



## Attendance Policy

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| <b>Policy:</b>              | Attendance Policy |
| <b>Date implemented:</b>    | September 2023    |
| <b>Date of review:</b>      | September 2023    |
| <b>Date of next review:</b> | September 2026    |
| <b>Lead professional:</b>   | Lucy Harper       |
| <b>Status:</b>              | Non-statutory     |

## 1. Aim of the Policy

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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB 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 Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The Head of School**

The Head of School 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 or Staff Manager 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 pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lucy Harper and can be contacted via [head@salterlee.polarismat.org.uk](mailto:head@salterlee.polarismat.org.uk)

### **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 Head of School or designated senior leader when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is Lucy Harper and can be contacted via [head@salterlee.polarismat.org.uk](mailto:head@salterlee.polarismat.org.uk)

### **3.5 Class teachers/form tutors**

Primary Schools: Class Teachers

Secondary Schools: Class Teachers and Form Teachers

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at a predetermined designated time on the same day.

### **3.6 School admin/office staff**

School admin/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 Pastoral Team 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 on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45 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.

### **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 at school by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50 and will be kept open until 1.00.

#### **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 as soon as practically possible by calling the school pupil absence line (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 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 with 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.

To attain authorization parents must give at least 48 hours' notice. The request must be made in writing (email) or made in person at the school reception. The request must be made by the person recorded by the school as having parental responsibility.

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 punctuality is an on-going / persistent issue, parents will be contacted by the school to address the issue and to encourage them to work in partnership with the school to improve the pupil's punctuality.

#### **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 contact the police and/or other external agencies as required.

- 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.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via their termly reports.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event that is life changing for the pupil.

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 six weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school reception. The Head of School 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 pupil'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 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

## **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head of School, local authority officer or the police.

- The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school celebrates strong pupil attendance to school. Rewards policies and procedures are focused upon rewarding pupils with strong attendance. Strong attendance is celebrated by the school through assemblies, class and/or form time celebrations and events.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The school monitors attendance using best practice guidance from the DfE and EEF. The approach is multi-faceted (different levels of monitoring led by different tiers of staff). This approach ensures that pupils who are at risk of poor attendance are identified early, and tried and tested sequential approaches of support and challenge are put in place as soon as possible. The school level analysis is by pupil; daily, weekly, and half termly. Trust leaders monitor school attendance by year group monthly and the LGBs monitor pupil attendance by year group termly. Finally, the Trust Board monitors attendance by school in a report from the CEO every term.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

To reflect the rigor stated in section 7, the school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether 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 via the system highlighted in section 7.

### **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/form tutors, 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.

### 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
- Hold regular 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

### 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum will be reviewed at a governance level every 3 years by the Head of School. At every review, the policy will be approved by the LGB.

### 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.

| Code | Definition   | Scenario                                   |
|------|--------------|--|
| /    | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration   |
| \    | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L    | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has     |



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

| <b>Code</b>               | <b>Definition</b>           | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| <b>C</b>                  | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| <b>E</b>                  | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| <b>H</b>                  | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>                  | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |
| <b>M</b>                  | Medical/dental appointment  | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |