

Policy Title: Attendance Policy

Mortimer



Leader: Mr. S Pickersgill

Review Date: Sept 2024

1. Aims

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 student 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 students 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) 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 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 Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher 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 students;
- 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.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mr Pickersgill and he can be contacted via email: spickersgill@mortimer.school, or telephone: 0191 456 6511.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7);
- arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families;
- 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 Head Teacher;
- working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence;
- advising the Head Teacher/Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Mrs Horsfall and she can be contacted via email: attendance@mortimer.school, or telephone: 0191 456 6511.

3.5 Head of Year

The Head of Year is responsible for monitoring student attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis and to take all the appropriate steps to ensure that attendance and punctuality of students in the year group are at the highest levels. The Head of Year is also to liaise with the Attendance Officer in this respect.

3.6 Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance daily for every timetabled lesson on time, using the correct codes, and submitting this information online through **ClassCharts within 10 minutes of a lesson starting**.

3.7 School Office Staff

School office staff will transfer calls and forward any emails from parents/carers to the school Attendance Officer, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.8 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every day, and every timetabled lesson, on time;
- contact the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. The Attendance Officer will add a comment on the attendance register when such information is received;
- provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child;
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day;
- not book holidays during term time;
- work actively with school staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur;
- ensure that, if their child is required leave the school premises during the school day (due to illness or appointments), they must be collected via the main reception by a person who is identified as a contact on our school information management system.

3.9 Students

Students are expected to attend every day, and every timetabled lesson, on time and be fully prepared for the day.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students 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 student 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 student is attending an approved educational activity);
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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

Students must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. 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 1:00pm (12:30pm for Year 7) and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am, and each subsequent day of absence, by contacting the school (see also section 7).

- Parents/carers should contact to inform the school of a child's absence. This can only be done A via the ClassCharts App. The Attendance Officer will add a comment on the attendance register when such information is received.
- The Attendance Officer will run an attendance report at 10.30am each day to identify any absence where parents/carers have not contacted school. If a student is marked absent at registration, and we have not had a reason for absence call, an automatic communication system will contact parents/carers directly via telephone, email and text message. This will ensure that the reason for the absence is known as soon as possible and alert the parent/carer if the student is not in school when they should be.
- Post-registration absences will also be detected and reported to the parents/carers.
- 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 student'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 unauthorized, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.
- Students who have poor attendance at school, without medical reason, may be visited at home by staff.

4.3 Planned Absence

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

Parents/carers should contact the school Attendance Officer on 0191 456 6511 to provide details of the planned medical or dental appointment. A messaging service is available via the ClassCharts App or direct to the Attendance Officer on mobile number 07581990688.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

If your child is required leave the school premises during the school day, due to illness or appointments, they must be collected via the main reception by a person who is identified as a contact on our school information management system.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A student 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.

Students who wish to succeed always attend school and are on time. We are trusting that students will arrive by 8.45am each day and be in their designated area so that they are ready for the day's learning. Failure to be in the school grounds by 8.50am may result in a 30-minute detention on the day the lateness occurs. Students who are repeatedly late in the same week will be issued with a 60-minute detention on the day the repeated lateness occurs, in addition to possible break-time detentions. 90-minute detentions will be issued for students who are persistently late

Students who arrive late to school are expected to sign in at reception.

If students arrive after the school register closes, the session is classed as an unauthorised absence. High levels of unauthorised absence can result in a referral to the Local Authorities Attendance & Monitoring team, and legal action may be taken against parents/carers, or parents/carers could be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

4.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

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

- call the student'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 student's emergency contacts, the school may request that a home visit is made by either a member of the pastoral team, the Safeguarding Officer, or the school Attendance Officer to ensure that the child is seen;
- 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, the school will consider involving the local authority Attendance & Monitoring Team.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via text message and ClassCharts. The DfE expects us to do this regularly. We will also include students' attendance in reports to parents/carers at least annually.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

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 least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with a leave of absence request form, available for collection from school reception.

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 student’s parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- study leave;
- traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision;
- other possible ‘exceptional circumstances’ where the Head Teacher may grant term-time holiday.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carer 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 Head Teacher, 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 student 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

We use a number of strategies for rewarding and improving attendance, such as celebrating good attendance in assemblies, rewards, post cards and contact with home.

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level;
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-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.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students 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

The school will:

- provide regular attendance reports to pastoral staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

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

The school will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students 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.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority, or DfE, is updated. As a minimum, this will be done at the start of a new academic year by the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance. 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.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration.
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration.
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed.
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment.
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance.
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations.
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school.
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence.
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody.
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school.
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.