



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Approval Authority:**

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**Date Ratified by GB:**

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**Signed by Chair of GB:**

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jo Bretayne and can be contacted via [office@pinnerwood.co.uk](mailto:office@pinnerwood.co.uk)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Recording daily attendance on SIMS with information provided from parents/carers
- 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 headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Ms Joanna Gilbert and can be contacted via 0208 868 2468 (option 1), [attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk](mailto:attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk)

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS by 9am.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

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

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call, email or report absence on ParentMail to the school, to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 pm. Any child arriving after 8.50am must be accompanied by an adult to the school office and will be recorded as late.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible either by;

- 1) Calling the school office 0208 868 246 (Option 1),
- 2) Emailing [attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk](mailto:attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk)
- 3) Reporting via the absence reporting tool on Parent Mail (See also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We will need a copy of the appointment notification sent in to the school or shown at pick up

Parent/Carers should notify the school by:

- 1) Phone 0208 868 2468 (option 1)
- 2) Emailing [attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk](mailto:attendance@pinnerwood.co.uk)
- 3) Reporting via the absence reporting tool on ParentMail as soon as the appointment is known to the parent/carer.

**However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.**

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence in writing. 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

If a child/ren miss the gates the parent/carer should accompany the child/ren to the school office and sign them in on InVentry.

### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will try to contact the parents using SMS or email via Parent Mail. Advise any other agencies who monitor the child's attendance. Advise the CP leaders with any concerns
- 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 or a missing mark letter will be sent home

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- The School will send out 'Missing Mark' letters where applicable

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The Attendance Office will inform parents about their child's attendance if they have any concern

**Persistent absence (PA)** is defined as an attendance rate of 90% or below. This is monitored weekly. If a child falls into this category, a letter will be sent to parents and/or a meeting will be held advising that their child/ren's attendance is now being monitored by the school. The parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Headteacher and Attendance Officer, if the child/ren's attendance fails to improve.

The Attendance officer will contact the parents if a regular pattern of absence or sibling absence has been detected

The child's percentage attendance figure for the school year will go out with child's yearly report in July.



## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- 1) The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional
- 2) A housing crisis that prevents a child attending
- 3) Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- 4) If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- 5) A sporting event where the child is competing regional/national event
- 6) The child is performing and the Headteacher is satisfied that the child's education will not suffer by reason of taking part in the performances or activities and is covered by the section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- 7) This list isn't exclusive and the school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request

Any request should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher as soon as it is anticipated before the absence, and before any travel is booked. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and each application will be judged on its individual merit and circumstances

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. SACRE provides guidance The school 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, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

Legal Enforcement by Harrow Local Authority.

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996). In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. Harrow Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for schools, parents/carers and other interested parties. Harrow Council will also be conducting Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984. Harrow's Code of Conduct provides that Penalty Notices/prosecutions may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

#### **Absence from school**

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence within a period of no more than 12 weeks
- A leave of absence of at least 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) not approved by head teacher as exceptional

#### **Lateness**

- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed (ten unauthorised late marks) within a period of no more than 12 weeks

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police

Harrow Council will also be conducting Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984. The Local Authority will hold Pre Court Panels for cases where there is persistent absenteeism/lateness and despite other interventions, issues are still continuing and it is necessary to pursue formal legal action

The Harrow Attendance Guidance and Resources (pack) provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action which is called Attendance Intervention Model (AIM)

Council guidance at: [http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200086/school\\_and\\_college/1951/education\\_penalty\\_notices/3](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200086/school_and_college/1951/education_penalty_notices/3) Sanctions could be imposed including:

- Your child could lose their school place
- You could be subject to legal action by the authority that could result in a fine of up £2500.00

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- The school has an attendance display board where we celebrate good attendance
- A weekly raffle is held in Friday assembly to highlight and reward good attendance
- Weekly class prizes are given for 100% attendance and no lates
- Regular Parent Mail/Newletters are sent out to remind parents of the school's attendance policy
- Children are awarded for having above 97% attendance at the end of the school year

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers] and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Monitor children who are under 90%
- Add anything else that is part of your strategy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the Headteacher and attendance officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

| Code     | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>/</b> | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| <b>\</b> | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| <b>L</b> | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| <b>B</b> | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| <b>D</b> | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| <b>J</b> | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| <b>P</b> | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| <b>V</b> | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| <b>W</b> | 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>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  |

## Appendix 1: attendance visual

