



**North Lowestoft
PRU Partnership**



Attendance policy

February 2020

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1. Aims

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 providing this appropriately meets the needs of the individual
- 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

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

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).

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

Pupils must arrive at school on time at the start of the school day:

First Base:	09.30
Harbour:	08.45
Old Warren House:	09.20 or at the start of their timetabled provision.

The register for the first session will be kept open for 30 minutes following the opening of registration:

First Base:	09.30	Register closes at 10.00
Harbour:	08.50	Register closes at 09.20
Old Warren House:	09.20	Register closes at 09.50

The register for the second session will be kept open for 15 minutes following the opening of registration.

First Base	13.00	Register closes at 13.15
Harbour	12.45	Register closes at 13.00
Old Warren House	12.50	Register closes at 13.05

If a pupil arrives late they will receive a late mark in the register. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will receive an unauthorised absence mark for that session.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers 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 08.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers need to contact the school to explain the reasons for absence. If this call is out of office hours a message can be left.

First Base	01502 512963
Harbour	01502 539755

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of sickness and diarrhoea the child should not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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 will be notified of this.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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.

Parents/carers can contact the school in advance about appointments either by telephone, letter or in person.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. This absence will be recorded as unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. If there are any concerns about a pupil's punctuality parents/carers will be contacted to share concerns and discuss any support that needs to be put in place to help resolve any difficulties. If the concerns are not resolved a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be considered.

3.5 Following up absence

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.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report pupils' attendance records annually in their written end-of-year report and these records will be shared in review meetings.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Head of Schools may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents can obtain an "Exceptional Leave of Absence" Form from the school office, which should be submitted (ideally) four weeks in advance of the period of absence.

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 Head of School's discretion.

Unauthorised holiday will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer at the discretion of the Head of School and if deemed necessary a prevention meeting will be held between Education Welfare Officer, Head of School and Parent/Carer.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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.

We closely monitor the attendance of every pupil. If we are concerned about any pupil's attendance record in the first instance, we will speak with parents/carers and if the concern continues we will then write to them. Following this if attendance doesn't improve a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer. If we are concerned about the number of unauthorised absences a pupil has a referral will also be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The law says that if children of compulsory school age are absent from school without good reason they are committing an offence and their parents or carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrate's Court.

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.

The Head of School decides if they wish to fine unauthorised absences from school by issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a pupil has had 6 unauthorised sessions over any period of time in one academic year, the Head of School may issue a Penalty Notice but they can also refer after one session of unauthorised absence in line with County policy. The Head of School requests by a referral to the Local Authority to issue a fixed Penalty Notice on their behalf.

The local authority will issue penalty notices on the behalf of the Head of School where a pupil:

- has an unauthorised absence during a school term. This can include persistently being late for school.
- is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days; please note this is £60 for each child, for each parent/carer (ie 2 children, 2 parent/carers = £240 fine) increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority and if this isn't received within 28 days then court proceedings may begin.

Second and subsequent unauthorised term-time absence of leave may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an Educational Welfare officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The school is responsible for ensuring that children have good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Providing a curriculum that is engaging and meets the needs of all learners.
- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately, using all necessary register codes.
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school can decide if the reason justifies authorising the absence).
- Phoning parents on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been received
- Working with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.

- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service with concerns around pupil's attendance or possible missing child.
- Making a referral to the Education Welfare Service where necessary and adopting the Penalty Notice Protocol.
- Continuing to undertake regular attendance audits in line with Suffolk County Council's Policy.
- If a dual placed, part-time pupil is ill and is sent home through illness, we will advise the mainstream school.

School will communicate with parents/carers at an early stage if there are any issues around attendance and offer any support to help improve it. If parents/carers have any concerns, please contact the Head of School to discuss these.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer (Administration Assistant) monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2) and are expected to call each day unless they have informed the school that their child is going to be off for more than a day.

If a pupil's absence falls below:

First Base	90%
Harbour	90%
Old Warren House	80%

we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to fall, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is:

First Base	10%
Harbour	10%
Old Warren House	20%

If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to these percentages, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil attendance data is collected by the local authority each half term and submitted to the DFE. We share our attendance data termly with the management committee.

We track the attendance of every pupil closely and contact parents/carers as soon as we are aware of any concerns. The attendance officer collects data every month which is shared with the Head of School to monitor and evaluate and identify those pupils who are in need of intervention and support. For pupils who are dual registered, during their placement at Harbour, our attendance officer sends the mainstream school the pupil's attendance certificate at the end of every week.

If, in the case of a pupil absence, the school has had no contact with parents/carers regarding the reason for absence for 3 days, on the fourth day the school will make further efforts to ascertain the well-being of the pupil eg: informing other relevant authorities; home visit etc.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The management committee

The management committee through the Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the management committee.

The Head of School also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer (Administration Assistant):

- Contacts parents/carers if their child hasn't arrived at school
- Inputs the correct codes for any absences
- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head of School
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Liaises with the Head of School regarding arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Liaises with the Head of School around fixed-penalty notices
- Take calls from parents about absence and informs the Head of School.

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for taking the attendance register daily at the start of each session registration time and recording the pupils present or absent.

7.5 Parents/Carers

Punctuality

It is the parents/carer's responsibility to ensure that their children arrive to school on time.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence by 8.30 am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office or emailing.
- To provide medical evidence, if requested, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer. Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after the School's start time **(See Point 3 above)**.

Illness/Medical Absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

In the case of a chronic illness or other long term illness issue then a letter or note from the GP or other health professional to state the child is not fit for school or stating the times and days each week the child will be fit for school will be required. This will give clarity to both the school and the child, plus the parent/carer

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday or if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

7.6 Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate absence which exceeds the persistent absence threshold in each school. and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Attendance Service.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Heads of School. At every review, the policy will be shared, adopted and signed by the management committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our **Child Protection and Safeguarding 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
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

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