



# Attendance Policy

**Approved by:**

Full Governing Body

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### 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 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 board

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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Our School's link governor for attendance is Lynne Anderson. Our link governor meets with the Headteacher to discuss and monitor attendance across the school every half term with attendance included as a standard agenda item at Full Governing Board meetings.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able 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 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 the Headteacher and can be contacted via the school office: 01202 872474 or [office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk)

### 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
- Maintain regular contact with parents to support children whose attendance is a concern. This can be done through meetings, telephone calls, Arbor Emails and WhatsApp communication.
- If a child's absence becomes a concern—whether due to frequent absences, prolonged illness, or unexplained absences, Miss Hurst and another member of staff may conduct a home visit. These visits allow us to check on the well-being of the pupil, offer support to families, and work together to improve attendance.
- Monitor lateness and, when appropriate, walk around the local area to encourage children to arrive at school on time. Contact will be made with parents/carers when a child's lateness becomes a concern.
- To ensure attendance remains a priority for all staff by 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 Inclusion Leads from Dorset County Council to tackle persistent absence
- Work alongside children who are finding it difficult to attend school, providing support and encouragement to help improve their attendance.
- Oversee the process of issuing penalty notices for persistent absenteeism, ensuring proper procedures are followed. Advising the Headteacher when fixed-penalty notices are to be issued

The attendance officer is Miss Hurst and can be contacted via the school office: 01202 872474 or [office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk)

### 3.5 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 08.45am for morning roll call and 1.35pm for afternoon roll call on each school day.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office 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 them to a relevant staff member (form tutor, head of year, pastoral lead, attendance officer) where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance. It is daily practice, that our office staff issue an absence report to relevant staff members providing a summary of absent pupils each day.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

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/carers, 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/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08.45am 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 the school office team. The school office will direct them to the most appropriate contact (e.g. attendance officer, SENDCo, pastoral lead).

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, 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:

- 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

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.30pm. It is really important pupils are in by this time ready for registration and timetabled learning interventions.

*Year 5 and 7 pupils are to arrive at 8.25am and year 6 and 8 pupils at 8.30am on each school day.*

The register for the first session will be taken between 08.30 and 08.40am and will be kept open until 08.45am (this is morning registration).

## 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 08.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via telephone on 01202 872474 or via the office email [office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@westmoorsmid.dorset.sch.uk).

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 7 school days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may 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 an illness-related absence extends beyond 15 days, we are typically required to notify the local authority. However, each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and the notification may occur earlier if necessary.

The school has a duty of care towards its pupils, particularly from a safeguarding perspective. At our discretion, we may request welfare checks and/or report concerns to the local authority's children's services if a period of absence raises concerns. Additionally, as part of our efforts to safeguard pupils and improve attendance, the school may carry out home visits to assess the well-being of students who are frequently absent. These visits will be conducted weekly, randomly, and based on staff availability. This is standard procedure and should not be a cause for concern to parents/carers. These checks are in place to support your child/ren's best interests and are part of our safeguarding practices.

If the school is not satisfied with 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 notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers will need to advise the school of appointments either via email or telephone call to the school office team. They will also need to provide a letter / proof of appointment (text, email etc).

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 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

Lateness is monitored and where there is cause for concern, or school support is required, parents/carers will receive a letter to inform them. Their child/ren will continue to be monitored to identify appropriate support required.

## 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 to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, request a welfare check, report to the local authority, depending on the individual case of the pupil/s.
- 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 the Local Authority
- Home visits can be conducted to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, to offer support to the family, and to encourage a prompt return to school. These visits may be carried out by school staff and/or the Inclusion Lead
- 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/carers 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: A penalty notice may be considered.

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels:

- Attendance marks will be identified on their report cards (termly)
- Pupil's with less than 90% attendance (present) will receive attendance letters home. This will be assessed every 3 weeks (twice every half-term).
- Pupils with 100% attendance in any given school week (isolated percentage) will receive positive praise point awards. This is available for parents/carers to see in Arbor parent portal.
- Pupils with an unexpected drop in attendance will be monitored and parents/carers contacted.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Before deciding whether to authorise a leave of absence, the Headteacher will consider:

- The impact on the pupil's academic progress
- The pupil's attendance over the academic year
- Whether the leave falls within any key stage national tests

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event that has had a negative impact on a child's ability to attend school, study or complete their assessments. We can only grant a leave of absence during term-time if we consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' that warrant this.

