



# Attendance policy

## Aims

- 1) Our school aims to meet its 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
- 2) We will 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.
- 3) We expect every pupil to attend punctually every school day unless there is a legitimate reason for absence.

## Legislation and guidance

- 4) This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:
  - [The Education Act 1996](#)
  - [The Education Act 2002](#)
  - [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
  - [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
  - [The Government Guidance on Recording Attendance in Relation to COVID 19 for the 2020-2021 Academic Year](#)
  - Local authority guidance on issuing fixed penalty notices
- 5) This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.



6) This policy will also be applied in line with current equalities legislation.

### **Attendance registers**

7) By law, all Creative Education Trust schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

8) The attendance register will be taken 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

9) 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

10) See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

11) Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

12) Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 must arrive in school each day between 8.45 am and 8:55 am. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 or 6 must arrive in school each day by 8:45 am.

13) The register for the first session will be taken at 9 am for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and will be kept open until 9.15am. 8.50 am for pupils in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 and will be kept open until 9.05am.

The register for the second session will be taken at: 12.35 pm Reception, 12.50 pm Year 1 and 3, 1.05 pm Year 2 and 4 and 1.20pm Year 5 and 6.



### **Unplanned absence**

- 14) Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:10 am or as soon as practically possible. They should call the school on each morning of a longer-term absence unless a doctor's note has been provided stating that a defined period of absence is necessary.
- 15) Parents/carers are required to leave a message stating the name of the pupil and clear reason for their absence. If a call has not been received by 9.20 am, a member of the office team will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence. This information will then be recorded by the office team.
- 16) Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 17) If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- 18) If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

- 19) Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.
- 20) Parents should 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.
- 21) Parents/carers should inform the school of a medical appointment as soon as possible, and provide them with a copy of the appointment letter.

### **COVID-19 Related Absence**

- 22) In July 2021 the Department for Education amended regulations to enable schools, in the 2021-2022 academic year, to continue to record where a pupil does not



attend in circumstance relating to COVID-19 states that all children are expected to be back in fulltime education from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

23) This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test, and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a



period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

### **Lateness and punctuality**

- 24) A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- 25) A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- 26) The school recognises that lateness hinders a child's education, as they will miss valuable learning time. If children arrive late to school but before the registers are closed, their names and reasons for lateness are recorded on the school management system and necessary action is taken by senior leaders and the attendance team.



### **Following up absence**

27) The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **Reporting to parents**

28) Parents will receive a written report on their child's attendance at the end of each academic year as part of the annual report.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

29) Principals/Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

30) The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's/Headteacher's discretion.

31) Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in paragraphs 13-20
- 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

32) The Principal/Headteacher will **not authorise absence** for any of the following reasons:

- Term-time holidays
- Study leave



### **Legal sanctions**

- 33) Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- 34) If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- 35) The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal/Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:
- A 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
- 36) If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

- 37) The school aims to promote good attendance and works with parents and pupils to achieve this aim. Specific strategies may include:
- School wide highest attendance competitions for example visits by Poppy and Regina – our school guinea pigs.
  - Each day that a class has 100% attendance, they get given the next symbol or letter in the phrase \*AMAZING ATTENDANCE!\*. Once the phrase is complete, each class will have an attendance reward chosen by the pupils.
  - 100% and excellent attendance (97%+) certificates are presented each half term.
  - 100% attendance badges are presented to pupils at the end of each whole term.
  - Pupils subject to an Attendance Support Plan will receive an agreed reward (e.g. playing a game with a friend) at the end of each week, subject to 100% attendance.



### **Attendance monitoring**

- 38) The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.
- 39) If a pupil's absence goes above five days in an academic year, shows patterns of absence which are unusual or includes unauthorised absences we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.
- 40) If a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern, the school will prepare and implement an attendance support plan. The pupil and their parents will be invited to a meeting in school to contribute to this plan and to periodic review meetings.
- 41) If school strategies are insufficiently successful in improving attendance, we will involve an education welfare officer.
- 42) 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.
- 43) Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Creative Education Trust Board of Directors.
- 44) The school tracks the attendance of individual pupils to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. It uses this information to identify any children who may be in need of intervention and support. Patterns of attendance and the impact of strategies to improve attendance are monitored by the Academy Council/Academy Improvement Board.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- 45) The Creative Education Trust Board and Academy Council/Academy Improvement Board
- a) The Creative Education Trust Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It does this through routine reporting to the Academy Council/Academy Improvement Board. It holds the Principal/Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy in the same way.
- 46) The Principal/Headteacher:



- a) is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Academy Council/Academy Improvement Board.
- b) supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- c) issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

47) The attendance officer:

- a) monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- b) reports concerns about attendance to the Principal/Headteacher
- c) works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- d) arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- e) advises the Principal/Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

48) Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance in a timely manner and for each session/lesson as determined by academy leaders. This must be undertaken using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the defined academy reporting system (e.g. SIMS)

49) Office staff take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance updated July 2019.

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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<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>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	COVID-19 related absence as outlined above
<b>Y</b>	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
<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