



# **Attendance Procedure 2020-21**

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**Person Responsible:** Principal

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# 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its legal obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence.
- Monitoring persistent absence and acting accordingly.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children, of compulsory school age, attend regularly, and help us to promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Attendance is important to us as we know that regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways that we can prepare your child for success - both in school and in life. When school attendance is a priority, a child is helped to have the best start in life.

Good attendance is a key factor to ensure that pupils benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children susceptible to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

## Our values and ethos

- We learn from real experience. We've spent over 50 years working together with people on the autism spectrum. No one has more practical knowledge of autism. But we move with the times and we understand that there's always more to learn.
- We tell it like it is. We share what we have learned about autism, so that more people can make informed decisions and lead the best lives possible.
- We inspire. We celebrate progress, open up new possibilities, spur people into action and motivate change.
- We are courageous. We won't accept ignorance or inequality, and we'll never stop pushing for more understanding, greater support and a better world for people on the autism spectrum.

Our definition of regular attendance is: punctual arrival with good attendance levels, without unnecessary absences from school.

The school considers good attendance percentages to be at levels of 95% or above.

## 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. 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.

#### **Timings for the school day**

Pupils must arrive in school on time for each school day.

At the Hub site, the morning sessions start at 9:00am afternoon sessions start at 13:00pm. At the Main School site, morning sessions start at 8:50am afternoon sessions start at 13:00pm. At the Hub, the register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00pm and will be kept open until 13.30pm. At the Main School site, the register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of all occasions of unplanned absence and each subsequent day - including if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

In the event of all occasions of unplanned absence, on each day and any subsequent day, please contact the School directly:

T: 01474 814878

E: helen.allison@nas.org.uk

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 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 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; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, 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.

In the event that a child has a medical or dental appointment, please inform the School in advance directly:

T: 01474 814878

E: helen.allison@nas.org.uk

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, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Careful monitoring of attendance by the Senior Leadership Team is in place to identify where there are ongoing punctuality issues. In these cases, support will be put into place and we will work closely with pupils, parents/carers to address this.

Support will be bespoke, and may include that in the form of:

- Initial discussions with class teacher.
- Further support from a variety of professionals available including Education, and Therapy teams.
- Further support is available for families from our Wellbeing Officer.

Pupils arriving late after the close of registers will be marked with a 'U' code 'representing an 'unauthorised absence' for that one session (morning or afternoon).

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identifying whether the absence can be 'authorised' or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

In the case of an unauthorised absence, the Principal will contact parents/carers to advise that the instance of absence will be recorded as unauthorised and offer to discuss this further. A meeting to discuss further will be offered.

**In order to keep children safe in education, we require parents/carers to:**

Provide a minimum of two emergency contact numbers for their child, at least one of which should be for a different household where reasonably possible.

**If a pupil's absence is unaccounted for at the close of registration, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and parents/carers of that child will be contacted by:**

- Calling every contact number that we hold for that pupil.
- If there is no response from any of these numbers, we will carry out a home visit.
- If there is nobody at home, we will inform the police that there is a missing child.

**The school may also take the following actions:**

- Report the child to the Local Authority as 'missing from education' (after 10 days).
- Consult with or refer the matter to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

The School reports to parents/carers on a pupil's attendance at annual review, however, this can be sooner on request.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Amendments were made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and came into force on 1 September 2013. This prohibits Head Teachers/Principals from granting any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

**Please note that this is not an entitlement and a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. This request must be made at least a **week in advance** and cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the leave is taken despite refusal it will be 'unauthorised'. To request term time absence, please contact the school to request a request form.

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.
- Exceptional circumstances which are unavoidable and/or unforeseen.

The Senior Leadership Team meet regularly to discuss pupils causing concern and this includes where there are concerns relating to attendance such as:

- Overall level of attendance is below 95%.
- Lengthy absence.
- Period of unauthorised absence.
- Sporadic absences or pattern of absences.

Termly tracking of attendance highlights where attendance is poor and we deploy a range of strategies to support families with this:

- Class teachers will communicate with parents/carers.
- In some cases, a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform that there are attendance concerns.
- Pupils may have case studies or attendance action plans.
- Strategies planned and deployed will include input from a multidisciplinary team, including therapy/education teams and Wellbeing Officer.

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The School works with pupils and parents/carers to support regular attendance, for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements and providing good home/school communication systems.

For many of our pupils, transition times of day can be challenging and there are bespoke programmes in place devised by professionals to support with a smooth transition to school. Professionals also provide support to parents/carers where necessary to devise strategies for a smooth transition from home and to decrease pupil's anxieties at these times.

Parents/carers are encouraged to access specialist support and guidance from a range of professionals and there are also regular workshops, events and training evenings held at the School related to a range of topics related to autism to support parents/carers with their children.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The School monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning on all occasions and each subsequent day if their child is going to be absent, including for reasons due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents and carers are expected to call the school on each day that their child is absent on all occasions and each subsequent day, including when they are ill.

Due to the nature of our pupil's sometimes complex needs, each case will be individually considered, however, should absence be causing concern we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

Our School collects and stores attendance data on systems including System Information Management Systems (SIMS). It is used to track the attendance, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Registers are a legal responsibility and the information used to report census information.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Principal**

The Principal 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 Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 The Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal.
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Notifies the Principal on absences that might attract a penalty notice.



## **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 about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Off Rolling**

All schools in England (including independent schools) must inform their Local Authority when a pupil is removed from the roll.

Pupils will be removed from roll with the consent of the Local Authority where they have been placed by the Local Authority and where the Local Authority refuses to give consent, at the direction of the secretary of state.

This will include circumstances where:

- The pupil has registered at another school
- The pupil has been permanently excluded
- The parent has elected to home educate the pupil and has notified the school in writing
- The pupil has ceased to attend school and is no longer residing within reasonable distance
- The pupil has failed to return to school within 10 school days immediately following the end of an authorised leave of absence
- The pupil has been missing from school for 20 continuous school days or more

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Principal/Deputy Principal. At every review, any updates will be shared with parents/carers.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding 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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day