

# Attendance policy



|                            |          |                       |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Approved by:</b>        | Trustees | <b>Date:</b> Sep 2025 |
| <b>Last reviewed on:</b>   | Sep 2022 |                       |
| <b>Next review due by:</b> | Sep 2027 |                       |

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard 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 in attending lessons.

## 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 The board of trustees

The board of trustees 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 lead 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

Bedford site- Susannah King (Deputy Headteacher and DSL)

Contactable on 07940 142826 or at [susannah.king@kwseducational.co.uk](mailto:susannah.king@kwseducational.co.uk).

Milton Keynes site- Sarah Nichols-Weaver (Head and DSL)

Contactable on 07872 067991 or at [sarah.nichols-weaver@kwseducational.co.uk](mailto:sarah.nichols-weaver@kwseducational.co.uk)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data and register codes (see Appendix 1 and 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 leadership team
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the senior leadership team when a fixed penalty notice needs to be requested

The attendance officer is also Susannah King (Deputy Headteacher and DSL).

### 3.5 Keyworkers

Keyworkers are responsible for discussing attendance on a daily basis and promoting good attendance for their keywork students. Where attendance is a concern keyworker adhere to the protocols in Appendices 2 and 3.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- › record attendance twice daily (morning and afternoon) using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) and ensuring that any relevant comments are always recorded in the register comments section.
- › Take calls from parents about absences on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system, copying in the keyworker and attendance officer.
- › Call home for all absent students by 10am each day, making a note of this in the register comments, and recording the contact on SchoolPod, copying in the keyworker and attendance officer.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every required session on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › 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 every timetabled session on time.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session of every day. 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
- › 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will open at 8:45am each day and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50pm and will be kept open until 12:55pm.

## 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 8am 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 with 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, provided the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance.

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 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

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code, and the number of minutes recorded
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code, and the time of arrival recorded

Where punctuality is a concern, the pupil will be spoken to by their keyworker and targets set, and the parents/carers will be informed. SLT monitors this through our daily keywork recording.

## 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 complete a home visit
- › 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, and home visits are unsuccessful 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 is done not only through keyworker communication at least half-termly, but also through letters and certification on a termly basis. Where attendance is a concern, communication is three weekly.

## 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 whereby the pupil would struggle emotionally to attend school and their mental health may suffer, or whereby the circumstances warrant absence and not granting it would be detrimental to the pupil or their family.

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 as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more details)
- 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
- Study leave

### 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.

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

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 can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Upon arrival at school each day, each pupil can receive a tick for being punctual – weekly totals are submitted to the attendance officer, who then adds pupils' names to the reward box. Names are

drawn out of this box on a 3-weekly basis and the winning students receives an Amazon voucher, or alternative voucher of their choice.

- Each half-term a letter is sent home to families informing them of their child's attendance and praising where it is good, or indicating the improvement needed (see Appendix 2).
- In addition, 100% attendance certificates are given to students, alongside a small edible reward, to celebrate their success.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The attendance officer 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
- › liaise with education welfare services to support decision making and actions taken.

Where a pupil is not attending through choice, the attendance officer will monitor this daily/weekly and maintain rigorous contact with home, recording all onto SchoolPod

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 board of trustees.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The attendance officer 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, with the leadership team, develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The attendance officer will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to keyworkers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families as per Appendix 2.
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- › Share data with education welfare to seek further advice on any strategies that could also be implemented

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The attendance officer will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Follow the protocol outlined in Appendix 3.
- › 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 other professionals to elicit change in school attendance, for example via child protection meetings and TAF meetings
- › Work with education welfare to ensure transparency and optimal improved outcomes
- › Build in home visits to ensure that the student continues to have links with education

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

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

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy
- › Curriculum policy
- › Staff code of conduct
- › Looked after and previously looked after 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  |
| J1   | 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   |
| K    | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority. |

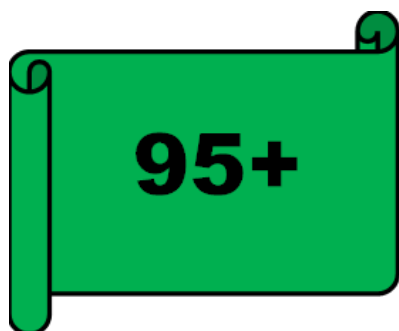
| Code                             | Definition                | Scenario   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Absent – Leave of absence</b> |                           |  |
| C                                | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| C1                               | Regulated performance     | Pupil undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours.         |
| C2                               | Part-time timetable       | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable.                |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>E</b>                    | Excluded                          | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made  |
| <b>I</b>                    | 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>X</b>                    | Not required to be in school      |   |

| <b>Code</b>  | <b>Definition</b>            | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Absent- unable to attend due to unavoidable cause</b> |                              |  |
| <b>Y1</b>  | Transport is not available   | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their homes and transport normally provided is not available. |
| <b>Y2</b>  | Widespread travel disruption | Pupil is not able to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, or   |

