on collection to determine reasons for absence if school are unable to make contact with parents.

2.6 School staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and 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 and be ready to learn when they arrive.

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 afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Dual Registered
- 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 A 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 8:30 am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will close at 9am

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:15pm and will be kept open until 12:25pm

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 (see also section 6).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where children are absent for 3 days or more a home visit will be made on day 3 at the latest, if there are safeguarding concerns then this will be on the first day of absence.

If authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school will make a home visit on day 3 at the latest to determine the whereabouts and safety of the child and leave a card to request parents make contact with school.

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

Parents should provide proof of the appointment so that school are able to authorise this.

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 at 9am 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

Where children are recorded as late this will be noted down and patterns are noted. Where patterns are noted, parents are spoken to initially by class teachers and then by a member of the Attendance Team where support will be offered.

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 will make a home visit and contact named school if a pupil is D coded.
- 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, parents are informed in Autumn and Spring Term at parent consultations and through end of year reports.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principals 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 Principals' discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as death of a parent or an unavoidable absence due to attending a funeral where no other arrangements can be put on place, and absence is kept to a minimum. Evidence could be requested to enable the Principals to authorise the absence.

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. Leave of absence request forms are available from the school office. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence so that it can be authorised

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.

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

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We celebrate weekly attendance in class daily and in end of week assemblies, sharing successes and rewarding attendance across school

The school acknowledges good and outstanding attendance in the following ways:

- In school events
- Weekly prize draws
- Class rewards
- School trips

6. Attendance monitoring

1. Information is sent to the SLT via the attendance team detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and Attendance Officer.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the attendance team daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to 96 percent, the teacher speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The attendance officer will make a phone call home, or teachers will speak to parents, to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. (Letter 1)
7. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the attendance officer contacts the parents to discuss this. (Letter 2)
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the Attendance Team and Principals to set improvement targets. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO). (Attendance Action Plan)

9. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the Attendance Team to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.
10. If targets are not met, the attendance team makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A four-week monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is no improvement after an additional four weeks, a fixed-penalty notice may be issued.
11. If attendance continues not to improve then court proceedings may be invoked, and this could lead to a fine or custodial sentence.

6.1 Monitoring whole school 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. 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

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Principals. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governors.

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
- Relationships 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 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix A: 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

Appendix B: Letter 1

Dear,

Pupil Name: ***** **Year Group:** *****

Since returning to school in September, it has been noted that your child's attendance is below 96%, which is lower than school expectations.

Attendance is *****%

I have enclosed an up-to-date attendance printout for your information and would like to bring to your attention that ***** has only attended ** out of a possible ** sessions, 1 session is equal to half a day, ** authorised absences and ** unauthorised absences.

If you would like to discuss the content of this letter or if you require support regarding your child's attendance, please contact me and we will arrange an appointment for you to come into school.

Please be aware that Early Help Assessment support (EHA) is available in school on request.

I look forward to an improvement in attendance.

Yours Sincerely

Miss Perkins

Attendance Officer

Appendix C: Letter 2

Dear

I note that the attendance at SENDSCOPE School of ***** has continued to be unsatisfactory. I must bring to your notice that under the Education Act, 1996, it is the duty of the person(s) with parental responsibility to secure regular attendance of their children at school. This means that they must be in attendance every time the school is open, unless they are prevented from doing so by reason of genuine illness or any unavoidable cause.

Since November to date, out of a possible ** school weeks, ** has so far only put in ** unbroken weeks. As you will appreciate this is a situation which is far from satisfactory.

Attendance is currently *** %, * authorised sessions of absence and ** unauthorised sessions of absence.

If ***** continues to attend school irregularly without good cause, it will be necessary for more formal action which may result in the Education Department taking legal proceedings under the Act.

I sincerely hope that you will take steps to ensure *****'s regular attendance at school and therefore make the need for further action unnecessary.

Yours sincerely

Miss Perkins

Attendance Officer

Appendix D: attendance action plan

Name:	DOB:

Attendance Zone	Less than 90%	91% - 96%	97% - 100%
Review 1			
Review 2			
Review 3			

What are the reasons for absence? (please tick)			
Genuine Medical		Illness	
Parent Mental Health		Truancy / lesson avoidance	
No Reason Provided		Student Mental Health	
Behaviour / exclusions		Bullying	
Historic Attendance Issues		Peer/Relationship Issues	
Poor Parenting		Dislike of school	
Other:		Reason:	

What actions have been taken? (please tick)			
Internal Monitoring		Part time hours	
Early Help/Family Partner		Referral to internal unit	
Telephone calls home		Attendance Report	
Meeting with parent/carers		Curriculum/class changes	
PSA/Attendance Officer Ref.		Peer mediation	
Parent Contract		Rewards & Recognition	
Legal Action			

Group work		Referral to Outside Agency:
Other:		Please state:

Historic Attendance:										
Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Attendance Barriers (In/out of school)

Background/Additional Information:

Actions:

Support Offered/Actioned: