



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved: 20 April 2023 by the Interim Executive Board  
Next review: April 2025

NB: In the context of this policy, the term headteacher refers to the executive headteacher if he is present or, in his absence, the deputy executive headteacher.

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### NEW DfE GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND RECORDING

The DfE has published (in September 2022) updated guidance for schools: see the document [HERE](#)  
This policy reflects the updated guidance.

## A. Aims

1. We aim to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance by:
  - a. Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
  - b. Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - c. Acting early to address patterns of absence
2. We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
3. We support the West Sussex pupil entitlement statement 'Miss school, miss out'.

## B. Legislation and guidance

4. 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

## C. School procedures

### Attendance register

5. By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.
6. The attendance register will be taken 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 circumstancesAny 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 amendmentSee appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
7. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.
8. Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.
9. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

### **Unplanned absence**

10. Parents must notify their school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also point 33). Notification should be by email to the school office, but if this is not possible then by telephone.
11. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
12. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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.
13. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

14. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents should contact the school office via email or telephone.
15. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
16. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section D.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

17. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
18. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. The school follows advice from West Sussex pupil entitlement team and further advice will be sought in cases when persistent lateness is not addressed by parents.

### **Following up absence**

19. The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **Reporting to parents**

20. Attendance is reported to parents annually and is included with the child's annual report.

## **D. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **Granting approval for term-time absence**

21. Headteachers are not allowed to grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.
22. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a family emergency, a funeral, religious observance, etc and we consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.
23. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
  - Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in points 14 and 15.
  - 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
  - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
  - Holidays in term time are not authorised and will not be approved.

### **Legal sanctions**

24. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

25. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
26. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:
  - A 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
27. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **E. Strategies for promoting attendance**

28. Various strategies are used to create a positive school culture and make school a place that children want to be.
29. Staff are mindful that the reasons for being late or not in school are often outside of a child's control and aim to avoid promoting a situation where a child may feel individually responsible for a class not achieving rewards.
30. Staff monitor absences and actively offer support for families who may need it.

## **F. Attendance monitoring**

31. The attendance officer, who is the office manager, monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.
32. Parents are expected to email or call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see point 10) and to email or call the school each day a child is ill.
33. If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
34. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.
35. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.
36. Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.
37. The attendance of all pupils is collected and stored on the school's management information system. It will be used to gather a picture of persistence absence and track improvement for individuals and, if appropriate, groups of children.

## **G. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

38. The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The executive headteacher**

39. The executive headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the schools, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
40. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **The attendance officer for each school**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher on grounds for issuing fixed-penalty notices.

### **Class teachers**

41. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

**Office staff**

42. Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

**Links with other policies**

43. This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policies

## Appendix 1: 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
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
<b>Y</b>	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 pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day