

St Barnabas C of E First and Middle School

'Let all that you do be done in love' 1 Corinthians ch16 v14



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Approved by	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date
LCR	LAB	September 2025	v1	September 2027

Rationale

At St Barnabas CE First and Middle School, we recognise that for pupils to achieve their full potential regular school attendance is vital. The key to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance is a consistently applied whole school policy where everyone accepts and plays their part.

St Barnabas CE First and Middle School is committed to provide all its pupils with a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each individual to realise his/her true potential. St Barnabas will also provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels valued and safe and wishes to attend to learn. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils and aim to reach the current school target of 97%.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is an important life skill for all students. Research findings and learning from best practice show that:

- Children must attend regularly to achieve their full potential
- Children who miss out can feel vulnerable and left behind
- Leave in term time can be disruptive and seriously affect a child's education

Every opportunity will be used at school to convey to pupils and their families that each pupil should attend school regularly and punctually and we will intervene at the earliest opportunity where attendance gives cause for concern. We will always challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, clear roles have been established that will provide an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement for pupils. In recognition of this, the law under Section 444 Education Act 1996 makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child, at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or agreement of the school. Regular attendance is in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and school will expect pupils to attend every day the school is open for instruction. Parents and children will be supported by school to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies. However, continued unauthorised absence from school may lead to prosecution of parents under Section 444 and 444a of the Education Act 1996.

This policy is intended to ensure every child's regular and punctual attendance at this school. We strive to work in partnership with parents/carers to give every child the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential academically, socially and emotionally.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance aiming to encourage full attendance for every child, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Ensuring children feel safe at school at all times, and have a sense of belonging as part of our school community
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education, with a curriculum that engages and inspires, to which they are entitled
- Ensuring that there is a positive school culture which celebrates, praises and encourages success.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school, working together to resolve any problems relating to attendance and punctuality

We also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
 - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

School roles Responsibilities

Head teacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors/LAB
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorizing the Attendance Champion and Attendance Administrator to be able to do so, as well as overseeing cases being prepared for formal prosecution
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

Attendance Governor / LAB

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Meeting with parents/carers as part of an Attendance Panel, where required.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Liaising with the Headteacher and Attendance Champion holding them to account for the implementation of this policy

The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (Attendance Champion)

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Attendance Champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school, working strategically with the Head teacher to agree relevant internal attendance targets.

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, ensuring all staff know that good attendance and punctuality is a collective responsibility.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families, following the identification of barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help these students overcome barriers
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) identifying any trends for both individuals and cohorts of children.
- 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 (EWOs), WCF staff and other outside agencies, as appropriate, to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/Attendance Champion (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Reporting to the governing body/LAB.

The designated senior leader (Attendance Champion) responsible for attendance is **Louise Reeder** and can be contacted via 01905 840366 or the school office email.

Class Teacher

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, submitting this information in a timely manner. The Attendance Administrator applies the appropriate and correct codes (see Appendix 1).

- Promote regular attendance through praise and encouragement
- Ensure that registers are always completed accurately
- Identify patterns of absence of individuals
- Add concerns to Arbor and MyConcern and alert Attendance Champion.
- Share attendance data with parents at Parents' Evenings and SEND Reviews

Attendance Administrator

- Key point of contact between home and school
- Ensure that contact is made either by parents or school in all cases on the first day of absence
- Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible. Refer to Attendance Champion / Head when no contact can be made or no suitable reason given.
- Show sympathy over genuine absence however encourage parents to bring their children to school at the earliest point

- Issue attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the effect intended. Seek advice from the Attendance Champion when you need it.
- Work closely with Attendance Champion
- Provide data regularly to school's Attendance Champion.
- Check and file all absence notes that are received and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8:55am 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Headteacher or Attendance Champion, who can be contacted via telephone or school office email.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Implementation

Strategies for promoting attendance

Registers are completed twice daily and as part of our safeguarding protocols all children must be accounted for. Great attendance is celebrated at individual, class, and whole school level, and is shared on our school weekly newsletter.

