



*'Trying our best to be our best'*

*Service and Stewardship. Justice. Peace and Forgiveness  
Generosity. Thankfulness. Equality  
Love and Compassion*

# Attendance policy

**Approved by:**

**Date:** December 2019

**Last reviewed on:** 26.11.18

**Next review due by:** December 2020

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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
- 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](#) 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

## 3. School procedures

### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55 am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session (afternoon) will be taken at 1.15pm.

Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration. If a child arrives after 9.00am, the parent/carer should take their child to the school office to sign their child in and provide a written explanation for lateness.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

You can do this by contacting the school office via telephone, in person or a letter.

### **ILLNESS**

If a child is in school with a minor illness, parents should inform the school and send them with anything they need, for example tissues, cough medicine or medicine prescribed by the GP. We have a separate policy for this: 'Medicines and supporting pupils with medical conditions policy.' If your child requires medicine in school you will have to fill in a simple form to say that you give your permission for staff to administer that medicine to your child. Staff will always do this in pairs and check that it is administered accordingly. Should you wish to call in at lunchtime to do this yourself, you may.

If a child is suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea, we would always ask for them to be collected as soon as possible and to remain at home for the next 48 hours from the last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea. If your child has a contagious condition such as chicken pox or hand foot and mouth disease they may not return to school until they are no longer contagious. This is recorded as an authorised absence.

Should the symptoms persist longer than 3 days, it may be advisable to seek medical advice by your GP. If there is reason for the school to doubt that your child is ill, medical evidence may be requested.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

If your child needs to attend a medical or dentist appointment, a form (available from the school office) must be submitted to the school office prior to the appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Teachers will complete registers digitally in accordance with the codes set out in Integrus using the Information Management Systems.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence for a half day. This may mean that you could face the possibility of legal action if the problem persists.

Letters will be sent to parents where lateness is an issue. These letters will be sent at the same time as the

analysis for main attendance is conducted-each October, January and April.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Fixed Penalty Warnings and Fines will be requested for 'Late Attendance' as well as for absence.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Registers will be inspected each day in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance issues are identified at an early stage.

Should no explanation be received from the child's parent/ carer, the administrator will endeavor to make contact by 10.00am.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence-only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided (should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence, the school will record such absence as unauthorised).

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Pupil attendance is communicated to all parents in November, February and July via Parents evening, letters and the annual school report. This uses a traffic light system for parents to see how attendance is judged in line with school and national expectations.

An attendance record will be printed off monthly for the Headteacher to check. Any emerging issues will be discussed with parents informally. An initial letter will be sent out to parents/carers whose children's attendance falls below 96% from the previous year in September. A further check and letter will be sent out in January and again in April. Letters are amended when the attendance thresholds fall below 96%, 90% and 85%.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

#### **WHEN A CHILD CAN MISS SCHOOL:**

You can only allow your child to miss school if either:

- Your child is too ill to go to school; [for example, has a temperature, has vomited, has diarrhoea or a contagious illness or rash. For vomiting and diarrhoea, we ask that your child is not in school for 48 hours.](#)
- You have advance permission from the school.

There is [extra support available](#) if your child cannot go to school for long periods because of a health problem.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be a genuine 'exceptional circumstances'. For example an exceptional family circumstance, which may be a funeral of a close family member.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

If parents/carers feel there is a genuine 'exceptional circumstance' which will mean their child will be absent from school, a form (available from the school office) must be submitted to the Headteacher and a reply will be given within 3 days with a decision.

## **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

**Since September 2017, the local authority issued all schools in Lincolnshire with a letter to send to each parent of every child in school (see appendix 1).**

**This letter states that holidays in term time that are unauthorised will be listed for a fine - a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

**This letter constitutes a Fixed Penalty Warning letter and no other warning letter will be issued.**

**A Fixed Penalty Notice will be requested when the child returns to school, in every case where permission was not granted.**

**This fine will be issued towards each parent who has the legal responsibility of ensuring the child is in school, this can include step parents and parents who do not live at the same address as the child.**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

It is essential that parents/carers apply for permission to take their child out of school **14 school days** before they intend to go. If no request made 14 days before, then the request will automatically be refused.

Requests that are refused are done so after consideration for each individual situation and we ask families to bear in mind how disruptive this is to their child's learning. The areas of learning that they miss cannot be taught again to them nor can staff provide work for them whilst they are away.

