The Abbey Primary School

Attendance Policy

Last reviewed on:	October 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027

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1. Intent

At The Abbey Primary School, we nurture every child to fulfil their whole potential. Regular attendance at school is the best way we can ensure the children have full access to our curriculum and therefore have every opportunity to fulfil their whole potential. The purpose of this policy is to promote good attendance through:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils, including nursery children
- Whilst nursery attendance is encouraged and monitored, statutory attendance procedures and legal interventions apply only to children of compulsory school age
- Explaining what good attendance is and why it matters
- Outlining the processes we follow to ensure attendance is good
- Detailing the steps we take when a child's attendance is a cause for concern
- Explaining how we monitor attendance

2. **Policy Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including: 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). The school aspires for all pupils to achieve at least 96% attendance.

3. 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.

4. Why Good Attendance Matters

At The Abbey Primary School, we are committed to delivering the highest quality education for all pupils. We strive to create an environment where every child feels safe, valued, and welcomed. High attendance is vital for children to fully benefit from the educational opportunities we offer. We encourage every pupil to aim for 100% attendance—being in school, on time, every day it is open (typically 190 days per year), unless absence is genuinely unavoidable. Regular attendance helps children build strong relationships with peers and staff, feel a sense of belonging, and learn our progressive, sequential curriculum. The habits of good attendance and punctuality mirror the expectations of future employers and are essential for academic success, social confidence, and long-term aspirations.

We understand that there will be occasions when a child is genuinely too unwell to attend school. However, we encourage all parents to send their child to school whenever possible. If a parent is unsure whether their child is well enough to attend, we ask that they send their child in, assured that the school will contact them promptly if the child appears too unwell during the school day. At The Abbey Primary School, we consider attendance below 95% to be a cause for concern and attendance below 90% as persistent absenteeism. Below is a table which illustrates how much learning is lost with attendance of 95% or below:

Attendance	Weeks Missed	Days Missed	Hours of School Missed
95%	2 weeks	10 days	68 hours
90%	4 weeks	20 days	136 hours
85%	6 weeks	30 days	204 hours
80%	8 weeks	40 days	272 hours

5. School procedures

5.1 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 9.30 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.

5.2 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.
The school may request medical evidence where there is a genuine and reasonable concern regarding the authenticity or frequency of absence. This may be: a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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.

5.3 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.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

• To ensure that their children arrive to school on time at 8:40am. Gates open at 8.25am and will remain open until 8.40am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.

• To report to the school office to sign in if their child arrives late after 8.40am. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.

• To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

The first few minutes of school is a crucial time for children to get settled into class. When a child arrives late for school, it not only disrupts the rest of the class, but they miss out on this crucial time.

Being punctual is an important life skill. Ensuring that your child is punctual gets them into good habits for their future.

Arriving just 5 minutes late every day equals 3 days of education over the whole year. Arriving half an hour late every day is equivalent to 18 days absence.

Lateness is monitored daily by the Attendance Officers. Parents/carers will be spoken to about any punctuality issues and this situation will be monitored. If there is still no improvement, a Parenting Contract will be drawn up.

5.5 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 to all contacts on list in order of priority. If no contact made, email primary guardians.

Day 2 Phone call to all contacts on list in order of priority. If no contact made, email primary guardians.

Day 3 Home visit and letter delivered. Consider referral to police or local authority welfare services where safeguarding concerns exist.

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. **The school may to do a home visit before day three of the absence if there are any additional concerns relating to the welfare or attendance of that child.**

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

An attendance record for the current academic year is shared with parents at each Parents' Evening and at the end of the year. Where there are attendance issues, letters and/or emails 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.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 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 where they cannot be arranged for an alternative time – as explained in sections 5.2 and 5.3
- 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 and/or emails are sent home and medical evidence may be required for absences. If no improvement is made after a period of monitoring, a Parenting Contract will be drawn up. Finally, a referral to School Attendance Support Service (SASS) will be made if there is still no improvement.
- Flexi-schooling requests – this will be discussed by parent/carer with Headteacher

7 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 £160 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).

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Weekly Class Attendance is celebrated to the best class attendance and attendance is promoted in the school hall on the display boards for 3rd, 2nd and 1st places. High attendance (97% +) for each term is recognised on an individual basis. Pupils with improved attendance are also recognised.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Daily Monitoring

The administration staff monitor pupil absence daily. The attendance officers monitor 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 5.2).

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

If attendance falls below 95%, parents will be informed and their child's attendance will be monitored. If their attendance continues to decline to below 90% after a monitoring period, a parenting contract will be drawn up. If attendance continues to decline or not improve, they will be referred to SASS.

9. 2 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

• Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

• Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from mental health needs, SEND, medical conditions or family circumstances, and will work with families and external agencies to overcome barriers.

9.3 Children Missing in Education

The school will follow local authority Children Missing Education procedures where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established despite reasonable enquiries.

9.4 Data Collection

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 similar schools and share this with governors.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 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.

10.2 The headteacher

The Headteacher is the Senior Attendance Champion and has overall responsibility for attendance strategy.

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.

10.3 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.

10.4 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.

10.5 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.