



NEW Attendance Policy - What parents need to know! Page 1

Reporting an absence

If your child is absent from school, you must telephone the school on 0121 453 7829 - a message can be left on the school's answer machine if nobody is available to answer the call.



All absences must be reported via telephone before 9:20am or they may not be authorised.

Absences should not be reported using e-mail from September 2025.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Members of school staff may contact parents regarding a child's absence – this may include telephone calls, text messages or home visits.

Lateness

Except for Reception and Nursery, our gates open at 8:40am each day.



- The register is started on the first bell at 8:45am.
- The register is saved on the second bell at 8:50am.
- So our pupils must arrive between 8.40am and 8:50am on each school day.
- Our morning register will be kept open until 9.20am.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed (after 9.20am) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly

Any pupils arriving after the gates close, will need to enter school via the main school office. On arrival at the school office, parents will be required to complete a record explaining the reason for the lateness, so that the attendance team can monitor for consistent patterns of lateness.

A member of the attendance team will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Effects of lateness on learning

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like phonics, reading lessons, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

Good attendance and the effects of non-attendance

Attendance percentages can be misleading. In most walks of life, 80% is good. But in terms of school attendance, anything less than 95% **isn't good**. The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons:

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Which is approximately
95%	9.5 days	2 weeks	57 hours of lost learning
90%	19 days	4 weeks	114 hours of lost learning
80%	38 days	7.5 weeks	228 hours of lost learning

Medical / Dental appointments

Parents should make appointments outside of school hours. When appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.



Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

Minutes late per day	Which is approximately
5 minutes	16 hours of lost learning
10 minutes	32 hours of lost learning
15 minutes	48 hours of lost learning

Full policy on school website



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When no reason for absence is given



All absences must be reported via telephone before 9:20 am or they may not be authorised.

Absences should not be reported using e-mail as they may not be seen before the cut off time of 9:20am.

When a child fails to attend school and no reason has been provided by the parent, the school will make every effort to contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence.

When we are unable to speak to a child's parent or carer on their first day of absence, we will try a child's other emergency contacts so could unnecessarily be bothering Nan, Aunty or Uncle.

We will then send a text message asking for the first contact to call the school to explain the absence.

If the school is unable to make contact with any of the emergency numbers provided, is concerned for the welfare of the pupil or feels that further investigation into an absence is required, we may carry out our own 'safe and well' checks, a home visit (see home visit section) or request a Welfare Check from the police.

The list of absent pupils is provided by the school office to Mr Harrold (Executive Headteacher and attendance champion), Mrs Linton (Deputy DSL and Pastoral Lead), Mrs. Wollacott (School Attendance Officer) and Miss Evans (SENDCO) to decide on the relevant follow-up actions needed. For example, Miss Evans may need to contact a family of a pupil with an EHCP to see if any agency involvement needs to be procured.



Home visits



Each school day, members of the attendance team will review the absence list for the day and decide where to prioritise home visits.

- **If we haven't been able to make contact about an absence and contact from parents hasn't been received, this is highly likely to lead to a home visit to check on the welfare of a pupil.**
- **If an absence takes place on a day/date where historic data suggests absence is higher, such as Fridays or the first day back after a school holiday, this is highly likely to lead to a home visit.**
- **If we suspect a pupil has been taken on holiday without officially requesting leave of absence, this is highly likely to lead to a home visit.**
- **If we feel the reason given for an absence requires further investigation, this is highly likely to lead to a home visit.**
- **If an absence is part of a pattern for that particular pupil, e.g. they are frequently absent on Mondays, this is highly likely to lead to a home visit.**

Home visits will be undertaken by school staff. They will wear a lanyard confirming their identity.

If nobody is at home when they visit, they will have to decide - based on their safeguarding training - if other agencies need to become involved, if there is a concern about the child's wellbeing.

A 'sorry we missed you' form will be left, so you know we have visited.

When a home visit requires staff to enter a communal doorway, it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure access is allowed. If access isn't granted, then staff will have to decide - based on their safeguarding training - if other agencies need to become involved if there is a concern about the child's wellbeing.

Leave of absence requests



The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least 15 calendar days before the absence. Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing and potentially invoking safeguarding referrals to outside agencies.

Full policy on school website



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Incentives

As a school, we recognise the importance of providing incentives for children to achieve good attendance. Our incentives are focused on two categories: ongoing and focused incentives. Below is an overview of the incentives we utilise. This is not an exhaustive list and is reviewed and improved when impact begins to plateau.

Ongoing incentives

Daily:

- 1 e-praise point for attending

Weekly:

- 'Squirrel' awarded in assembly by phase (EYFS/1-2/3-4/5-6) for best attending class and most improved class.
- Squirrels are worth five minutes of golden time in the final week of term for the class.

Half-Termly:

- Prize draw featuring all pupils with attendance at or above 96.5% for the half-term.

Prizes

£25 toy voucher, £15 toy voucher and £10 toy voucher

- Half-termly thank you postcards to pupils in band 1 by the end of each half-term

Termly:

- Termly colour-ordered certificates for 100% attendance (Red-Indigo then Bronze to Gold)

Focused incentives

These are a little more secretive, so as not to spoil the surprise and novelty factor.

Examples of calendar focused incentives are:

- 1) Specific calendared timetable events in school to address whole school dips in attendance seen in the previous academic year
- 2) 'Pop up weeks' - Targeted focus weeks in school where any pupil with 100% attendance that week will receive a multi-pass (Parents will be told when these weeks are via dojo)
- 3) Freebie days - Days where attendance on that day leads to a freebie (such a free piece of toast from the school canteen) or entry into a prize draw on that day. **Note: if the winning name is absent on the day of the draw, the draw will continue until a pupil in attendance is drawn**

Our communication



To ensure parents are fully aware of the amount of time their child has been present/absent, the school will:

- Talk where possible using the language of lost learning hours rather than percentages;
- **Provide parents with a copy of their child's lost learning hours (in the previous term) at the start of every term.**

We prioritise communication strategies based on the attendance band a pupil is currently in or is likely to be in on the current trajectory.

For example:

Band 1 - when attendance is good (100% to 95%)

- Half-termly thank you letter

Band 2 - (94.9% to 90%) at risk of becoming persistently absent

- Phone call home when attendance drops below 95%

Band 3 - (89.9% to 85%) has become persistently absent

Band 4 - (84.9% to 80%) is persistently absent

- Phone call home and follow-up letter, when attendance drops below 90%
- Invitation to meet with attendance leaders when attendance is below 90% at the end of a half-term. If parents do not attend, then decision will be made to unauthorise absence, without medical evidence from that point onwards.

Persistent and Severe absence



Good attendance is above 95%

Attendance below 90% is considered persistent absence and we will be in contact to make you aware. Fines can be issued from this point.

Attendance below 75% is a safeguarding concern and will be treated as such.

Attendance below 50% is considered severely and will lead to external agency intervention.

Full policy on school website