All applications for leave will be declined unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Applications are generally always refused in the following cases:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible;
- Immediately before and during assessment periods eg SATs testing weeks;
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence;
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (96%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

If a family is told that their request to take a child out of school in term time is not authorised, it will be marked unauthorised in the register.

### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

To avoid any type of action, the school will always try to see what they can do first. This may be:

- Speak to the parent/carer first, then where appropriate, to the child;
- Address any problems in school;
- Arrange to meet regularly if the child is not happy or has had an ongoing medical need;
- Arrange for the child to see a member of staff about pastoral needs, for a chance to talk and explore ways to help;
- If there are problems regarding a parent's employment and getting the child to school, look at what else can be done;
- If there are other family issues that prevent a child being in school, refer for further family support if agreed to the need, via the Early Help Assessment form, that looks at 'What are we worried about?' 'What is going well?' 'What needs to happen?' Together the family and school can often identify a solution to a problem and resolve any obstacles.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance: the Headteacher and Class Teachers will communicate regularly with parents/carers on attendance matters; appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to all children; clear attendance information will be included in the Home School Partnership as well as the Pupil Profile.

100% attendance awards will be awarded to pupils each year.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence becomes less than 96% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, 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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The Headteacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data to inform next steps. Any further meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow up actions for both the school and the parents.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 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.

The Headteacher will report attendance information to the Governing Body via the Headteacher's Report to Governors three times per year. The link Governor for attendance is Allison Jackson.

## 7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## 7.3 The attendance officer (Headteacher)

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Decides when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## 7.4 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.

## 7.5 Office staff and administrators

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

# 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

# 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)**

Poor school attendance can sometimes be linked to other issues such as neglect, substance misuse, crime, trafficking, or sexual exploitation. We assess all cases of persistent absence as at risk of any of these possibilities and in some cases have to refer to the Local Safeguarding Board with a Child Protection concern.

In conjunction with the **Statutory Guidance for Children Missing Education, 2016, DfE**. We are required to notify the Children Missing Education Team, at the local authority, if a child is absent for 5 days or more and there has been no contact with parent/carers. Also, should a child who has been away on a notified absence not return for a further 10 days, they too will be referred to the CME team and could be removed from the roll of the school. See (Guidance as in documents listed along with the Lincolnshire County Council policy on Children Missing Education, 2014)

We expect all children to have full attendance, however we do understand that some children in certain circumstances are not able to achieve this. We work closely with our Traveller families and their children and refer to the report, **Improving the Outcomes for: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children, Final Report**, in order to be supportive of their culture and values whilst maintaining their children's education. In order to offer an equal and equitable provision for our Traveller children, we work closely with their parents and wider community and make reasonable adjustments for them to be able to achieve their best whilst they are with

us. We will also access the Ethnic Minority Teaching and Education Team, (EMTET) for additional support for our Traveller children if necessary.

Should we have any child who is absent for a prolonged period of time due to illness or medical treatment, then we will always liaise with parents to support their child's learning needs and, if necessary, refer to the Pilgrim Hospital Outreach School for additional home tuition. A re-integration package of care and a phased return would be in place and absence would be recorded as authorised and possibly dual registered if Home Tuition is required.



## 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<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

## Appendix 2:

Copy of letter from the Headteacher on behalf of the local authority:

### Fixed Penalty Notice warning

Date

Address

Dear Mr ..... (one letter to each parent)

Dear Mrs .....

Childs Name .....

DOB .....

I am writing to inform you that The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 has been amended and came into force from the 1st September 2013. The amendments have removed reference to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. (Therefore the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to 10 days authorised holiday/absence has now ceased).

As a result, a request for leave of absence will not be granted for the purpose of a holiday **unless deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances'**.

If you wish to seek approval for any request of absence for your child(ren) from School, then you must apply in writing to the Headteacher, at least four weeks in advance of the requested absence. You should only then remove your child(ren) if the absence has been authorised, and notified to you in writing by the School. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the Headteacher who will consider each case upon its merits.

If you then choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is **not** deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the School, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and a [Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty may result in further legal action being taken against you.](#)

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**

- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for £60.00 or £120.00.**

If you have any concerns regarding this please contact: ....., we appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher