



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**An Exceptional Education for All**

**REACH** for your future

***Respect Enterprise Ambition Confidence Happiness***

Autumn 2023

## Aims

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 and punctuality;
- 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; and
- building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [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](#)

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

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Governing Board

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; and
- holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The safeguarding link governor will also be the link governor for overseeing attendance.

### The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher 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 pupils; and
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

## The Attendance Team

The attendance team comprises the School Office Manager, the Attendance Officer, the Pastoral/Designated Safeguarding/Senior Mental Health Leader supported by Education Welfare consultants. The team works closely together to improve and monitor attendance and punctuality. Each person has clearly defined roles and is clear about their responsibility.

## The Designated Senior Leads responsible for attendance

The School Office Manager and the Pastoral/Designated Safeguarding/Senior Mental Health Leader are contactable via [penny@williamtyndale.islington.sch.uk](mailto:penny@williamtyndale.islington.sch.uk) or [corinne@williamtyndale.islington.sch.uk](mailto:corinne@williamtyndale.islington.sch.uk) and are 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;
- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Attendance Monitoring below);
- working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- reporting absences to the local authority, which may incur fixed-penalty notices when appropriate; and
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership Team and the Head Teacher.

The Senior Leadership Team, including the Head Teacher is responsible for:

producing termly reports to the governing body.

## The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is Tina Gabriel, or another member of the office staff in her absence, and is responsible for:

- ensuring that teaching staff have correctly taken the registers;
- entering the correct attendance codes and recording any authorised or unauthorised absence requests;
- recording any lates on the register;
- attending attendance meeting with the designated senior leaders for attendance and EWO consultants; and
- making first day calls re children who are absent and the parents or carers have not notified of us of the reason.

## Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office promptly at the start of the school day by 9am and again after the lunch break.

## School office staff

School office staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system; and
- transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral Lead (if appropriate) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

## Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day on time;
- call the school to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return;
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child; and
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

## Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day on time by 8.55am.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 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 second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent; and
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

See appendix 1 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; and
- 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 be in class by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.30. The register for the second session will be taken after the end of lunch play.

### Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also Attendance Monitoring).

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 pupil's parent or 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 will be recorded as unauthorised and parents or carers will be notified verbally of the unauthorised absence.

### 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. Evidence of the appointment will be requested by the school staff.

However, we encourage parents or 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.

The pupil's parent or carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (see below for information on term-time absences the school can authorise).

## Punctuality

A pupil who arrives:

- after the register has been taken at 9am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code; and
- after the register has closed at 9.30am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

## 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 may contact the school's Educational Welfare consultant to carry out a home visit;
- 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; and
- call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving the Education Welfare consultant.

## Reporting to parents and carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via the end of year report. Parents will also be written to, if their child's attendance falls below 90%, to inform them that their child is considered a persistent absentee.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

### Approval for term-time absence

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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

**Where term time leave is not approved and it is still taken, the school will usually request a penalty notice to be issued by the Council.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any authorised absence should be kept to a minimum.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the planned absence and in accordance with any leave of absence request form; forms are accessible from the school office or can be emailed to the parent for completion. The Head Teacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- illness and medical/dental appointments (see Planned Absence above);
- 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; and
- 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.

## 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 are issued by the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may (but not necessarily) 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; and
- where an excluded pupil 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.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

- Punctuality certificates awarded to a class if there are no lates in any given week – these are awarded at the whole school assembly
- Attendance badges awarded on a termly basis for any child who is neither absent nor late for a term
- Punctuality badges awarded on a termly basis for any child who is not late at all, on the days they attend, for a term
- Medals awarded on an annual basis for any child who is neither absent nor late for the entire year
- Monthly individual awards for a child who is not late for the month. Children will be entered into a randomised electronic draw and a prize will be awarded for the winning child in each class

## Attendance monitoring

The attendance team have the following procedures and processes in place to monitor attendance

- Hold regular meetings with our Education Welfare consultants – these are held at least half a term more regularly if felt necessary. Any children falling below 95% are identified and a course of action is agreed. The process is normally as follows:
  - Letter send to parent/carer advising them that their child is below 90% and therefore considered a persistent absentee
  - If absence does not improve – a home visit may be arranged or an attendance meeting in school with the Pastoral lead and Educational Welfare consultants to offer support and discuss strategies for improving the child's attendance. This may involve a referral to school nursing, if there are health concerns or other agencies
  - If there is a high number of unauthorised absences (greater than 10 sessions) a court warning letter may be sent which could result in a court assessment meeting to discuss the child's attendance record. This may result in court action.
- Create termly reports for governors and school leaders with attendance data for absence for whole school and identified specific cohorts such as pupil premium, EHCP children, vulnerable children.
- Identify children who have been absent days prior to or just after a holiday – holiday letters will be sent to children who have been absent for these days. If the number of days applies a penalty notice will be issued for the absence. If the child continues to have further absences prior to or after a school holiday, the parent/carer will then be inviting in for an attendance meeting.