Where children and families need support, targets may be set and barriers to attendance will be identified. Strategies will be put in place to support families in removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analyse the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for development. Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual attendance and punctuality
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify children who should be praised for excellent attendance or significant improvements

We will promote attendance by:

- Celebrating in our weekly school newsletter
- Promoting attendance and strategies around school
- Regular communication on the school website and via the school newsletter
- Celebrating improved attendance and punctuality e.g. emails to parents/carers
- Regularly highlighting the impact of good attendance and punctuality on attainment
- Highlighting the importance of good attendance and punctuality in the workplace and on reference requests

Safeguarding

First day calling is used to ensure the safety of all children. If children do not attend school regularly, they may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding children is a collective responsibility for the whole school and this encompasses promoting the welfare and life opportunities for all children in our care. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter. Helping to create, nurture and foster patterns of good attendance and punctuality are the responsibility of everyone; parents, children and school staff.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

a. Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We will work closely with families and students who have been absent for a long period of time, in reintegrating the student back into school. A phased return to school will be offered, if necessary, for a maximum of 6 weeks. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be started and reviewed regularly with parents and any other professionals.

We will:

- Liaise with outside agencies as appropriate
- All relevant staff will be fully involved and updated
- Provide peer support and mentoring if appropriate
- Provide work and relevant school news to the pupil
- Agree a timescale to review the reintegration plan
- Include parent/guardian, pupil and any relevant staff in the reintegration plan.

b. Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The school will work closely with families and pupil who have been absent for a long period of time, in reintegrating the pupil back into school.

- Liaise with health professionals in supporting the pupil back into school
- Refer to external agencies including School Health, GP, Paediatrics, Mental Health Services for additional support
- Liaise with SEND and review SEND provision and adjust if appropriate
- Keep teaching staff fully updated on situation and share any reintegration packages
- Consider a phased return to school for a maximum of 6 weeks.
- If an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place arrange an emergency review and liaise with SEND services
- The school will submit regular notifications to the Local Authority for students absent for 10 or more days.
- Where a pupil has an EHCP and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the SEND services.

c. Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When pupils have been absent for a long period of time the school will

- Liaise with parents and pupil in identifying a reintegration package to school.
- Notify teachers of any reasonable adjustments made to support a return to school
- Liaise with any external agencies, as appropriate
- Consider an Supporting Families Assessment (Early Help Assessment) to support return to school

Attendance monitoring

Attendance and absence data is monitored by the Attendance Champion on a weekly basis. Whole school attendance, class attendance and individual attendance is monitored, to identify and track any pupils who are absent and have an attendance below 95%, understanding the reasons behind this absence and then responding as necessary. Attendance data is shared with parents/carers on the school's weekly newsletter, and class teachers are also given weekly attendance for their class, as well as the pupils in their cohort who are being monitoring (90-95%) and are persistently/severely absent (<90%).

Attendance data is collected weekly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This includes cases where there may be:

- Persistent Absence e.g. less than 90%
 - Incomplete weeks
 - Monday and Friday absences
 - Lateness
 - Periods of extended absence
 - Periods of "unauthorised" absence
 - Periods of absence for leave taken in term time

The Attendance Champion will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance at least annually and will ensure the Governors / LAB are kept informed of the whole school's attendance percentage, including groups, at each LAB meeting.

The Governors / LAB, and Executive Headteacher will set an annual target of attendance and review this annually. The attendance target for Academic year 2024/2025 is 97%.

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and whole school level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Where a pupil is on the Persistent Absentee tracking, falling below 90% attendance, for two consecutive years, this may result in being withdrawn from or unable to access interventions.

Data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.

