Attendance policy



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| **Approved by:** | Governing Board | **Date:** 31/3/22 |
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# 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence

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

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance). 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](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II)
* Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3/chapter/3)
* Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/7/chapter/2/crossheading/school-attendance)
* [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made) (and [2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/regulation/2/made), [2011](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/made), [2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/made), [2016](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/made/data.html) amendments)
* [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

**3. Roles and responsibilities**

**3.1 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 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
* Informing NYCC of an unauthorized absence leading to a possible fixed-penalty notices issued by NYCC.

**3.3 The attendance officer- admin assistant/ Headteacher in our setting**

The school attendance officer:

* Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
* Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
* Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
* Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
* Advises the headteacher when a fixed-penalty notice may needed and to inform NYCC so they can make a decision.

**3.4 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.

**3.5 School admin staff**

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

**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 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.

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 9 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

**4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can ring the School Office 01977 672158 or text on the school phone

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Possible reasons why staff may be in doubt about the illness:

* Other sources have told staff about why a pupil is not in
* Multiple absences but no signs of illness
* A pattern of absence has been noted ie each Monday
* Safeguarding concerns
* Near to a holiday

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will discuss this with the parent/carer and they 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 about 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 as long as the pupil’s parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents can ring the School Office 01977 672158 or text on the school phone.

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.

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If half termly analysis of attendance reveals that a pattern is developing of a pupil being late, the Headteacher/ class teacher will have a conversation with the parent to see if there is a reason for this and what can be done to prevent it from continuing.

**4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by phoning the parent/carer to arrange a discussion and determine the reason for the absence. This will take place by 9.30am each day. Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Identify the correct attendance code to use.

**4.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents will receive a report about their child’s attendance on the termly information sent home detailing information about pupil progress. Any concerns will also be raised with a parent/carer directly at the half termly check.

**5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Please see Appendix 2 for a diagram of the procedure for managing absence in term time as provided by NYCC.

**5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher’s discretion.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’ based on NYCC guidance which suggests-

* Service personnel returning from active deployment
* If there is inflexibility of parents’ leave or working arrangements as part of a company policy. This needs to be evidenced by confirmation from the company/organization.
* Where leave is recommended as part of a parents’ or a child’s rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Some evidence is required.
* When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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

**5.2 Reducing persistent absence**

Persistent Absence is defined as a pupil missing 10% or more of school sessions.

In the event of persistent absence, the Head teacher will arrange to meet the parents/carers to discuss the situation with the aim of finding a solution/ strategy to stop this continuing.

A comment will be added onto the child’s end of term report under the absence section.

**5.3 Legal sanctions**

The 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 the 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

The decision to issue a penalty notice is solely with NYCC.

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**

Pupils will receive notification through *Marvellous Me* about good attendance at the end of each term.

**7. Attendance monitoring**

The attendance officer/ headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Half termly analysis takes place across the whole school.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil’s absence goes above 10 accumulative days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil’s absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, 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 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.

Our school collects and stores attendance data through Scholarpak. It is used to:

* Track the attendance of individual pupils
* Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
* Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

**8. Monitoring arrangements**

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

**9. Links with other policies**

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.

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| 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 |

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| Code | Definition | Scenario |
| 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 |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **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 |