- Maintain the shared google spreadsheet, which allows all members of the attendance team to contribute to, with a running record of attendance actions and data and any attendance related actions.

## Monitoring attendance

The school will:

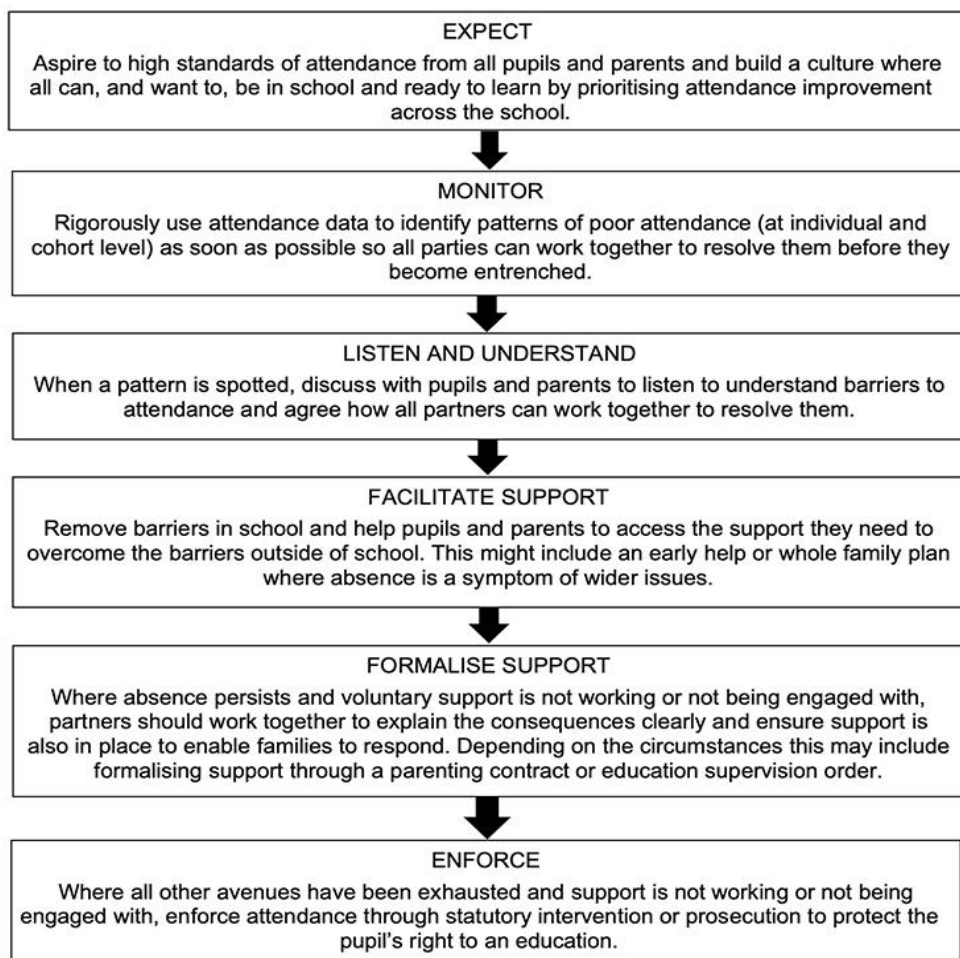
- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level; and
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term 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 board.

## 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. ***The aim is to support families and pupils to achieve good attendance through interventions, meetings, referrals to and working with wider support agencies before having to resort to statutory action;*** and
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence on a termly basis, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.



## Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers (as necessary), and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families; and
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

## Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more.

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; and
- hold regularly (at least half termly meetings) with the school's attendance consultants to discuss and monitor attendance and agree action plans, which may take the form of a letter to the parent, a home visit or inviting the parent in for an attendance meeting.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by Penny El-Nemer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection 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)	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



<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<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