

Attendance Policy

Date Published	January 2024
Version	
Approved Date	
Review Cycle	Annually
Review Date	January 2025

An academy within:



1. Purpose 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
- Building strong relationships with Early Help and other agencies to support good school attendance

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.

- The policy also draws upon the steps identified in the SAMP (School Attendance Matters Pathway) to support with responses to persistent and unauthorised absence.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

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

The link governor for attendance is Paula Williams.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of the policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring to the Local Authority for Fixed Penalty Notices when deemed appropriate following the SAMP.

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement including the promotion of good school attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Undertaking systematic, rigorous and informative attendance data monitoring
- Using data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Advising the headteacher when to refer to the Local Authority following the SAMP

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Identifying a planned approach of targeted intervention and support for pupils and families to aim to understand and address barriers to attendance involving Specialist Support (Kelford) and external professionals where appropriate
- Working with professionals within Early Help including the Attendance Lead for Rotherham Central (Lisa Marriott) and the Integrated Working Lead (Rebecca Green) including holding regular meetings and attending training and networking events.
- Referring cases to the attendance lead where support is required to tackle persistent absence
- Understanding and following the SAMP as deemed appropriate to target persistent and unauthorised absence.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Catherine Bentley and can be contacted via cbentley@nexusmat.org or 01709 512088.

3.4 The family Support Officer

The school family support officer is responsible for working with the senior attendance lead including:

- Monitoring attendance data and identifying patterns
- Identifying barriers by building relationships and working closely with families and Early Help professionals
- Providing targeted support for families including referrals to key services and by completing Early Help assessments where appropriate
- Promote good attendance and working relationships between families and school through communication and family focused support and events

The family support officer is Colette Gillott and can be contacted via email cgillott@nexusmat.org or 01709 512088

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 via the daily use of school MIS (Bromcom)

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3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Bromcom. Any absence is also recorded on cpoms to support senior leaders, DSL and family support officer to identify any concerns or patterns.
- Listen to the pupil absence line and mark attendance accordingly on school MIS (Bromcom).
- Transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral Team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Follow up non-attendance where no reason has been provided
- Report concerns regarding attendance following the school safeguarding policy and procedure

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the 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
- Provide evidence of medical appointments

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 unauthorised
- A reason for any absence
- 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 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

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 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school

Parents/carers can call and leave a voicemail on the pupil absence line and this will be picked up by the admin team and recorded appropriately on the school MIS (Bromcom). Alternatively, parents/carers can speak directly to a member of the school admin team.

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.

For medical absence, parents and carers can ring the school office to explain the absence. Parents and carers can also message on Class Dojo to explain a planned absence and attach a photo of a letter of appointment and this is then recorded on school MIS system (Bromcom).

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.

For a school holiday, parents/carers can request a 'Leave of absence form' from the school office. This will be sent home with their child. Once school receive the completed the form, the Head will consider the application and then a letter will be sent home stating whether it has been granted or refused. The requests will be logged in a request of absence folder and Bromcom marked appropriately.

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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

- A pupil who arrives late, after the register has closed at 9.45am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

Where patterns and concerns are identified through monitoring of attendance or through conversations with school staff. The attendance officer will contact the parent/carer to identify any barriers to attending school on time and work with parent/carer to improve punctuality and this will be monitored/reviewed for an appropriately identified period of time.

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. The administration member of staff to report the absence as a safeguarding concern if no response or reason by 11am
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a safe and welfare check by a member of school staff. If the pupil has a social worker, we would inform the relevant person.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Talk through the school reporting absence procedure with parents and carers and encourage them to follow this.
- 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
- Continue to make absence phone calls if no call is received from parents/carers on subsequent days
- If absence continues the school may escalate to MASH and the SAMP attendance lead to report the concern and seek guidance.

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.

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 four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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.

5.2 Approval for term-time absence

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 the local authority (following the SAMP) 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 year
- One-off instances of absence, 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 encourages and promotes good school attendance by

- Communicating our ethos and expectations to the school community including weekly newsletters to parents and carers
- Promoting good attendance and the outcomes to pupils and their parents and carers through the curriculum and school events.
- Promoting attendance campaigns and evidence-based approaches to tackle specific issues relating to school attendance.
- Keeping up to date with national and local issues impacting on school attendance and identifying strategies to support our pupils and their families
- The senior leader and family support officer attending Early Help and SAMP training events in order to develop knowledge, share approaches and make links with key professionals, agencies and individuals
- Recognising improvements in attendance through individual and school wide approaches

Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, fortnightly half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify when there are particular children or groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Develop a response to the patterns and trends identified

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 teacher 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 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
- Make contact with other agencies to request support
- Obtain permission from families to undertake an Early Help assessment to consider what support may be needed
- Make a safeguarding referral if children are at risk or there is potential risk of harm.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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	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

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

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