(DfE – Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? May 2023)

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, on Arbor, 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil 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:

- For pupils of non-compulsory and compulsory age in Reception upwards, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:40am, with the first register being taken at 8:55am for all children Reception to Y7. The school day ends at 3:15pm for Reception and KS1, and 3:30pm for those children in KS2/Year 7.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will open at 8:40am during soft start, and will be closed at 8:55am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm for Reception/KS1 and 1:15pm for KS2/Y7.

If a child is late after registration 8.55am it is recorded as 'Late'. Where a child is more than 20 minutes after that, it is classed as an unauthorised absence. Please note urgent medical appointments when children come into school after registers have closed are recorded differently and are authorised.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling or emailing the school office.

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 3 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 parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment by telephone call or email. 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.

Lateness and punctuality

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated. The school day starts at 8:55am, with gates opening for arrival from 8:40am. Pupils should be in their classroom by 8:55am, when the register is closed. Registers are close at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. If a child does not arrive by 9:15am, pupils will receive a mark of absence.

After lunch, registers close at 12:45pm for Reception/KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2/3.

Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

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
- Parents will receive regular communication about their children's punctuality via letter, should concerns be raised following monitoring.

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 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 undertake a home visit and may call the police
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see below), as appropriate

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

The attendance of individual pupils is monitored weekly from the school management information system, which highlight all children with attendance that has fallen below 95% and those where attendance has fallen below 90%.

The flowcharts in Appendix 2 and letters in Appendix 3 will be followed in these cases and parents will be kept informed through letters or be invited to attend a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and any support that school can offer. (Appendix 2 and 3)

The school will also inform all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parent's evenings and in their end of year reports. Furthermore, where a child is on the SEN register, attendance will be reported on the child's Individual Provision Map, as poor attendance can significantly impact on a child's progress and attainment.

The Government expects pupils to have a minimum level of attendance of at least 97% (5 days absence across the whole school year).

This Attendance Ladder shows the amount of 'lost learning' across an academic year due to absence from school.

Number of days missed in an academic year	Number of lessons missed in an academic year	Attendance percentage	
0	0	100%	Outstanding
5	25	97%	Very good
7	35	96%	Good
10	50	95%	Almost there
20	100	90%	Improvement needed Our Attendance Officer will be in touch
29	150	85%	Concerned Below 90% is officially 'persistently absent'.
40	200	80%	Very concerned
100	500	≤50%	Officially 'severely absent'.

Data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.

(DfE – Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? May 2023)

Where a pupil is on the Persistent Absentee tracking, falling below 90% attendance, for two consecutive years, this may result in being withdrawn from or unable to access interventions.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement from the Headteacher. The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In exceptional circumstances, parents may request leave for their child and applications will be considered by the Headteacher. The pupil's parent must also apply for term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please obtain the relevant form from the school office. Leave will not be considered retrospectively.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been assessed for equality impact on 01/09/2024 and has been graded as: low priority.

Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with special educational needs as part of their annual / interim review if required.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour

Review

Policy Written: September 2024 EAW/VL

Policy reviewed: September 2025 LCR

Approved by Governors / LAB : October 2024

Glossary

Attendance

The act of going regularly to and being present at school.

Authorised absence

Authorised absence is when a child is absent from school for a genuine reason such as illness where they are too unwell to attend.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is when a child is absent from school where no reason for absence has been given, the reason does not warrant authorisation or leave where the leave request has not been authorised.

Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absence is when a pupil's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions. Therefore attendance of 90% or below.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

