



LEARNER ATTENDANCE POLICY

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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 learner 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 learners 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 \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) 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 learner's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
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3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body 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 learners
- 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 parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Donna Hatcher and can be contacted via donna.hatcher@alpschools.org or 02475 901051 (ext. 1157).

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for supporting intervention and initiative set by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance. This may include:

- Making elfare phone calls
- Conducting home visits
- Writing letters advising of a child's attendance

3.5 School admin team

School admin team will:

- Be responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes on the same day.
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the class teacher, curriculum manager or senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Check the school voicemail system to see if there have been any reports of absence and inform classroom staff

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8am 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
- Where appointments lead to learner absence, evidence must be provided to the school admin team

3.7 Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all learners 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 learner 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 learner is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a learner 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.

Learners must arrive in school by 9:15am on each school day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am or as soon as practically possible by leaving a voicemail on the school answerphone (02475 901051 option 1, option 1) (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 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 parents/carers 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 learner's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This request must be put in writing to the head teacher at least 5 school days in advance of the required absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The learner's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

There can be a number of factors outside the learner's or parent's control which contribute to lateness. If a learner arrives after 9:30am, the learner will be marked as late, using the appropriate code, where this is not part of their agreed timetable with the local authority, which is done only in exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality is monitored on a termly basis by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head Teacher.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- A senior leader, or a class teacher nominated by the senior leader, call the learner'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 learner's emergency contacts, the school may contact other professionals who support the family or, in extreme cases, 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer from local authority.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels on a half-termly basis.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as where all reasonable measures have been taken to ensure the absence does not occur.

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 and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. 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 learner's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller learners 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 learner is attending educational provision
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Strategies for promoting attendance include:

- Celebrating 100% through certificates and head teacher pencil awards
- Postcards home

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual learner level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Learner-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 learners or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these learners 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 learners 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 learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner 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 parents/carers of learners 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
- Closely monitor, send letters and arrange meeting to target persistent and severe absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Bradley Rowley, Head Teacher. 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 and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Learner is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Learner 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	Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Learner is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Learner is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Learner 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	Learner is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment

J1	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Learner is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Learner is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Learner 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	Learner is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Learner 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	Learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of school premises closed	Learner 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 learner absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Learner is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Learner'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	Learner 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	Learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective learner not on admission register	Learner 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