Service Delivery Policy Education- Schools (England)

Attendance Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Our schools aim to:

- Promote a welcoming atmosphere that makes pupils feel safe and valued.

- Encourage good relationships between the school and parents/carers.

- Stress the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively, and absence followed up quickly.

- Ensure that all pupils receive suitable teaching and receive rewards for success.

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05/04/2023	V2.01	Abbie Heard	Complete refresh to reflect 2022 guidance.
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1. Scope

1.1   Rationale

1.1.1   The school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Pupils attending school regularly and punctually will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and will develop great achievements both academically and socially. If a student's attendance is below expectations for their entire school career, they will have missed over one year of education. 91.1% attendance means missing 17 days/85 lessons of school in one year. Missing 17 days a year also means dropping 1 GCSE grade (on average). The policy has been drawn up based on current Government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all team members and parents/carers have access to this policy.

Days Absent	Missed Time	Number of Missed Lessons	Attendance
1	1 day	6	99.5%
2	2 days	12	99%
3	3 days	18	98.5%
4	4 days	24	98%
5	1 week	30	97.5%
10	2 weeks	60	95%
15	3 weeks	90	92.5%
20	4 weeks	120	89.7%
25	5 weeks	150	87.5%
30	6 weeks	180	85%
35	7 weeks	210	82.5%
40	8 weeks	240	80%

1.1.2   We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance.

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.2   Legislation and guidance

1.2.1   This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together to Improve 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.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DFE, 2023

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments).

- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1   The Education Operations Team

2.1.1   The Education Operations Team 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 Team Members receive adequate training on attendance.

- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

2.2   The Head Teacher

2.2.1   The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Education Operations Team.

- Supporting Team Members with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement and monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

2.3   Administrative Teams

2.3.1   Administrators are responsible for:

- Ensuring the accurate recording of attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.

- Taking calls from parents, carers, and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system.

- Transferring calls from parents, carers, and pupils to a member of the senior leadership team or pastoral lead, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

2.4   Parents/carers

2.4.1   Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.

- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

2.5   Pupils

2.5.1   Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day or timetabled session on time.

3. Recording attendance

3.1   Attendance register

3.1.1   We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

3.1.2   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.

3.1.3   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.

3.1.4   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.

3.1.5   Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00 am on each school day unless there is prior agreement with the Head Teacher.

3.1.6   The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

3.2   Unplanned absence

3.2.1   The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

3.2.2   Contact details for specific schools can be found on the Phoenix Learning and Care website. https://phoenixschools.org.uk/

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

3.2.4   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 other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

3.2.5   If the school is not satisfied about 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.

3.3.1   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.

3.3.2   Parents and carers should contact the school office via phone or email. Contact details can be found at https://phoenixschools.org.uk/

3.3.3   However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

3.3.4   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

3.4.1   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.

3.5   Following up unexplained absence

3.5.1   Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

3.5.2   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 conduct a welfare visit to the pupil's home. The school may, if no contact can be made, call the police.

3.5.3   Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

3.5.4   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 five working days after the session.

3.5.5   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 support from Early Help and Educational Welfare or named Caseworkers within the placing authority as appropriate.

3.6   Reporting to parents/carers

3.6.1   The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1   Approval for term-time absence

4.1.1   The Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

4.1.3   Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail).

- 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.

4.2   Strategies for promoting attendance.

4.2.1   The school celebrates good and / or improving attendance by:

- Rewarding those pupils who make a substantial improvement to their attendance, in line with our Therapeutic Approaches (Behaviour) policy.

- Holding supportive meetings with parents/carers and pupils where problems have arisen.

- Agreeing Individual Attendance Plans (IAP) with pupils and parents/carers and review these regularly.

- Sending letters to parents/carers of pupils who fall below the attendance threshold.

- Seeking the views of all stakeholders (including pupils and parents/carers) on attendance.

5. Attendance monitoring

5.1   Monitoring attendance

5.1.1   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.

5.2   Analysing attendance

5.2.1   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.

5.3   Using data to improve attendance.

5.3.1   The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, 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.

5.4   Reducing persistent and severe absence

5.4.1   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.

5.4.2   The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who 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.

6. Monitoring arrangements

6.1.1   This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Education Operations Team.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Therapeutic Approach (Behaviour) policy

8. 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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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
Unauthorised absence		
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

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 pupil is in custody
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