Exceptional circumstances may include for example:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of an immediate family member
- Religious observance

- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family member's graduation ceremony/passing out parade

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 one week prior to the absence. If you are unable to meet this request and / or the circumstances are unexpected, then the school shall take into considering the individual's request in a timely manner. You will be expected to complete a *request for leave of absence form*, available from the school office. The headteacher 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
  - Absence will not be authorised for the reasons stated below:
  - To care for other family members
  - Birthdays
  - To interpret for other family members
  - No school uniform/shoes
  - Bullying
  - Friendship problems
  - Head lice
  - Learning difficulties
  - Family holiday

- > Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- > Family Anniversaries
- > Death of a pet
- > Travel problems
- > School refusal

## 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 headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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 parents/carers 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/carers 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/carers 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.

### Notices to improve

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

### 6.1 Our attendance strategies

The school seeks to promote effective partnerships with parents/carers and to provide support, advice and guidance on the importance of regular and punctual attendance of their children. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Seek to foster and develop positive partnerships with parents/carers; encourage/invite parents/carers in to school to discuss individual attendance concerns; signpost parents/carers to our Pastoral Support Worker or other professional/agency for support and guidance.
- Set whole school targets in relation to attendance and persistent absence. The whole school attendance target for 2024/2025 is 94%+.
- Expect that all pupils will achieve an attendance level of 100%.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and progress towards attendance targets in our newsletters, class, assemblies, consultation evenings, workshops and in the prospectus. Attendance issues may also be discussed in inclusion meetings, pupil target setting meetings and/or in relevant staff meetings.

The school encourages the active involvement of other services and agencies to support and promote good attendance. The Education Social Work Service may arrange a Parenting Order, an Education Supervision Order, issue a fine (also known as a penalty notice) and/or liaise with other agencies and professionals as appropriate.

To promote attendance, we use a range of strategies for rewarding and improving attendance. These include:

- Weekly 100% attendance praise points
- Stars and stickers scheme to visually reward a select group of pupils requiring attendance support
- Termly attendance awards
- Positive communications with parents/carers e.g. Headteacher awards home
- Communicating to parents/carers and carers via termly letters sent out via Arbor
- Dissemination of weekly attendance data for tutors to support children and help improve their attendance and reduce the incidence of lateness
- Half termly celebration assemblies for excellent attendance
- Attendance display board in school displaying the following:
  - Tutor group league table (weekly update)

- House attendance
- Year group attendance
- Whole school and phase assemblies that highlight the importance of good attendance
- Weekly presentation of KS2 and KS3 attendance shields to the tutor group with the highest percentage attendance in each key stage
- Newsletter updates weekly on tutor group attendance awards with an emphasis placed on the importance of school attendance
- Timely targeted interventions and support, working in partnerships with colleagues in Dorset Council

## 6.2 Our inclusive attendance practice

West Moors Middle School is an Inclusive Attendance School, where our steadfast dedication to attendance is driven by student-focused initiatives, evidence-based practices, and a collective commitment to understanding and fulfilling our shared roles in fostering outstanding attendance. Our attendance approach is fundamentally guided by the Inclusive Attendance professional development model. For more information on our inclusive attendance, please reference *appendix 2*.

## 7. Children Who Cannot Attend School Due to Health Needs

At West Moors Middle School, we understand that there may be times when a child or young person cannot attend school because of health needs or other exceptional circumstances. In these cases, our priority is to make sure that every pupil continues to receive the right support and access to education.

### Referral Process

If we identify that a pupil may require support from a Learning Centre, we will complete a referral form and send it to our **Link Inclusion Lead** at Dorset Council.

As the school knows the pupil best, we will also attend the **Central Learning Centre Panel** to present the referral and provide any relevant background information. This ensures that the most suitable provision is identified for each young person. Schools have around five minutes to present each case.

