

Abbey Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

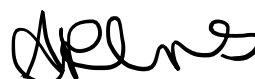
September 2025

Signed by:



Headteacher

Date: October 2025



Chair of governors

Date: October 2025

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Statement of intent

Abbey Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The senior school administrator is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and school every day and attend any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason, e.g. for birthdays or to go shopping, looking after other children
- Truancy before the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

4. Training of staff

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

5. Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The Governing Body will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment, if needed.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with parents and pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

6. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.

A text or telephone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for the attendance officer to make contact, if deemed appropriate. The school will inform the LA, when requested, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation. School will follow the LA flow chart procedures linked to attendance.

A pupil is at risk of Persistent Absence (PA) if they have 19 days of absence within an academic year. School will also monitor the number of days pupils are absent for and the following actions will be taken:

- 7-11 days absence – a phone call made to inform parents that their child is at risk of persistent absence and offer support in improving attendance. Attendance will be monitored for a set period and reviewed. If attendance improves, no further action will be taken. If attendance does not improve, monitoring will continue and be moved to the next level.
- 12 or more days absence – a letter will be sent confirming in writing to parents/carers that their child's attendance is being monitored for set period and offering support. If attendance improves, no further action will be taken but monitoring may continue if attendance is still below 90%. If attendance does not improve, arrangements will be made for the local authority attendance officer to become involved and the local authority flow chart followed (which could result in penalty notices being issued).

Where a pupil is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school can remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries. Appropriate safeguarding procedures will be followed.

7. Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support & call staff for help when they need it.

8. Attendance register

Staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity (**only used if pupils are off site for the majority of the day**)
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity

- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent.

9. Attendance officer

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the local authority has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data in liaison with the deputy Headteacher and senior school administrator, regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence, and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

10. Register Opening and Closing Times

The school will take the register at the start of each morning and afternoon session, in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after the register has been taken but before it closes will normally be marked with code L (late before register closes). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will normally be marked with code U (late after register closes), which counts as an unauthorised absence.

11. Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with SEND/SEMH

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil’s disability or special educational need results in unavoidable lateness. While the statutory register closing time cannot be extended beyond 30 minutes, the school may consider the use of alternative coding or continued use of code L (rather than code U) as a reasonable adjustment where lateness is directly linked to a pupil’s SEND/SEMH needs or disability. Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, will be supported by evidence. While an EHCP may provide formal backing, schools should not wait for this process to conclude. Other forms of evidence — such as professional advice, internal assessments, support plans, or records of reasonable adjustments already in place — can also justify and guide these decisions. All decisions should be clearly documented in the pupil’s attendance record and support plan.

12. Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

If a child reaches ten ‘L’ codes, a letter will be sent to parents outlining concerns and that punctuality will be monitored for a set period of time. If punctuality does not improve, parents/carers will be called into school for a meeting to work collaboratively with school and actively improve punctuality together. Should lateness improve, monitoring can be withdrawn. Should lateness continue, support from our local authority attendance officer may be sought.

The school day starts at 8.50am. Pupils should be through the gates at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by 8.55am. Pupils will receive an absent mark (N) if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time. Pupils attending after 8:55am will receive a late mark (coded ‘L’) to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- If a child arrives in school after 9:25am, this will be classed as arrival after registration has closed and coded as a ‘U’.
- After lunch, registers are marked by 1:05pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The afternoon register closes at 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

13. EYFS / Early Years Attendance (Nursery & Reception)

Although children in EYFS (Nursery and Reception) are not of statutory school age, once they are enrolled at our nursery the expectation is that they attend **every day and on time**. Establishing good habits and routines from the earliest stages supports children's social, emotional and academic development, and lays the foundation for strong attendance as they progress through school.

The school will:

- Maintain daily registers for EYFS children, with absence or lateness recorded accurately.
- Contact parents/carers by the *morning of the first day* of absence where no explanation is given.
- Apply the **whole-school attendance procedures** for EYFS pupils, including first-day messaging/calling, follow-up, and home visits if necessary, to ensure children are safeguarded.
- Monitor patterns or trends of absence (for example, regular absences, part-time attendance, or frequent late starts) and work proactively with families to address barriers.
- **Work in partnership with parents** to promote positive routines around attendance and punctuality, offering advice and support where needed.
- Where concerns about attendance persist, offer **Early Help** to support families at the earliest opportunity.
- Liaise with the Local Authority where prolonged or persistent absence raises safeguarding concerns.
- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, SEMH, or medical needs (including flexible start times or individualised timetables), documented through support plans or EHCP reviews.

14. Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines. Within a two year period, parents can receive a fixed penalty notice two times for holidays taken. Should a parent request a third holiday, it is at the discretion of the head whether a third penalty notice is given or the family are taken to court. Any further holiday requests will result in court action from the local authority.

15. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher. Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher.

Where permission has been granted, parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the system at the school office.

Our lunch time hours are anytime between 12pm and 1:00pm, dependant on the year group.

16. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, contact will be made from the HT or DHT to the parent, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider parent meetings, action plans, a reduced timetable or issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

17. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library and corridor
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified, using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

18. Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

19. Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

20. Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain prior arrangement from the Headteacher before such absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve online learning.

21. Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

22. Rewarding good attendance

The school will acknowledge good attendance in the following ways:

- **Weekly class awards**
- **Termly award/recognition**

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

23. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96% or above.

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Sept 2027, if not sooner

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.