



Attendance Policy

Approved: October 2023
To be reviewed: October 2024

As a school we aim to:

- Increase attendance levels and reduce persistent absenteeism (targets set annually).
- Maintain good levels of attendance (a **minimum** of 96%).
- Promote and maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance is important because:

- It helps to ensure children make expected progress and achieve the best possible standards across the curriculum (statistics show there is a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance).
- Children who attend regularly also make better progress socially and find school routines and school work easier to cope with.

As a parent you can help us by:

- Informing us (either verbally to the school office, by phone, text or email) during the first morning of your child's absence with the reason.
- Arranging medical appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Keeping us updated if your child has an extended period of absence.
- Communicating with us regarding any difficulties which are likely to affect your child's attendance.

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phoning or texting parents/carers (on the first day) and by sending letters home.
If we do not hear from parents/carers after attempting to contact you and are concerned about your child, we may carry out a home visit. If we are still unable to contact you we may have to inform the Local Authority.
- Remind parents and children about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality through the newsletter, assemblies and the school website.
- Ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they do and can succeed.
- Publish our attendance rate in the newsletter and on the website, the school prospectus and at the Governing Body's Annual Review for parents.
- Encourage classes to work together on their attendance and punctuality and award an Attendance Dog 'SAM' to the best attending class/es each week.
- Acknowledge and reward individual children for good attendance with certificates at the end of each term and the year.
- Publish your child's attendance rate and the number of any unauthorised absences on his/her annual school report.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality carefully and let you know if we have concerns about either of these with your child.
- If your child's attendance falls below 90% monitor it regularly (each week) and where it does not improve, contact to discuss this.
- Create an action plan of details with actions to date and update weekly with the attendance %
- Take appropriate action if we continue to have concerns.
(This could include:

arranging a meeting with you at the school,
drawing up an individual action plan to set and achieve personal attendance goals,
making a referral to the School Health Nurse or other outside agency)

Authorised Absence:

There are some absences, known as "authorised absences" which are allowed by law. The school will authorise an absence for the following reasons:

- if your child is ill and unfit to attend school*.
Please note – we do expect children to attend school if they are slightly unwell but are fit to attend school e.g. if they just have a sore throat / cough / cold etc.
- a hospital or emergency appointment (we expect all other medical appointments be made out of the school day).
- for religious observance - absence may be authorised, for one day on each occasion, for pupils to attend relevant religious observances. For example, we will only authorise one day for a child whose family is celebrating Eid when this falls on a week day during term time.
- An unexpected event which makes it momentarily difficult for children to attend.

It is important that the school is kept informed about absences of this kind or it may be recorded as unauthorised. For certain absences we may also request to see some evidence before making the decision to authorise it (i.e. medical appointment letters).

*Please note, if your child has taken several days off over the year for sickness we may start requesting evidence for further absences of this nature (i.e. a note or appointment card from the doctor or a copy of a prescription). If you are unable to provide such evidence after it has been requested, the absence may not be authorised. A high number of absences due to illness will also be referred to the School nursing team.

Sometimes children can be reluctant to attend school for reasons other than illness. We encourage parents/carers to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any issues together.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and support the child, often with the support of the school's Inclusion Team, back into school.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Unapproved holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or acceptable evidence is not provided on request, or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory
- A mild form of illness which does not need a day off school (i.e. a sore throat, cough and cold).

Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The LA may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has a number of unauthorised absences.

Children who are unwell in school:

Children may at times feel slightly unwell before school or during the school day. While we encourage you to send your child in if they are suffering from a mild symptom, it will also be our prime responsibility to ensure your child is looked after properly while at school. If we are aware a child is not feeling too well, we will allow them time and space to take rest and stay indoors if necessary, apply a hot or cold compress to ease any discomfort, check on the child at regular intervals and provide them with appropriate attention, support and comfort. We will also ensure tissues and soap/hand wash are available for children in the classrooms and toilets and that children are encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times to reduce the spread of germs. We will ensure we follow the advice given to schools by the Health Protection Agency ('Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings'). We understand at times it is more difficult for parents to collect children in the middle of the school day. We will therefore endeavour to do our best to keep children in school and **only** contact parents during the school day if it is felt the child is not fit and is unable to cope with being at school. If your child has been unwell during the day and has remained in school, a member of staff will inform you of this at the end of the day.

Collecting children from school:

If your child has to go home during the school day (i.e. to attend an appointment), he/she will need to be collected by a known responsible adult. Children are not allowed to go home by themselves. All children leaving the premises during the school day must be signed out by the adult collecting them.

We are aware that some of our older children are allowed to make their own way home at the end of the school day. While this is not something we encourage, we ask that parents inform the school in writing before allowing children to go home on their own. If you would like an older sibling who is under the age of 18 to collect your child from school at the end of the day, this must also be put in writing to the school beforehand. Older siblings will not be allowed to take younger siblings home if they are younger than 14 years.

Term Time Leave of Absence:

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Authority and School. Leave of absence will only be allowed at the discretion of the Headteacher and will not be offered to pupils for family holidays except:-

- Under special / exceptional circumstances
- And where a pupil's attendance for the year is at least 96%

The Headteacher, at her discretion and having considered individual circumstances, may permit up to 5 days holiday after considering the child's absence to date (but is not obliged to do so). If you must take your holiday in term time, please do not take a holiday in September, as it is very unsettling for a child to miss the start of the school year, or around SATS time (Y2 + Y6) and please look at the possibility of incorporating at least part of a school holiday into your requested holiday period.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time holidays need to fill in an application form well in advance and before booking. Please ask the school office for a form. The Headteacher will consider your request and will advise you of her decision (possibly asking to meet with you). Any further time taken than that allowed will be unauthorised and you will risk your child being taken off the school roll (the school has the right to do this under government legislation), as well as being liable for a fixed penalty fine.

Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only

take place when the pupil is in the classroom. Children also often find it harder returning to school after time off and so time away in term time can disrupt them emotionally as well.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the school 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. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their social life and out into the wider world.

Morning registration is at 8.50am. The children may arrive in school anytime between 8.40 – 8.50am. If a child arrives after 8.50am, they must go to the school office to be signed in. If a child arrives after the close of registration (after 9.30am) this will be coded as an “unauthorised late”. An unauthorised late mark will show that a child is on site but will not count as a present mark. This means the child will have an **unauthorised absence** and could lead to a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Help and Advice:

There are a number of people who you can contact at the school if you are having any problems with attendance or punctuality and would like some help and support. The names of these people are listed below:

Senior Leadership Team:

- Miss Angela Lowry (Headteacher)
- Mrs Lisa Naughton (Deputy Headteacher)
- Miss Clare Huxley (Assistant Headteacher)
- Mrs Sally Clements (Inclusion/Pastoral Leader and SENDCO/Attendance Lead)

Inclusion & Pastoral Team:

- Mrs S Clements (Inclusion/Pastoral Leader and Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator/ Attendance Lead)
- Miss Rachel Carter (Learning Mentor)

School Health Team: school have a direct email address for the school health team

Please note you may also speak to any member of the school staff if you would prefer to do so.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.