Attendance Policy

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Attendance

1. 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
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child 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 children have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. 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 (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a child's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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
- Holding 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 children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 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
- Building relationships with families to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with the child and their families
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss L Dykes and can be contacted via 01744 678700.

3.4 The School Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data
> 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 headteacher
> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss L Dykes and can be contacted via 01744 678700 supported by Miss A Conqueror.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Teachers are also responsible for creating a welcoming atmosphere that encourages and fosters good attendance.

3.6 Admin staff

School admin staff will:

> Take calls from families about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
> Transfer calls from families to the Attendance Lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
> Ensure first day response calls are made in accordance with the school procedures

3.7 Families

Families are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every [day 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

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all children 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 child is:

> Present
> Attending an approved off-site educational activity
> 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not
> The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
> The nature of circumstances where a child 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.
Childs must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 08:55 and will be kept open until 10:00. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 in EYFS and Key Stage One and 13:15 in Key Stage Two.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The child's family must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

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

Where the absence is longer than [e.g. 5] days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 families will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's family notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage families to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's family 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A child 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

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
> Call the child's family on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school may make a welfare call, call the police, contact social services.
> 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 family 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

4.6 Reporting to families

The school will regularly inform families about their child's attendance and absence levels in termly reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child 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 child is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable and out of the control of the family, examples may include the passing of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance, a serious safeguarding issue or police protection.

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 before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
> Illness (including mental 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 child's families belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
> Traveller children 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 child is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions
The school or local authority can fine families 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 family 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 a headteacher, 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 child 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
The school Attendance Officer will work closely with families when support is needed to improve attendance. This may be part of a multi-agency approach.
Classes have whole-class rewards dependent on the whole class attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring
The Attendance Office will review attendance data weekly and this will be compared to other schools and areas using the DfE monitoring attendance and benchmarking tools.

7.1 Monitoring attendance
The school will:
> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child level
> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
Child-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.

7.2 Analysing attendance
The school will:
> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify child's or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families
> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance
The school will:
> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with childs 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

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence
Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child 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 families of children 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

8 Children Missing in Education
8.1 Children at Risk of Missing Education
A child who is absent from education can become a child missing education if they're removed from their school's register.

Children absent from education: children who are persistently absent (absent repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods).

Children missing education: children of compulsory school age who aren't registered pupils at a school and aren't receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

It's important that your response as a school to persistently absent pupils helps to prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

The children most at risk are children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

Where a pupil needs a social worker, this should inform your decisions about responding to unauthorised absence or to the pupil missing education where there are known safeguarding risks (paragraph 173, KCSIE 2023).

All schools must inform their local authority of any child who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:
• Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
• Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
• Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the child is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
• Have been permanently excluded.

8.2 Key tasks to identify and prevent CME
- **Enter new pupils onto our register as soon as they start**
- If we're told that a new pupil will be joining the school, but the pupil doesn't attend on the agreed date, we will establish the child's whereabouts.
- Remind parents/carers to tell us about any changes to their information

- Hold **more than 1** emergency contact number for each pupil, to help you get in touch with an adult if you have any concerns.
- As soon as a parent or carer tells us about a **change of address** for a pupil, we **must** record the following in the admission register:
    - The full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live
    - The new address
    - The date from when it's expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a pupil is registered at **another school** or will be attending one in future, we **must** record in our register:
    - The name of the new school
    - The date when the pupil has started, or is due to start, attending their new school
    - Send a common transfer file (CTF) to a pupil's new school

8.3 Our duty to share information about non-standard transitions
If a pupil's name is added to the school roll at a non-standard transition point (for example, joining mid-year or leaving before your school's final year), we must:
- Notify your LA **within 5 days**
- Provide your LA with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the school roll
- We **must** inform the LA of all deletions from the admission register when a pupil is taken off roll (this doesn't apply where a pupil's name is deleted after they've completed the final year at school).

If at a non-standard transition point, we **must** tell the LA immediately and provide them the following information:
- The pupil's full name
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least 1 phone number for the parent/carer the pupil lives with
- The full name and address of the parent/carer the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there (if applicable)
- The name of the pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date (if applicable)
- The ground in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register

We **must** notify the LA as soon as the ground for removal is met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

8.4 Make 'reasonable enquiries' for pupils who aren't attending
Where a pupil:
Has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, **or**
Has been absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive days

We remove them from our register **only when** we've failed to establish their whereabouts, after making 'reasonable enquiries', **jointly with the LA**, to locate them. This only applies if we don't have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or another unavoidable cause.

We **must** make these enquiries.

'Reasonable enquiries' when the whereabouts of a child are unclear or unknown, might include completing and recording **1 or more** of the following:

- Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Checking local databases within the LA, or the DfE's Key to Success or school2school systems
- Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
    - Other local databases and agencies
    - Agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force

- Checking with the LA and school from which your pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated your pupil
- Checking with the LA where your pupil lives, if it's different from the one where your school is
- In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- Conducting a home visit, following your own policies and risk assessment procedures. If appropriate, making enquiries with neighbours and relatives

If you still aren't able to locate a pupil (and neither can your LA), you can remove them from your register (as set out above).