



Attendance policy

Person responsible:	Becky McGuire	
Approved by:	Water Hall Academy Improvement Board (AIB)	Date:
Last reviewed on:	November 2021	
Next review due by:	November 2022	

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures	4
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	6
6. Attendance monitoring	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	7
9. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes	8

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

We will also 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.

Water Hall Primary School defines good attendance as follows - Children should attend school every day it is open for learning.

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](#) and children missing in education. 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](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

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 8:50 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 am and will be kept open until 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm

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 8:50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents will need to ring the school office on the first morning of absence and every morning of absence of the children, stating Name, class, reason for absence and expected return date.

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.

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.

Parents will inform the school in advance of the appointment where possible, showing an appointment letter / card. A time of collection will be agreed and discussion around the length of absence required.

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

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. This will result in an unauthorised absence.

You will be asked to sign your child in, stating the reason for the lateness. This will be logged and monitored by the pastoral team, for improvement. If there is no improvement, you will be invited into school to meet with the Headteacher and/or the Family Support Manager.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

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. This may include

Home visits announced or unannounced

Every effort will be made to speak to the parent or carer to ensure the child is safe and well, in the event that school have had no contact or we are unable to make contact we will seek advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, or in some cases we may seek support from Thames Valley Police and ask for a Welfare call to be made on behalf of the school.

School has a duty of care to ensure the safety of each child that attends.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance will be discussed with parents via parents evenings/termly reports. Attendance information is passed on to new schools when a child moves, including secondary schools

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

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

Unauthorised absence include

- Truancy
- Staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having hair cut
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone
- Birthdays.
- Head Lice
- Feeling tired

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Holidays in term time will NOT be authorised. There will be a Fixed Penalty Notice issued for each child at £60 per parent.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The fine can be issued after a total of 10 unauthorised absences in a twelve week period. The absence is passed to the Local Authority for their consideration to issue.

If issued with a fixed penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This is per child, per parent. 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
- 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.

Please note that a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued after 20 sessions unauthorised within a 12 week period.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We expect full attendance from all of our children. Where this is not possible, please notify us of all absences on the first day with a reason for the absence. If you need support to ensure regular attendance, our family support team is here to work with you.

Where we have concerns about a child's attendance our family support team may ask to meet with you to see how we can support regular attendance, you may receive a letter home, a home visit, be invited to a meeting with the school or asked to complete a parenting contract whereby the parent is agreeing to attendance targets.

If after sufficient time, there is still no improvement, schools will invite the parent to an Attendance Interview where concerns will be formally highlighted and a plan will be agreed for the child to return to school. If attendance does not improve the parent will be required to attend a Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) interview with the Milton Keynes Council Legal Interventions team which could lead to criminal prosecution.

Where there are additional concerns about a child or family, schools may refer to the children and families Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

6. Attendance monitoring

The Family Support Team and the Deputy Headteacher monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis. Regular meetings are held to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings.

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).

Parents are expected to call each day that their child/ren are ill.

We track the attendance of all children and will contact the parent if the child's attendance falls below 96% to discuss the reasons for this.

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 the AIB.

School collects attendance data via SIMs. This information is used for absence analysis within school.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Academy Improvement Board

The AIB 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.

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 the AIB.

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

It is at the discretion of the headteacher if any absence is authorised.

7.3 The Family Support Team

The Family Support Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with Milton Keynes Council Legal Interventions Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality

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 and Family Support Team. Class teachers are required to promote good attendance.

Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Following up on unexplained absences.

Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. If the office team has any concerns about the child or their attendance they will share these concerns with the Family Support Team, Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will follow up.

7.6 Parents or Carers

Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence

Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment

Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)

Arranging, where possible medical appointments out of school hours.
Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years. 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

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