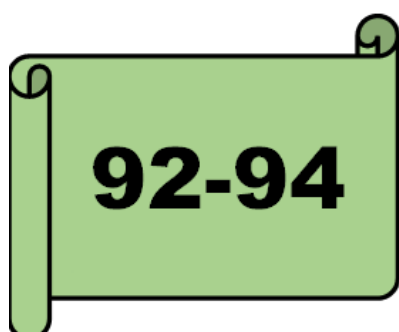
|           |                                       |   |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|
|           |                                       | international emergency   |
| <b>Y3</b> | Part of the school premises is closed | Pupil unable to attend because they cannot be [practically accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open   |
| <b>Y4</b> | Whole site unexpectedly closed        | Every pupil absent as the school is unexpectedly closed- adverse weather  |
| <b>Y5</b> | Criminal justice detention            | Pupil unable to attend because they are-<br>In police detention<br>Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing.<br>Detained under a sentence of detention |
| <b>Y6</b> | Public health guidance or law         | Pupil's travel or attendance at school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law  |
| <b>Y7</b> | Any other avoidable cause             | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes   |
| <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   |

## Appendix 2: Attendance Chart



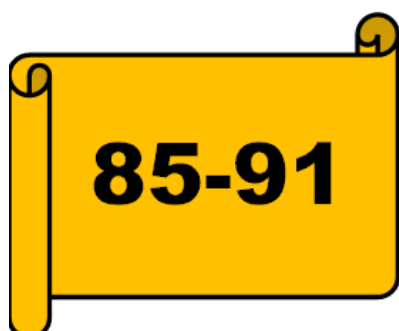
### **EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE**

- Positive letter home.
- Continue to monitor.
- On track to reach potential if fully engaged in all learning.



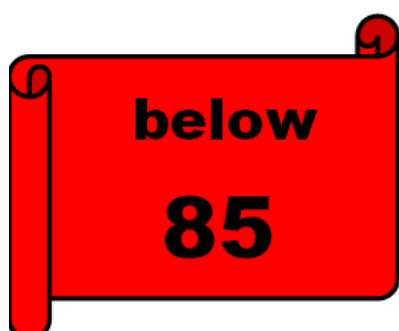
### **GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- Positive letter home.
- Continue to monitor.
- Could reach potential if extra work completed to catch up.



### **UNSATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE**

- Concern letter home and also to Education Welfare Services.
- Warning of possible Fixed Penalty being issued (£60 per parent).
- Improvement required to achieve.



### **POOR ATTENDANCE**

- Letter home informing of initial monitoring for 3 weeks and Fixed Penalty Notice being issued if no improvement (£60 per parent).
- School meeting offered.
- Education Welfare Services informed.
- Intervention required to achieve.

### Appendix 3: Persistent Absence Protocol

#### **3 CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS MISSED**

Keyworker to call home

(log call as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding, if no answer, email and log email as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding)



#### **6 CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS**

Keyworker to call home

(log call as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding, if no answer, email and log email as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding)



#### **9 CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS**

DSL to call home

(log call as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker, if no answer, email and log email as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker)

DSL check attendance percentage and refer as appropriate

(CME at 10 days, EWO concern at 85%-91%, FPN request at -85%)



#### **12 CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS**

DSL to visit home

(log visit as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker, if no answer, leave a slip and log slip as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker)

DSL check attendance percentage and refer as appropriate

(EWO concern at 85%-91%, FPN request at -85%)



#### **15+ CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS**

Keyworker to email home weekly

(log email as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding, if no answer, email and log email as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding)

DSL to call weekly & visit home 3-weekly

(log calls and visit as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker, if no answer, leave a slip and log slip as contact onto POD & link to safeguarding & keyworker)

DSL check attendance percentage and refer as appropriate

(EWO concern at 85%-91%, FPN request at -85%)

NB: The actions above are in addition to any other agency support or processes that may be running concurrently.