

The Abbey Primary School

Attendance Policy



Last reviewed on:	5 th September 2024
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Next review due by:	5 th September 2026
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The Abbey Primary School Attendance Policy

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

The Abbey Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that “parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” (DfE 1999). Our expectation for attendance is a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.

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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold and DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve school Attendance](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 a.m. and will be kept open until 9.00 a.m. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 p.m. and will be kept open until 1.15 p.m.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school by 9:00am, or as soon as is practically possible (see section 6), on the first day of an unplanned absence.

There is an answerphone available for parents/carers to leave a message if they are phoning before 8 am.

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/carers 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/carers 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. 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.

Parents/carers must inform the school in advance of the appointment. Appointment card or text message about appointment to be shown to office as evidence.

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.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent.

Lateness is monitored daily by the Attendance Officer. Parents/carers will be spoken to about any punctuality issues. If no improvement is made a letter will be issued to the parent/carer. If no improvement is made, the parent/carer will be asked to attend an attendance surgery. If there is still no improvement, a Parenting Contract will be drawn up.

3.5 Following up absence

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

Day 1 Phone call

Day 2 Phone call

Day 3 Write/e-mail/ text parents/carers

Day 5/6 Home Visit /Contact PCSO

If the child has not been seen and the parents/carers have not made contact, the school will report the pupil as missing from education.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

An attendance record for the current academic year is shared with parents at the end of each full term. Where there are attendance issues, letters are sent informing parent of decline in attendance and consequences, once attendance falls below 95%.

Parents/carers can also view their child's attendance by logging on to the Arbor app.

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'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event which is unexpected and unavoidable.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering 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

- Examples include: term-time holidays, birthdays, shopping, home repairs etc.
- Children with poor attendance due to unauthorised absences are monitored daily. Letters are sent home and medical evidence may be required for absences. If no improvement is made, the parent will be asked to attend an attendance surgery. If there is still no improvement, a Parenting Contract will be drawn up. Finally a referral to School Attendance Support Service (SASS) will be made.
- Flexi-schooling requests – this will be discussed by parent/carer with Headteacher

4.2 Legal sanctions

Irregular Attendance

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of ten weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include:

A Penalty Notice payable up to £180 fine.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

The Abbey Primary School follows National Framework for Penalty Notices which came into effect from 19th of August 2024. The aim is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

The national framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 week period may span different terms or school years. For example, 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 within the autumn term.
- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal interventions).

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

weekly Class Attendance cup is awarded to the best class attendance and attendance is promoted in the school hall on the display boards for 3rd, 2nd and 1st places. Termly/yearly rewards are given to individual children with 100% attendance for each term and consecutive term. Pupils with improved attendance are also recognised.

6. Attendance monitoring

The administration staff monitor pupil absence daily. The attendance office monitors patterns in attendance on a weekly basis.

Parents/carers 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/carers to call by 9am on first day of illness and then to provide ongoing updates.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider referring to SASS.

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.

Attendance is monitored daily and data is collected weekly for the whole school and individual pupils. Pupils below 95% are monitored closely. Intervention is taken to support students whose attendance is below 90%

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 LAC (Local Academy Committee)

The LAC 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 governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaising with the LA who issue fixed penalty fines.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises the LA when to issue a fixed penalty fine.

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

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

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.

The student is counted as absent, authorised.

C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.

I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.

The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.

These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.

D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.