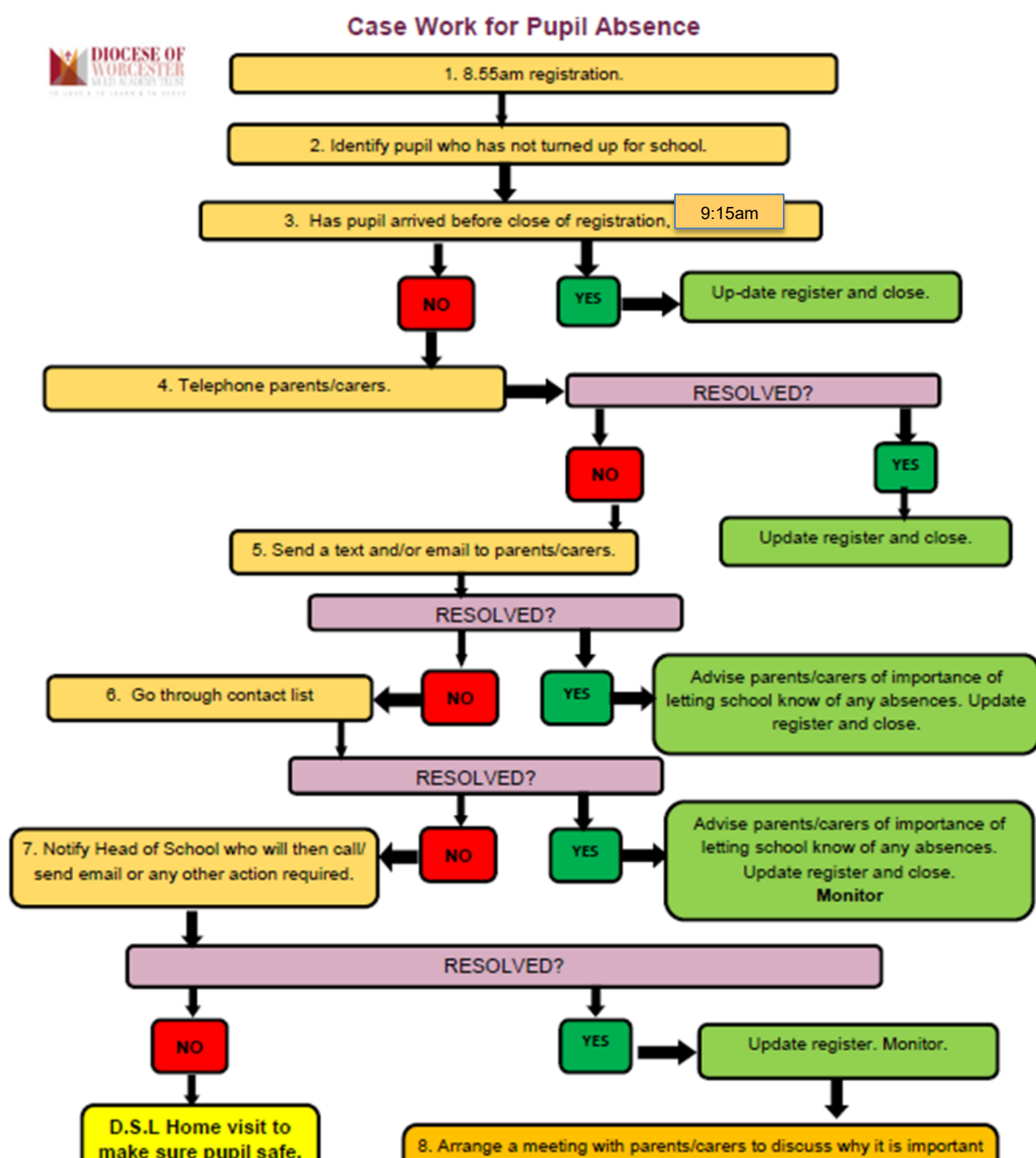
The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Attendance Action Flowchart



Appendix 3 Letter 1 and Letter 2 Persistent Absence

LETTER 1 This template MUST be submitted on school letter headed paper.

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

RE: (Student Name and Year Group)

I am writing to inform you that (insert student name) attendance is (insert %) which equates to (insert no. of days) days absence. This figure is below the school's target of 97%.

While I understand that absence is sometimes unavoidable and there are genuine reasons for absence such as illness, I have a duty to monitor attendance and inform home when a child's attendance falls below 95%.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the attendance information. The school believes that early intervention is vital and if you feel that there are barriers to your child's attendance that the school could support you with, please let us know.

