

Attendance Policy (Students)

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| **Policy holder:** | R Sharpe: Deputy Headteacher |
| **To be reviewed by policy holder:** | Every 4 years |
| **Last reviewed by Community & Ethos Committee:** | Summer 2021 |
| **Next review by Community & Ethos Committee:** | Summer 2025 |

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This policy was originally developed in June 2019 with the Penair Partners School group to ensure a common approach across our schools. The schools are:

Archbishop Benson C of E Primary School

Devoran School

Penair School

St Mary’s C of E School

# 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). 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](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made) (and [2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/regulation/2/made), [2011](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made), [2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made), [2016](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html) amendments)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

There is a link governor from the Community and Ethos Committee whose role it is to monitor pupil attendance.

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
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

* Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
* Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
* Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
* Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
* Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Form Tutors/Class Teachers

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This also applies to registering pupils for all lessons during the school day.

3.5 School Administrative staff

School administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

# 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 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 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.05pm and will be kept open until 12.25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents should ring the school and leave a message on the school answerphone to report your child’s absence or email the relevant form tutor with reasons for the unplanned absence.

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

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.

Notice should be given via email, in person or via telephone as per the unplanned absence.

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. It is expected that children would return to school after the appointment wherever possible.

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

Should a pupil regularly arrive late to school then staff from the Pastoral team will investigate the matter further and liaise with the pupil and parent. There is a school sanction of 5 consecutive lates resulting in an after school detention.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by the form tutor/Student Welfare Officer when no contact has been made by the parent/carer
* Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not
* Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are kept up-to-date on their child’s attendance through the reporting process for each year group through the course of the year and annually in the written 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 pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher’s discretion.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ as follows:

* If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
* Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
* The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
* Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
* Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states ‘’on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs’’;
* To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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
* 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
* Flexi-schooling requests

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Through the monitoring of pupil attendance and identifying persistent absenteeism, form tutors, Student Welfare Officers and Personal Development leaders will communicate their concerns to parents/carers by phone, e-mail, meetings with pupils/parents/carers and letter. Closer monitoring will then take place to help secure improved attendance.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

* The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
* One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
* Where an excluded 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.

**Should a parent choose to take their child out of school during term time then they should expect a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent per child to be levied on them via the Local Authority**. **This information is stated on the Application for Leave of Absence’ pro forma that must be completed by parents who request a leave of absence for their child(ren) during term time.**

**If attendance or punctuality is a concern we will:**

* Discuss the problem with the pupil to try and improve the situation. The school’s approach to bullying is of particular significance here. Where problems outside school are identified as having an impact on a student’s attendance, an appropriate level of multi-agency support will be developed.
* Inform the parent/guardian and include them in discussion about remedying the problem by way of offering support.
* Advocate prosecuting a parent/guardian after all other avenues have been pursued.

# 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The Personal Development Leader will award/recognise students with 100% attendance each term and/or academic year, with a certificate and Achievement points on ClassCharts (with consideration given to medical absence) whilst also recognising improving attendance. They will also present an award/reward to the Tutor Group with the highest % attendance termly. Letter to be sent to the tutor group from the Headteacher.

# 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis. Personal Development Leaders, Student Welfare Officers and form tutors also monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil’s absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If a pupil’s absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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.

For information on how the school collects and stores attendance data, please refer to the schools Privacy Notice.

**Senior Staff, Personal Development Leaders, Student Welfare Officers will monitor attendance by:**

* Keeping a “late list” of pupils who arrive after 8.35 am.
* Providing regular attendance print-outs and percentage data for each tutor/year group via the School Information Officer.

**The Personal Development Leader will:**

* Monitor attendance of their Year Group, particularly noting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Pupil Premium children
* Liaise with both the tutor and the Student Welfare Officer to investigate poor attendance and/or punctuality with the view to improving the situation.
* Meet with a pupil to investigate reasons for being late when the pupil has arrived late for 5 registrations in one half-term. The expectation is that parents will be contacted about this by the Form tutor and if the issue persists then by the Personal Development Leader.
* Ensure that annual registration certificates are produced so that parents can see their child’s accumulated attendance and punctuality. A certificate of this type is included with the annual report but can be requested at any time.

**The designated teacher for looked after children will as far as possible:**

* Ensure that any looked after child attends school regularly and achieves high educational standards.

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# 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once every 3 years by the Deputy Headteacher i/c Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Community and Ethos Committee on behalf of the full governing board.

**During the next three years we will:**

* Improve our monitoring system by reinforcing guidelines to students and parents and expanding our mentoring programme.
* Reinforce with parents the need to reduce the amount of holidays taken in term time owing to the impact on educational progress. Penair School will not authorise holidays taken during term time.
* Wherever possible, liaise with parents so that students’ routine appointments to doctors, dentists etc are arranged outside school hours.
* Attempt to improve attendance to a school target for 96% overall.
* Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support for parents, students and staff.
* Keep parents informed of their child’s attendance through first day contact (Keep Kids Safe text message facility, through letters of praise and concern and through individual attendance clinics when appropriate.
* Regularly inform Governors about attendance issues in reports to governors.
* Monitor this Policy every 3 years by the Headteacher and Full Governing Body via the Community and Ethos Committee. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

A range of strategies designed to tackle poor attendance is only a part of the school’s approach to this issue. Whole-school issues such as providing effective pastoral support and effective teaching and learning are recognised as having a direct impact upon attendance.

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

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** | | |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | 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) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | 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 |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |