

# Attendance Policy

Maple Ridge School



**Approved by:** Headteacher

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## 1. Aims

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
- Promoting positive support systems and advocating multi-agency approaches to improve attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) document 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing body

The governing body 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

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance (AHTs)

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across their phase team
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to support with, discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention plans in partnership with parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- › Working with local authority attendance officers to tackle persistent absence

### 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 at 9:30am and 1:15pm.

Class teachers should offer support and advice to parents where there are attendance issues and parents are seeking support. If further support is needed, class teachers can seek advice and support from our SHIP Coordinator or their team Assistant Headteacher.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Take messages from parents/carers who are seeking support with attendance issues and pass these on to class teachers to follow up in the first instance
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the phase team Assistant Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of 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

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 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 not
- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

School starts at 9am. Pupils must arrive in school by 9:15am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:15am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:55pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

## **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 office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 requests and receives permission in advance and the school has authorised the absence on an exceptional absence request form.

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.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues are identified through monitoring the register as well as informal monitoring of arrival times during transport duties.

## **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. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may attend the pupil's home to carry out a welfare check or contact children's services if there are concerns
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a local authority attendance officer and/or referral to children's services

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. Attendance levels will be recorded in the record of an annual review of a child's EHCP and in their annual report. It will also be shared at parents' evenings. For children who have attendance levels of 90% or below, parents/carers will receive more regular updates on their child's attendance level in order to support awareness and partnership working to achieve improved attendance.

## 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events that are rare, significant and unavoidable; an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

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 4 weeks before the absence, using an exceptional leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we recognise that our children's SEND can sometimes impact on their attendance. Where this is the case, we would encourage parents to let us know so that we can help. Class teams all include staff who will have experienced similar circumstances with other children, and our team will be very willing to support with motivators and practical strategies that could help your child. Common causes of concern for parents include sleep, diet, toileting and behaviour and our SHIP service runs information and advice sessions in relation to all of these aspects of need on a rolling programme. It is also possible for parents to telephone and ask to speak to our SHIP Coordinator to seek advice and sometimes it is identified that more support from this service would be of benefit. Further information about this support is available on our website or from the school office. Parents can also talk to their child's teacher if they think they may need more specialist help.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 and local average, and share this with the governing body.

### 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 teachers, 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
- investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

- To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents. Assistant Headteachers will have contact with families and meet with them to discuss and support preventing absence becoming persistent
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support such as to the Inclusion Support Service (ISS) | Hampshire County Council ([hants.gov.uk](http://hants.gov.uk))

## 8. Legal Sanctions

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer 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 rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays, taken in term time without permission

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution via the Magistrates' Court. Parents found guilty of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

## 9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and, as a minimum, every two years by the headteacher.



## Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity approved by the school. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity.	Examples of nature of activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) Attending taster days at college</li> <li>• 2) Attending courses at college</li> <li>• 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>K</b>	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority Schools must also record the nature of the provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending courses at college</li> <li>• Attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	An educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff
<b>W</b>	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	<p>Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances</p> <p>Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p>	<p>Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.</p> <p>Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.</p>
<b>C1</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
<b>C2</b>	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
<b>M</b>	Medical appointment	Attending a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This is linked to transport not other access arrangements
<b>Y1</b>	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
<b>Y3</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Adverse weather
<b>Y5</b>	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	In police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.
<b>Y6</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	

<b>Y7</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not granted by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	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>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied with the reason given
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	A pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Administrative Codes</b>		
<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