

Attendance Policy and Procedures



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Imagine, Make a Difference,
Persevere, Succeed

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- It also refers to:
 - School census guidance
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Referring to the Local Authority for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorizing Zoe Smith and Carol Young to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days

- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Janis Williams and can be contacted via the school office on 01642 761985.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 / school administrators (authorised by the Head Teacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Janis Williams and can be contacted via the main school office on 01642 761985.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 8:55am for the morning session and 1:10pm for the afternoon session.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call 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
- 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting your child's class teacher or a member of senior leadership who can be contacted via the school office on 01642 761985 or email office@inglebymill.org.uk

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm in Nursery, at 12:25pm in Reception and at 1:00pm in KS1 and KS2.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01642 761985.

As part of their First day Response procedures, the office staff will contact primary and secondary contacts by telephone from 9:10am when a child is absent from school and no explanation for absence has been received. If the school has not established a reason for absence by 11:30am, a senior leader will carry out a home visit to establish the reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents and carers **must** provide evidence of appointments, such as surgery appointment cards or text confirmations to the school office, **for this absence to be authorized as a medical appointment.**

However, we encourage parents 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 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

A persistent poor punctuality is detrimental to the educational progress of children. School monitors punctuality through register checks which are carried out by the attendance officer. Parents and carers will be contacted to offer support and advice when attendance and punctuality is an issue. The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher will be responsible for producing individual attendance and punctuality plans with parents and carers.

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 on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence from 9:10am to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit and/or contact statutory services e.g. police, social care.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: the a referral will be made to the local authority following attendance procedures which may result in a notice to improve being issued, penalty notice or other legal intervention under the act (see section 5.2 below).

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via annual reports. Regular attendance monitoring may result in contact with parents or carers to outline school's concerns, this can be via a telephone call, a letter or an invitation to attend and attendance meeting. Parents/carers have immediate access to their child's attendance certificate and records via the Arbor app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background 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 office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil’s offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

(Penalty notices are 'not a money making scheme'. The money does not go to schools. Local authorities can use the revenues to administer the fines system, and any surplus on 'attendance support'. Any remaining surplus at the end of the year must be paid to the secretary of state.)

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is celebrated on a Friday in celebration assembly on a class basis. School is currently reviewing this in line with current research to determine the most effective way to reward good attendance.

Where attendance or punctuality is an ongoing concern, the Head Teacher or Deputy head teacher will hold a meeting with parents to agree and sign an Attendance Plan. Such plans are intended to support parents in working alongside school to overcome barriers to attendance and/or punctuality. Parents may also be signposted to universal services through The family6 Hub based in Thornaby for further support.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where there are complex barriers to attendance, school will offer support and advice through our SENDCos and the Attendance Officer in order to try to overcome these barriers and improve attendance.

The school's response will be determined by the needs of the individual or the wider, complex needs of the child's family. Support mechanisms could include any of the following or a combination of them:

- Referral to Early Help or Family Hub services;
- Referral to CAMHS Decider Skills program (low-level CBT)
- Referral to in-school ELSA programme
- Referral to ABC Counselling Service (School SLA)
- Adaptions to entry/exit procedures
- Adaptions to timetables including reduced timetables
- Adaptions to uniform to support a diagnosed sensory need
- Ongoing support from Education Welfare, including home visits
- Allocation of a key person in school to check in with identified pupils at key points during the day
- Access to sensory and proprioceptive activities and space, as required

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil's attendance at school is impacted adversely by mental or physical ill health or their SEND, the school's response will be determined by the needs of the child or the wider complex needs of the child's family. Support mechanisms could include any of the following or a combination of them:

- School liaison and collaboration with outside agencies such as CAHMS; psychologists and psychiatrists; occupational health; NHS professionals such as consultants and specialised support teams, such as HIVI team, SEMH team, Early Help team, Future Steps (private occupational therapy)
- ABC and Alliance counselling services; hospital education teams
- Collaboration with families including offers of Early Help support; support from Education Welfare Officer and referral to relevant agencies
- As outlined in the previous section' school can also make adaptions to timetabling, entry and exit procedures, uniform and the environment through access to sensory and proprioceptive activities and breakout space
- Access to remote learning to support recovery from long-term health conditions

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, school will work with families to support pupils on their return to school. The school will follow and act on medical advice so that adaptions can be made to support the pupil where it is possible to do so. School may offer a reduced timetable or phased return, if this in the best interest of the pupil. Adaptions to seating or access to classrooms may be put in place where possible, if this supports the physical needs of the pupil. The school will also identify the child as educationally vulnerable if they have missed a significant period of time in school due to unavoidable medical needs. Pupils will then be supported through pupil progress arrangements to help bridge any gaps in learning.

8. Attendance monitoring

The school's Attendance Officer (Head Teacher) monitors attendance, absence and punctuality data on a weekly basis and, in collaboration with the Deputy Head Teacher, plans a course of action for addressing individual cases. Analytical reports on school attendance and on key groups (such as persistent absentees) are maintained and these reports are included in the Head Teacher's Report to Governors. Monitoring reports are also used in conjunction with attainment and progress data to establish possible reasons for year group-specific or class-specific performance issues.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
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8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum it is reviewed annually by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy