

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Poor attendance disadvantages children.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

Children whose attendance is good will be rewarded regularly.

Improved attendance and time keeping will be recognised.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

AIMS

- To improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

Who is responsible for attendance issues in school?

- The School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues, who should work closely with the designated safeguarding lead where there are attendance concerns.
- Members of school staff both teaching and non-teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school. **See Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown of these roles and responsibilities.**
- Attendance matters are reviewed by the Principal and members of the Senior Leadership team.
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff should follow the school's or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead Handbook pathway on children missing from education is in Appendix 2. This provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns.

The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly. Schools use the Solihull Multi-agency Thresholds Criteria (www.solgrid.org.uk/safeguarding) which is summarised in [Appendix 3](#) to identify the level of concern and provide the appropriate level of support.

PROCEDURES

Registers

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Heart of England School: procedures for maintaining registers including the procedures for marking registers:

Procedure	Person responsible
1. Registers must be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session	
2. On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity.	
3. Pupils should only be marked present if they are in the room when the register is called.	
3. Spaces must not be left in the register	
4. School to add additional requirements about times, school procedures etc.	
5. School to add their procedures ensuring pupils do not go missing from school during the school day and what to do if this happens	

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Principal has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as

satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the Principal. [See The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – Reg 7(1)].

School has procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

Attendance registers may be kept manually or electronically.

School complies with and uses the DFE compulsory national attendance codes

Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Working in partnership with parents

Absence:

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

Illness:

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parental note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

However schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness

Scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Requests for absence (exceptional circumstances)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Please consult the 'Request for Absence Policy' for specific advice, and information regarding requests for absence.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (Appendix 4) and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term time should be regarded as exceptional. This was re enforced by the Isle of Wight Supreme Court Judgement dated April 2017 which confirmed that children are expected to attend school every day that it is open to them unless the reason for their absence is exceptional and unavoidable (e.g. illness). The Head teacher can decide to authorise an absence based on the evidence provided to them where they consider that the absence is unavoidable
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form available on the website. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Principal.

- Where the Principal is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator
- If the Principal deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer (Appendix 5).
- If the Principal deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent. The letter provided in this guidance (appendix 6) must be used.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team via the Student Attendance Officer for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Other reasons for absences:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time, notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.

The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Examples of authorised absence may include, days of religious observance, illness, and medical appointments.

Parents are advised to make appointments for dentist/doctor or optician outside of school hours where possible.

Parents can support regular school attendance by:

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 09:30am.

Poor attendance

Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance

All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance.

After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement the Education Enforcement Team will be informed where the child's attendance remains a concern.

School has in place a system for enabling returning pupils to catch up on learning and re-integrate within the school.

Persistent Absences

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level.

Good and excellent attendance

The school will reward good attendance and improved regularly through reward schemes and incentives.

ATTENDANCE PANELS

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel. An attendance panel is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify and barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.

An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present this may include anyone in school who is involved with your child for an example a learning mentor.

Data Analysis

Attendance data is submitted to the DFE, most schools use the management information systems via the school census. This data is published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. Analysis of data helps to identify the main causes of absence within the school and plan appropriate action to ensure all pupils attend school regularly.

- Attendance data is analysed to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Attendance data is analysed attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help identify areas of concern and attendance patterns.



SCHOOL ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Form to be returned to the school office with a minimum of two weeks notice

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised leave of absence and requests will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances.

Name of Student	Tutor Group
Date of birth	House
<p>Please detail below the exceptional circumstance why you are requesting to take your child out of school. You may be invited into school to discuss your request with the your child’s Pastoral Manager or a member of the Leadership Team (please attach your supporting evidence)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	
Address.....	
Leave of absence from date:..... to date	
Number of schools days that your child will be absent from school	
Signature	Date
Name of Parent/Carer	

Leave of absence which has not been agreed will be marked as unauthorised. These may be referred to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration which could result in a Penalty Notice.

For School Use:

Previous requests for leave of absence	Yes / No	Attendance %
Evidence provided for exceptional circumstance	Yes / No	
Arrange to meet with Parent/Carer	Yes / No	Date & time

Authorised **Unauthorised** **by Principal**