

Attendance Policy

The Bythams Primary School



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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 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 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 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
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Supporting with the delivery of targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing school attendance reports/data to school staff
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.3 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 using Scholar Pack. Registers should be taken at 8:55am and at the start of the afternoon session – 12:50pm/1pm every day.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Accurately record absence codes for each pupil
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance, if required

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30am 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 school every day 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 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 also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, 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 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session (12:50pm for EYFS and KS1, 1pm for KS2) and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

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 as soon as practically possible and by 9:30am by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

To report an absence, please call the school office on 01780 410275, select option 1 and leave a message.

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 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.

Please complete an absence request form, providing a copy of any appointment letter or email, in advance of the appointment.

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

Where there are concerns about a pupil being late to school on a regular basis, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the family to discuss concerns and to find ways to support the child to arrive at school on time. Further support can be sought through Lincolnshire County Council's School Attendance Team.

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 arrange a home visit or contact the police to conduct a welfare check.
- 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 an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and attendance reports will be sent to parents on a termly basis (three times a year). The Headteacher will contact parents if attendance or punctuality is becoming a concern.

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. Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one of events.

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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website, or by emailing office@bythams.lincs.sch.uk to request one to be sent to you. 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 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 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, per child. 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

To celebrate and promote good attendance, the whole school and class attendance figures will be shared each week in assembly. These figures will also be published on the weekly newsletter.

The class with the highest attendance each term may receive a reward such as a non-uniform day.

100% attendance certificates will be given out at the end of each half term and the end of the school year.

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 pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school 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 develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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 pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Send letters to parents to raise concerns of attendance or punctuality
- 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

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 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
/	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
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
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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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

Appendix 2

Term Time Absence Authorisation – Parent Request Form

The regulations concerning authorised absences during term time have been tightened significantly throughout the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. The purpose of the new regulation is to 'clarify that leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are exceptional circumstances'.

In practise, the changes mean that:

- Headteachers are not allowed to authorise absences during term time for family holidays in any circumstances
- Head teachers may only authorise term time absence for an exceptional, once in a lifetime event.

I am requesting a leave of absence for my child/children.

Name of child/children: _____

Class(es): _____

For the following reasons [please continue on the reverse if more space required]:

Dates of absence from: ____/____/____ to ____/____/____ Total number of days or part days: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

In the case of separated families, if either parent does not agree to the absence, they must write to the school formerly stating this. In these cases, the parent who refuses permission will not be fined.

School Response:

The school has authorised/ not authorised your request [reasons below if not authorised]:

_____ Date: _____

Warning

A fixed penalty notice may be issued if you choose to take unauthorised term time leave of absence. Each parent carer may be liable to a penalty of £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per child) if paid after 21 days but before 28 days.

Appendix 3

Dear Parent/Carer,

(Child's Name and Class)

Unfortunately, your child has an outstanding absence on their attendance record and we not seem to have received either a telephone call, message or letter from you explain the reason for the absence.

Please complete the tear off slip below, and return it to school as soon as possible in order for us to ensure that your child's attendance is recorded accurately.

Failure to return the slip will result in your child's absence being marked as unauthorised. Please note that 'poorly' or 'unwell' are not classed as reasons for absence. Therefore, if these are given as the reasons, the absence has to be recorded as unauthorised.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

Please return to the school office

Child's name and class _____

Date of absence: _____

Reason for absence: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

Dear Parent/Carer,

Child's Name

From monitoring our registers, we find that your child's attendance has dropped to below 96%, which is a concern to us because this means that your child is regularly missing school – an absence of 5% equates to 1 day off in every 20 / your child has regularly been late to school in a morning.

We will be monitoring your child's attendance this term and expect an immediate and sustained improvement.

If these absences were due to an ongoing illness, please contact the school so that support can be put in place to help your child achieve their full potential.

If any sessions have not been authorised by the school, we must make you aware that the Local Authority will be contacted as unauthorised absences may lead to prosecution under the Education Act.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child's attendance / punctuality back to an acceptable level, please contact the school to discuss the matter further.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

Appendix 5

Dear Parent/Carer

Child's Name

Following previous correspondence, your child has continued to be absent from school. As you know, it is important that students attend school regularly – an absence of 5% equates to 1 day off in every 20.

We must, therefore, make you aware that the Local Authority will now be contacted regarding your child's attendance level. We would also like to invite you into school to attend an attendance panel review meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to work together to identify barriers to attendance and identify support which can be put in place in order to overcome the barriers, ensuring your child's attendance improves.

The meeting will be held at: _____ on _____.

We do hope you will be able to make it. Please contact the school to confirm your attendance or to rearrange the meeting if this is not scheduled at a convenient time.

If you choose not to attend, please be advised that the meeting will still proceed in your absence.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher