



Attendance Policy

The Law: Penalty Notices and Legal Action

*The Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) 444(1A) states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable-
[a] to his/her age, ability and aptitude and
[b] to any special needs he/she may have.
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
Failure to do so may result in legal action taken against the parent under the above legislation.*

In line with the evidence now published linking school attendance and pupil attainment, the school governors and staff, alongside the LA, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and acted on promptly.

We believe that there are times during a school career where pupils might be particularly disadvantaged through absence. For this reason we advise that pupils' continuity of learning is not disrupted during Standard Attainment Test year (Y6). In fact all times of examination are crucial to all pupils.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor or House Leader, any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that, in line with the school's Home/School Agreement, all parents/carers/persons that have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school
- contact the school by 10 am on the first day of the child's/children's absence and send a note on their return to school explaining the reason for absence.
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

We expect that school staff, in accordance with legal requirements, will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up on all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- encourage good attendance
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns

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- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service.

The primary responsibility for ensuring that children and young people attend school rests with their parents/carers. However promoting attendance and tackling absence is the responsibility of schools and agencies within the local authority. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

School attendance is subject to Education law and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Types of Absence

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised
2. Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised

Unauthorised absence

If leave of absence is taken without consultation and school authorisation, then the absence, by definition, is unauthorised. Absence is also unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school could then contact the Local Authority (LA) support services. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is made aware of any concerns regarding repeated absences.

The LA reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Frequent Absence

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parents/carers. The Head teacher (or nominated member of staff) will liaise with the schools allocated Education Welfare Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern.

Leave of absence

Parents should not take their children on holidays in term time – it can be disruptive to both the child's learning and the school. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holiday during these times.

Changes in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
State that leave of absence shall not be granted unless—

(a) an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and

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(b) the head teacher, or a person authorised by the head teacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application

The amendments made in 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents must complete a Term Time Absence Request form at least one month before the requested leave, whenever this is possible. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice will be issued to each parent for each child.

As at October 2015, the penalty is per parent per child and will be £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 & 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, where each parent may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine up to the maximum of £1,000. Costs may also be incurred.

If a child is absent:

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.

Parents or carers should ensure that if a child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school on the first morning of absence before 10:00 am by phone, email or in person. This should be followed up with a letter explaining his/her absence on the child's return to school. Parents/carers should keep the school informed if the child remains absent for more than one day.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, for example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Lateness

Registration is at 8:50 am daily and 2pm on Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday. On Thursday & Friday the afternoon register is taken at 2.55pm. Children who arrive after registration but before 9:20 will be marked as L (before the register's closed) in the register. Children arriving after 9:20 are entered as U (after the register's closed) which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The children must sign in the late arrival book at the pupil hatch. This is for both administrative and health and safety reasons. The school will monitor children who are persistently late and will talk to parents to address the situation, and ask for the support of the EWO if required.

Dates of ratification
Date of Review

October 2015
June 2017