ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority, parents / carers and works within 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' DfE 2024. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

- ❑ Attendance at school is an important pre-requisite for a successful and fulfilling school career.
- ❑ Children who miss education are at an immediate disadvantage.
- ❑ Periods of absence can have a detrimental effect upon an individual's progress. Poor attendance and punctuality can all serve to undermine educational achievement and result in long-term disadvantage to children.
- ❑ Good attendance is an important safeguarding issue. Children who are persistently absent may be at greater risk of exploitation, neglect, poor mental health and educational disadvantage.
- ❑ We should work together to keep absence from our school to the lowest possible figure.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance.

Attendance	Missing out on	Which means.....	Over 13yrs of schooling is.....
90%	1 day per fortnight	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years missed
80%	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years missed
60%	2 days per week	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years missed
40%	3 days per week	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years missed

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the ***Headteacher,*** not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

As part of our home school agreement, parents agree to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will follow the borough Guidelines.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. An email from a known address is acceptable. If a parent / carer is unable to email / write, a telephone call may suffice in the event of a child's illness.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, religious holidays or other unavoidable cause (you may be asked to provide evidence for your child before this can be authorised).

The school recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, in these cases only the headteacher can decide to authorise the absence. The request for an authorised absence must be submitted in advance. (Schools consult with religious leaders and are told what should and should not be authorised)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however is recorded as an absence for the session.
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher- may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed
- From September 2024, there will be a new national threshold and schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

- If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
- If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a child is absent from school (unless authorised) the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before *9.00AM* The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or call into school personally and speak to the office staff. An email is also acceptable. If we have not heard from you, we will endeavor to contact you however it is *the parents responsibility to inform us of any absences.*
- Contact the school on every other day of absence, again before *9.00am*
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence if requested to support the absence.
- Routine medical appointments should be made outside of school or in the school holidays where possible. Evidence of medical appointments made in school hours will need to be seen.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when the school needs to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have current contact numbers at all times. Parents should ensure the school is informed of any changes.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the 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 school life and out into the wider world.

Registration is at 8.50am and children are expected to be in attendance at that time. Registers are marked by 9.00am and registers will close at 9.15am. If a child arrives after 9.15am, with good reason, it will be authorised.

If a child arrives after 9.15am, without good reason, it will be counted as an unauthorised absence.

Children who are late arriving at school should ***report to the Reception Desk*** where a “late” mark will be recorded.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and /or the Attendance Officer, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

Applications for exceptional leave must be made by completing a form (from the Office) and not via email. Parents should not take their child/ren out of school and then send an email.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time including:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.
- If a child's attendance is under 95%

If the application is refused but the leave is taken then this will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence will be reported to the Local Authority and may result in a Penalty Notice of £80 per parent per child. Fines imposed and not paid within 21 days will be doubled to £160 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days. Failure to do so may result in a summons to Court which will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 section 444(1) and 444(1A). If a second request is made and a penalty notice has already been issued, further penalty notices will not be issued but may result in a summons to court.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

Attendance is recorded electronically each morning and afternoon and regularly across terms and the year. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. (See Appendix 1)

If a child's attendance falls below 95% monitoring procedures will be initiated and if attendance falls further you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer to sign a parental agreement form. Should the child be absent during the allotted time frame, the matter will be passed to the local authority.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.
Specific pupil data will be shared with the DfE on request.

We will :

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, again if it falls below 90% (absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence)
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation
- Parents will be asked to sign an Attendance contract and to attend further Attendance meeting
- PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Attendance Officer, Home School Liaison Worker, Local Authority, Stronger Families Key Worker or Social Care
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions
- Refer children with EHCP's to the Local Authority if their attendance falls or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupils needs

> ***"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence"***

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

In Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016), children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing education. Most children and young people are moving schools supported by their parents/carers, schools and local authority admissions services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/carers, what has happened. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding teacher/advisor should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

In the circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Headteacher should inform the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. Prior to doing so, the school should have made enquiries to ascertain whether the child is still residing at the home address and is not attending or whether the child is missing.

PERFORMANCE LICENCES

The applicant for a Performance Licence (usually the production company or theatrical agent) is obliged to seek the view of the school when applying for an absence request. Such a request will only be considered by the school when the child's attendance is at least 93% and the child is making at least expected levels of progress, however the number of days authorised for this purpose will be limited to 10 days in a school year. A request may be declined if either of these thresholds is not meet or if the timing of the requested absence could be detrimental to the child's education.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The Local Authority will

- Provide an Attendance Support Officer
- Organise Termly meetings with the Headteacher / Attendance Officer

We will

- Analyse the data from school registers.
- Monitor patterns of lateness.
- Identify individual and groups with poor attendance.

This information will be analysed in liaison meetings between the Local Authority, Headteacher and Attendance Officer.

The school promotes a positive attitude towards attendance with trophies for the class of the week and the class of the term with the best attendance.

Each child will receive a Registration Certificate with their end of year report. Certificates are awarded to pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each academic year.

This policy will be reviewed annually

Ratified by the full Governing Board on 1st October 2026



Mrs Sally de Jongh, Chair.

To be reviewed in September 2027

APPENDIX 1

ATTENDANCE CODES

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school - Attending Sheffield Inclusion Centre - Attending Alternative Provision at another school site - Chapel House / Becton Outreach / CAMHS Lodges - Hospital education - Education at a secure / residential site - Off-site direction / managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority - Home Tutoring - Approved Framework for Alternative Provision - Blended Learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend

Code	Meaning	Type
The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the parent.	Not expected to attend
The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Missing school can disrupt a child's learning progression, as well as their ability to engage with peers and participate in ongoing projects. Parental support in maintaining regular school attendance is highly appreciated and can make a significant difference in a pupil's educational journey.
Parents/carers should obtain permission from the headteacher **before** taking a child out of school for leave during term time for **any reason**.

1.Childs Full Name …… Class ……

2.Childs Full Name …… Class ……

3.Childs Full Name …… Class ……

4.Childs Full Name …… Class ……

Address: ……

Period of Absence: From …… To …… (Inclusive)

Reason for requesting absence (if request if for a family holiday, please give exceptional circumstances on why it MUST be in term time).

Name: …… Relationship to Child: ……..
(Applicant must be the parent / carer the child normally resides with)

Signed: …….. Date ……

For Office Use Only:
Attendance % …… First Request …….
Notes: