



Attendance of Pupils Policy

September 2024

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the management of pupil attendance in relation to Withinfields Primary School.

2. Rationale

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of guidance which will secure high levels of attendance for all our pupils. High attendance at school is essential for pupils to make the most of their school experience and achieve their potential including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Safeguarding as well as educational concerns must be considered alongside school attendance. Poor attendance not only hinders educational progress but may place some children at risk. It is therefore important that we strive to achieve high levels of attendance for all our pupils so that they are happy, safe and successful.

The school follows the guidance provided by the Department for Education namely Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024) as well as the statutory guidance documents on children missing education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, education for children with health needs who cannot attend school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3. Objectives and principles

Through this policy the school aims to:

- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil
- Communicate these expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents so that they can be easily understood
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture and ethos that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment where children feel safe, welcome and supported and are keen to make progress in all aspects of school life
- Ensure admission and attendance registers are completed accurately and effective procedures are in place to follow up absence and prevent further absence
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or groups of pupils that require support with their attendance and put appropriate strategies in place at the earliest possible opportunity
- Support and encourage parents to fulfil their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly by building strong relationships with families, understanding barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Develop effective working relationships with the local authority and local partners to overcome barriers to attendance

4. Approaches

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

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 Senior Leadership Team (including the Parent Liaison Officer) are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and championing good attendance and punctuality
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and staff
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Communicating with parents and families about poor attendance and punctuality
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and punctuality identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office at the start of every school session
- Promoting good standards of attendance and punctuality
- Communicating the importance of attendance and punctuality to parents
- Identifying patterns of absence and/or individual pupils causing concern and notify the SLT

Admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct codes
- Follow up any absence when school has not been notified (see first day calling procedures)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on each day that they are absent
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

4.2 Attendance Registers

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. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. See appendix 1.

4.3 Timings within the school day

Children are classed as present for the morning session if they are present for the register being taken at 8.40am.

Children are classed as present for the afternoon session if they are present for the register being taken at 12.45pm for EYFS and KS1 children, 12.55pm for Y3/4 children and 1.05pm for Y5/6 children.

Registers are kept open for 20 minutes. Any child arriving during this time will be marked as L in the register.

The school day ends for all children except Nursery at 3.10pm. Nursery sessions end at 3pm. Reception children can be collected from 3pm to ease the collection of siblings from other classes.

4.4 Requesting leave of absence

Parents and carers should contact the school to inform them of any planned leave of absence e.g. medical or dental appointments, holidays, regulated performance with a licence. This should be via email to the head or Parent Liaison Officer.

4.5 Informing of unexpected absence

Parents and carers should inform the school every day when their child is not in school for an unexpected absence e.g. due to illness. Contact can be made via the telephone, ClassDojo message to the admin account, email to the School admin email address or through text message. The reason for absence should be given along with the child's name and class.

4.6 Parent Liaison Officer role

The Parent Liaison Officers are able to offer support to families whose attendance is causing concern. They regularly monitor attendance and punctuality and send letters to parents when a concern is noticed. They may also telephone or speak to the parent in person. They are able to refer to Early Help or other agencies where parents feel this may be helpful to improve their child's attendance.

4.7 First Day Calling procedures

Once the registers have been taken, the Parent Liaison Officer, or another administrator in the event of their absence, list all children that are recorded as N in the registers. All forms of communication are checked for contact from parents and carers and recorded accordingly. For any child that the school have not received contact from to explain the absence, the Parent Liaison Officer will use all communication means to try to get in touch with the parent. If contact with a parent/carer has not been received by 9.30am, the other contacts for the children will be used to aim to ascertain if anyone has heard from the family that morning. If by 10am, contact with the parent/carer or child have not been confirmed, a home visit will take place to see if the family can be found. If this does not lead to contact with the child or parent, a welfare check will be requested by the police.

4.8 Promoting and Incentivising positive attendance

Reward systems are utilised to promote positive attendance. These may involve class averages to encourage whole classes to attend regularly with whole class rewards. Individual reward charts may also be used in consultation with parents and carers to encourage children whose attendance needs to be improved. Attendance is also provided as part of the school's information as part of Child Protection and Child in Need plans so that appropriate targets can be set if attendance needs to improve.

Where a year group or particular group is analysed as having poorer attendance, specific strategies are devised which are pertinent to the group of children and likely to incentivise attendance.

4.9 Attendance which causes concern, Persistent absence or Severe absence

Attendance is monitored at least half termly to identify children who are likely to be a persistent absentee or severe absentee. If a child's absence is close to or higher than 10%, they will be considered at risk of persistent absence and similarly if it is close to or higher than 50%, they will be considered at risk of severe absence.

The following steps will be taken to improve attendance at any point that it starts to cause concern.

Monitor

We will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

We will aim to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond.

Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

4.10 Penalty notices. Notices to improve and other action

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When we become aware that the threshold has been met, we are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
 - If yes, we would continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.

- If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The head will monitor the school's attendance termly with the Education Welfare Officer and Parent Liaison Officer. Reports will be provided to governors as part of the Head teacher's report so that average attendance and attendance for different groups can be monitored.

6. Review

The policy will be formally reviewed in September 2028 if not deemed necessary before.

Appendix 1 - Attendance Register codes

Further information about these codes can be found in [Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#)

Code	Reason	How classified for statistical purpose
/\	Present	Attending
L	Late before the register is closed	Attending
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Attending an approved educational activity
V	Attending an education visit or trip	Attending an approved educational activity
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending an approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience	Attending an approved educational activity
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Attending an approved educational activity
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not a possible attendance
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another school	Not a possible attendance
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	Authorised absence
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance

Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Not collected
#	Planned whole school closure	Not collected