



# 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 pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

### 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 pupils
- › 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 (Attendance Lead) 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
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sebastien Descrettes, who can be contacted via telephone: 0208 883 0608 and email: [office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk)

In Working Together to Improve School Attendance, the Attendance Lead is referred to as The Senior Attendance Champion.

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › 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 attendance officer is Alex Sapirstein, who can be contacted via telephone: 0208 883 0608 and email: [office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:office@coldfall.haringey.sch.uk)

### 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 by 9:00 and then by 13:35 (N,R,Y1 & Y2), 13:05 (Y3 & Y5) and 14:05 (Y4 & Y6)

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- 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 Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. **The school day starts at 8:55 AM.** The school bell is rung 2 minutes before this to allow children time to get to their classrooms. School finishes each day at **3:30 PM**
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00 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 one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

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

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00 and will be kept open until 9:30. The register for the second session will be taken between 13:00 and 2:05 and will be kept open until 2:30.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office and leaving a voicemail by following automated instructions, by speaking to a member of office staff in person, by emailing the school office or by filling out the online form on the school website. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, for example if a child tells a member of staff that they have been on holiday.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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 pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers must inform the office with the date and time of any medical or dental appointment.

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

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

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

If a child has ongoing punctuality issues:

- We will monitor patterns, make contact with parents and offer suitable support where needed

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the family at home or may contact the police if we feel that there is a significant safeguarding concern.

- › 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 five 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

#### 4.6 Non returnees

Where a child does not return to school after 10 days after a school holiday, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

#### 4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly via parents' evenings and the end of year report.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

In the majority of cases, exceptional circumstances will be deemed to be emergency situations. Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Pilgrimages are not included as an example of religious observance
- › Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- › The death or terminal illness of an immediate relative
- › The wedding or funeral of a close family member (immediate family plus grandparents, aunts, uncles, first cousins.)
- › Respite care of a looked after child
- › A housing crisis which prevents attendance
- › Participating in sporting events or performing arts competitions at a national or significantly high level

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the attendance team will seek a legal sanction.

### Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

If 10 sessions unauthorised absence in 10 weeks is recorded. **(Stage 1)**

#### 1. The school will decide whether to issue a FPN

- Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If after issuing a FPN, attendance does still not improve **(Stage 2)**

#### 2. The school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution.

- Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

A penalty notice of £120 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

### Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

First and foremost, good attendance is encouraged by our dedication to make school a safe and enjoyable place for all. School staff work hard to create a space where children want to attend school every day by ensuring: safe playtimes, an engaging curriculum and warm relationships.

Good attendance is celebrated, and the benefits of good attendance are explained. We celebrate good attendance by:

- Recognising the best attending class per year group each week and rewarding with a week's ownership of an attendance teddy. (Children who have significant health problems will not be included in the figures.)
- Giving certificates to children who have had exceptional attendance (98% and above) at the end of the academic year.
- 100% attendance badges given at the end of the academic year. (We do not count authorised absences for religious observance when calculating these figures)
- Letters home from the Headteacher when attendance has been significantly improved.

We will regularly include information about the importance of good attendance in our school newsletter and emails.

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- 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 pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide termly attendance updates and reports to the governing body.

### 7.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Make contact via letter, phone or email and discuss any potential barriers to good attendance
- Hold regular, face-to-face, meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, for example the Education Welfare Officer
- Ask permission to speak to relevant medical professionals, whereby doing so could remove barriers to a child attending school
- Make referrals to Early Help, where appropriate and wanted, to remove any barriers to good attendance that may exist.

The school is committed to preventing children from becoming persistently absent and will adhere to the following procedure, as recommended by the local authority.

- If a child's attendance is equal to or lower than 93% for the year, or if a child has three or more unauthorized absences, then a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform them of the fact. The child's attendance will then be monitored.
- An attendance review will be held two weeks after the letter has been sent. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be contacted and invited in for a meeting to see if any assistance to removing barriers to attendance can be removed.
- A second review will be held two weeks later. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be contacted and invited in for a meeting with our Educational Welfare Officer.
- A third review will be held two weeks later. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Attendance Lead. 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.

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed

- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register