



School Policy Document

Pupil Attendance Policy

Date Adopted by Full Governing board:	05 December 2019
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Last reviewed on:	28 September 2023
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Next review due by:	September 2026
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1. Aims

- 1.1. 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
 - 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
 - We will also promote and support punctuality.

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1. 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](#)
- 2.2. 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 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- 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 senior leader responsible for attendance

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
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Nick Waldron (headteacher) and can be contacted via attendance@pinnerpark.harrow.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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 request the issuing of fixed-penalty notices by Harrow Council

The attendance officer can be contacted via attendance@pinnerpark.harrow.sch.uk.

3.5 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. The register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are taken electronically and submitted to the school's management information system immediately.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system and/or inform the school's attendance officer
- Refer parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, by phone call or email message, and advise when they are expected to return
- Update the school about their child's absence on each day of 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

4.1.1. We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

4.1.2. We will take our 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

4.1.3. We will follow the DfE guidance for attendance codes (See appendix 1)

4.1.4. We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- 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

4.1.5. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.1.6. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

4.1.7. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken immediately following the lunch break and will be kept open for 30 minutes.

4.2. Unplanned absence

4.2.1. Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

4.2.2. To notify the school of an absence, parents should report the reason for the absence to the school by:

- telephoning the school office (0208 863 2191) then press 1 to report an absence
- sending an email to attendance@pinnerpark.harrow.sch.uk
- sending a message through the School Gateway app

4.2.3. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

4.2.4. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, doctor's note or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.2.5. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3. Planned Absence - Medical or dental appointments

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

4.3.2. We encourage parents 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.

4.3.3. For medical or dental appointments, parents must seek permission before the absence using the form in the appendices or by completing the online form through the school website.

4.3.4. Where a school-time appointment is unavoidable, a copy of the appointment card or letter should be provided.

4.3.5. The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4. Lateness and punctuality

4.4.1. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

4.4.2. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.4.3. If a pupil has a pattern of lateness, this will be followed up by the attendance officer and/or headteacher.

4.5. Following up unexplained absence

4.5.1. Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent 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 contact the police or children's services
- 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 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 the Local Authority's attendance team
- If school absence exceeds 10 days, and there is no contact from parents to explain why this is, the school should refer to the Local Authority's Children Missing from Education team.

4.6. Reporting to parents

4.6.1. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly written reports sent by email

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1. Approval for term-time absence

- 5.1.1. 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.
- 5.1.2. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- 5.1.3. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated before the absence and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
- 5.1.4. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
- Illness 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
 - Other valid reasons for authorized absence can be found in the School Attendance Guidance [School attendance guidance May 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/school-attendance-guidance-may-2022.pdf)
- 5.1.5. The school **will not** grant permission for holidays, foreign travel or extended leave to be taken in term time.

5.2. Legal Sanctions

- 5.2.1. The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- 5.2.2. 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
- 5.2.3. A Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority, when requested by the Headteacher
- 5.2.4. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
 - Where 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 will proceed to prosecution.

5.2.5. Information regarding penalty notices can be found on Harrow Council's website [Education Penalty Notices – Harrow Council](#)

6. Strategies for Promoting attendance

- 6.1. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parent(s), that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. This may be achieved through:
- Letters to parents
 - The school's website
 - The school newsletter
 - Information leaflets
- 6.2. The school will use opportunities to teach children to value high attendance at school. For example, through assemblies, certificates and awards, PSHE.

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1. Monitoring Attendance

7.1.1. The 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
- Monitor attendance by pupil group (vulnerable students, SEND, Pupil Premium)

7.1.2. 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.

7.1.3. The Governing Board will monitor the implementation of this policy.

7.2. Analysing attendance

7.2.1. The 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

7.3.1. The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers and school leaders, 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

7.4.1. 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.

7.4.2. 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 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

7.5. Monitoring Arrangements

7.5.1. This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, every 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

7.6. Links with other policies

7.6.1. 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.

Present		
/	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
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 traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the 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
Other Codes		
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

Appendix 2: Harrow's Attendance Intervention Model – to be used for irregular attendance and unauthorised absences.

Phase	School actions	LA Attendance Team Services	LA Children's Services
Phase 1	<p>First day response – log of texts/calls</p> <p>1st school warning letter – after either 10 unauthorised days or attendance drops below 90%. School to set monitoring period to review attendance.</p> <p>If no improvement during monitoring period – Second school warning letter to be issued.</p> <p>EPN to be issued when threshold for unauthorised absence is met</p>	Issue EPN if required	
Phase 2	<p>Meeting / School Attendance panel with parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete CAF with parental agreement for Early Support or refer to other services • School and parents to sign attendance contract • School to inform parents about possible referral to LA pre-court panel and specify monitoring period 		MASH Team receive CAF and consider for Early Support, worker allocated
Phase 3	<p>If no progress has happened and further unauthorised absences have occurred, school to send Pre-Court Panel referral form to LA with chronology.</p> <p>School to attend pre-court panel meeting with LA.</p>	Review chronology, arrange pre-court panel if appropriate.	
Phase 4		If no progress or engagement at Pre-Court Panel after monitoring period, LA to pursue court action.	