I must remind you that it is the parent/guardian's legal responsibility to ensure regular and sustained school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

(insert name of sender/title)

(insert name of school)

LETTER 2

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

RE: (Student Name and Year Group)

I am writing to inform you that (insert student name) attendance is (insert %) which equates to (insert no. of days) days absence. This figure is below the school's target of 97%.

I know that we are aware of the reasons for absence and that you have kept school updated on each absence, but I have a duty to make sure you are aware of the level that it has fallen to.

Regular school attendance is expected for all students and any student whose attendance falls below 90% is classed as persistently absent from school. I want to remind you that we are here to support (insert student name) in school, but they must be attending school to access this support.

I will continue to monitor (insert student name) school attendance and if the attendance does not improve, I will contact you again to arrange a meeting to discuss what the barriers may be. If (insert student name) has a medical issue that is affecting school attendance, please ensure the school has an up-to-date Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and the contact details of any health professional involved in any ongoing treatment or investigation. The IHCP forms can be accessed by (insert).

I must remind you that it is the parent/guardian's legal responsibility to ensure regular and sustained school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

(insert name of sender/title)

(insert name of school)

Appendix 3 Letter 1 and 2 Punctuality

Letter 1 Punctuality This template MUST be submitted on school letter headed paper.

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

RE: (Student Name and Year Group)

I am writing to inform you that (insert student name) has been marked late to school (insert number) times last half-term. Morning registration closes at (insert time) am. If a pupil arrives between (insert time) and (insert time), they will be marked as late. Pupil's arriving after (insert time) am and without a valid reason will be recorded as unauthorised late. If (insert student name) continues to arrive late to school, not only will the key information and learning be missed but unauthorised absences may result in a referral to the Local Authority.

If (insert student name) has a genuine reason for lateness e.g. medical appointments, please ensure that the School Office is notified by phone, email or in writing prior to the appointment. Please be aware traffic, taking siblings to school etc. are not valid reasons for a pupil to arrive late to school.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential in order for pupils to maximise the opportunities available to them and to reduce the distraction of arriving late. The school and I are here to support (insert student name) and you, but I must remind you that responsibility for ensuring a regular and sustained attendance is that of the parent/guardian.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me on (insert telephone number) or by email (insert email).

Yours sincerely,

(insert name of sender/title)

(insert name of school)

Letter 2 Punctuality with unauthorised late

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

RE: (Student Name and Year Group)

I am writing to inform you that (insert student name) has been marked late to school (insert number) times last half-term, includes (insert number) arrivals after the register closes resulting in an unauthorised absence being recorded. Morning registration closes at (insert time) am. If a pupil arrives between (insert time) and (insert time), they will be marked as late. Pupil's arriving after (insert time) am and without a valid reason will be recorded as unauthorised late. If (insert student name) continues to arrive late to school not only will the key information and learning be missed but unauthorised absences may result in a referral to the Local Authority.

If (insert student name) has a genuine reason for lateness e.g. medical appointments, please ensure that the School Office is notified by phone, email or in writing prior to the appointment. Please be aware traffic, taking siblings to school etc. are not valid reasons for a pupil to arrive late to school.

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential in order for pupils to maximise the opportunities available to them and to reduce the distraction of arriving late. The school and I are here to support (insert student name) and you, but I must remind you that responsibility for ensuring a regular and sustained attendance is that of the parent/guardian.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact me on (insert telephone number), or by email (insert email).

Yours sincerely,

(insert name of sender/title)

(insert name of school)

Appendix 3 Letters regarding Planned Absence

Letter Absence Authorised This template MUST be submitted on school letter headed paper.

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

(ideally a separate letter addressed to each parent)

RE: (Student Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your correspondence dated (insert date), requesting permission for (insert student name) to be absent from school for (insert no. of days) days, (insert dates from-to).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having carefully considered your application, and the exceptional circumstances you have cited, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance.

Therefore, if the absences occur, they will be authorised. Please note authorised absence has been agreed for (insert no. of days) (insert inclusive to and from dates) only, as requested.

Please note any absences that occur outside of the specified agreed dates will be reviewed and may be marked as unauthorised in line with government guidance.

Our key priority is to ensure that (insert student name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/hers) full potential whilst at (insert name of the school). For future leave, I hope you are able to support the expectations in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be

taken during the 13 weeks of school holidays, wherever possible, apart from in extremely exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (insert student name) attendance for this academic year.

Yours sincerely,

(insert name of sender/title)

(insert name of school)

Letter Absence Unauthorised

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)

(ideally a separate letter addressed to each parent)

RE: (Student Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your correspondence dated (insert date), requesting permission for (insert student name) to be absent from school for (insert no. of days) days, (insert dates from-to).

In line with Government and school policy, parents are requested not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that pupils will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having carefully considered your request, the purpose and circumstances of the request alongside the impact this absence will have on (insert student name) attainment the request cannot be authorised.

Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £80 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £160 each if not paid within 21 days. If no payment is received within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection, you are able to support this decision. Local Authority and Government

policy state that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, or anything mentioned in this letter, please contact the school office on (insert contact telephone number).

Yours sincerely,

(Headteacher) – The Headteacher MUST sign this letter
(insert name of school)

Letter No Request for Absence

Date: (insert)

Address: (insert)

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer)
(ideally a separate letter addressed to each parent)

RE: (Student Name and Date of Birth)

Further to our conversation on (insert date), thank you for confirming that (insert student name) was absent from school for (insert number of days, and dates of absence), for the purpose of a holiday. All requests for term-time leave should be made in writing, in accordance with the school policy and before the event takes place.

In line with Government and school policy, parents are requested not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, I must advise you that these dates will be recorded as unauthorised.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £80 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £160 each if not paid within 21 days. If no payment is received within 28 days, this may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential. Local Authority and Government policy state that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

(Headteacher) – The Headteacher MUST sign this letter
(insert name of school)

School responses to absence

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence-based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact for individuals. We are aware that at times absence is inevitable or unavoidable, each individual case below 90% will be discussed and evaluated in order to ensure that decision making is fair and consistent.

97% is average attendance for a primary aged pupil.

90% attendance or below is Persistent Absentee and this information is held at a local and national level at the end of each academic year.

Attendance Threshold Action

Thresholds	Actions at each threshold:
>90%	Registers are checked daily to identify absentees. If a child is absent and no reason has been provided by their parent/carer, the school office will make a telephone call home to the parent/carer asking them to contact school that day, to explain the reason for absence. On each day of absence, parents must inform the school office of the reason before 11am. Where no reason is given or contact cannot be made, this is referred to the Attendance Champion or Head teacher.
<90%	Pupils deteriorating to 90% (equivalent to one session missed per week, persistent absence threshold) · The office staff will make first day calls as above. · School Attendance Champion/ Headteacher will monitor the attendance of those pupil's whose attendance is less than 90%. · Welfare checks may be made by 2 members of staff if deemed appropriate. · A standard letter will be sent to parents pointing out the deterioration in attendance levels and will be reminded of the school's target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning. · Continue to monitor weekly attendance. · Should attendance continue to be an issue, then it may be necessary to refer to Worcestershire Children First Education Welfare office. · Parents may be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the child's attendance and/or punctuality and the detrimental effect on learning with support offered. Below 90% Absence will no longer be authorised without a medical note unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents may be invited to an Attendance Panel meeting and targets or a plan will be put in place. Where attendance continues to deteriorate, this may lead to a fixed penalty fine or prosecution. Early Years - The expectation for children in early years is the same as that of all other years in school. Children in Pre-School who fall below 75% may have their funding for their place removed from the Local Authority and will either have to leave or parents fund the place.