



This policy is written in accordance with ETAT's commitment to promoting the
UNCRC Rights of the child:

Article 28: Every child has a right to primary education, which should be free.

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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 and punctuality
- 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

- 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](#) 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Local Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

3.2 Trustees (via Executive Staff)

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data across the trust
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The Head Teacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at their school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and Trust Executive staff
- 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 Attendance Lead (DAL)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

In some schools the Designated Attendance lead is also the Head Teacher.

3.5 The Attendance Support Officer (ASO)

Some schools may have an Attendance Support worker (usually part of an administrator; Family Support or Learning Mentor role). The ASO provides administrative and practical support to the DAL with the above responsibilities. In some schools there may be one designated person fulfilling both the DAL and ASO roles.

3.6 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 by the end of morning and afternoon registration periods.

3.7 School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to ASO or DAL in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.8 Parents / Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return. If this is uncertain, parents /carers should ring the school on each day of subsequent absence.
- 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

Each school will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Schools will take their 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 (only applies to children of compulsory school age)
- 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Each school sets its own start time and this is communicated clearly to pupils and families. In some schools there is a window for arrivals rather than one set time. Pupils must arrive by the end of this window. Pupils must arrive in school by the agreed time on each school day. Arrival more than 30 minutes after the agreed start time will be marked as late and this is recorded as half a day's absence.

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 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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 apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Each school has an absence request form. Electronic and paper versions are available.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be recorded as absent for that half day session.

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 attempt a house visit or contact the police
- 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 an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be included in annual reports for most children. Where absence falls below 90%, more frequent (no less than termly) reporting will be part of the attendance support plan. Absence below 95% will be reported as a concern during scheduled parent/teacher meetings.

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 circumstances in which it would harm the child more not to be absent for the requested purpose than to attend school and when the family has had no control or choice about the date and time. This may include a funeral or embassy citizenship appointment for example. It does not usually apply to routine family celebrations.

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 on the school request form as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (physical or mental) 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 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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. **Neither the school nor the Trust receives any money resulting from fines.**

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

Head Teachers in our schools will issue fines if:

- there are 10 sessions or more (5 full days) of unauthorised absence within any possible 100 school sessions (equivalent to 50 school days).
- 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 decides whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each school has its own set of strategies to reward and promote good attendance. These are shared with governors and Trust executive staff at least annually. They include:

- Systems for identifying patterns or downward trends quickly
- Support and advice to parents /carers
- Support plans with specific targets and practical help for children and families as required
- Celebration of good attendance eg class trophies / school target displays.
NB we do not issue 100% attendance certificates to children as we believe this is divisive and unfair on children who cannot help having less than 100% attendance.

- Incentives such as breakfast clubs or early morning activities to encourage prompt attendance

7. Attendance monitoring

Schools attendance officers monitor and analyse attendance primarily to identify individuals who may need support. However, data is also grouped and analysed to help us identify patterns and groups that may need targeted support. This includes analysis by:

- Gender
- SEND
- Disadvantage (eg Pupil Premium)
- Race and ethnicity

This analysis also helps us monitor our responses to absence and absence requests to ensure we are not treating any group unfairly.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

Each 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 average, and share this with the governing board, and trustees (via executive staff)

7.2 Analysing attendance

Each 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

Each school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other relevant staff 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
- 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
- Work with local authority education welfare and other support services to obtain appropriate support and advice

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Education Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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
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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	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the

	traveller absence	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
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