The panel meets weekly and includes representatives from the **Learning and Belonging Service, Learning and Belonging Team Managers, the Virtual School, and Inclusion Leads**.

### Section 19 of the Education Act 1996

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 outlines the local authority's duty to provide suitable alternative education for children of compulsory school age who cannot attend school because of **illness, exclusion, or other reasons**.

As a school, we work closely with the local authority to ensure that suitable provision is in place as soon as possible for any child in this situation.

### When a Child Cannot Attend School

#### 1. Permanent Exclusion

If a child is permanently excluded, Dorset Council must arrange suitable full-time education from the **sixth school day** after the exclusion.

Alternative provision might include a Learning Centre, online learning, or vocational training.

#### 2. Illness

If a child is unable to attend school because of medical or mental health needs, we will keep in regular contact with parents and health professionals to agree the best approach.

If it becomes clear that a pupil will be absent for **15 school days or more**, we will make a referral so that appropriate provision can be put in place, such as home tuition, hospital education, or online learning.

### 3. Otherwise (Other Circumstances)

Sometimes, children are unable to access school for reasons other than illness or exclusion. In these cases, we will work closely with the local authority to consider what provision might be needed.

Examples of this include:

- A pupil with **10 or more continuous days of unauthorised absence**.
- A pupil who has been absent for **15 days or more** (authorised or unauthorised) for related reasons.
- A pupil who is **not currently on a school roll**, including where a child has recently been withdrawn from Elective Home Education (EHE).
- A pupil with an **EHCP** who is not receiving appropriate provision or who does not currently have a school place.
- Situations where a child is **awaiting a school place**, and there may be a delay in starting education.

## 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.

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.

To monitor and action attendance, we follow an attendance roadmap in line with DfE guidance (2024). See the below steps we follow;

### Attendance Support Process

#### Step 1: Identify, Assess and Prevent

Early identification of attendance concerns, assessment of barriers, and proactive measures to prevent further absence.

#### Step 2: Early Absence Support

This may include phone calls, emails, invitations to a drop-in session, or formal meetings.

Students whose attendance is below 90% will be discussed at the Termly Targeted Support meetings with the Inclusion Lead.

#### Step 3: Formalised Support

This stage may include working alongside Inclusion Leads from Dorset Council and being invited to an Educational Planning Meeting.

At this meeting, different strategies and support options will be discussed, which may include an Attendance Contract. A *Notice to Improve* is likely to be issued at this point (under section 5.2).

If parents fail to attend the Educational Planning Meeting, the meeting will go ahead in their absence and the outcome will be shared in writing.

#### Step 4: Warning of Legal Action

If attendance does not improve, formal warnings will be issued, outlining the legal requirement for improvement.

#### Step 5: Legal Action

#### Some children may be discussed at an in Year Fair Access Panel.

If there continues to be no improvement despite all support and intervention, and all other avenues of support have been exhausted, a *Penalty Notice* may be issued.

Our school also monitors and analyses attendance on a daily basis. The school's Attendance Officer is

Christine Hurst. The attendance officer, in liaison with the Headteacher, monitors pupil absence on an ongoing basis.

The school collects and stores attendance data to enable:

- Tracking of attendance of individual pupils
- Identification as to whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- The monitoring and evaluation of those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Formal attendance review meetings take place every term (Targeted support meetings). Present at these reviews will be the school's attendance officer and then when necessary, the inclusion leader and Headteacher.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Regular attendance monitoring reports are shared with the Headteacher and the Link Governor for Attendance. In addition, a summary of attendance monitoring data is presented to all governors at Full Governing Board meetings each term.

## 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

## 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 form tutors and SLT members, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- 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/carers 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)
- Identify pupils who may be at risk of reduced attendance
- Half termly letters to inform parents/carers of their child/ren's reduced or concerning attendance
- Rewards and incentives for targeted groups of children with a history or concerning attendance
- Rewards and incentives for every pupil within school (reference appendix 2)
- Closer monitoring of pupils with attendance percentage nearing the persistent absentee bracket

## 9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by the attendance officer and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board prior to publishing online and implementing any strategy adjustments.

## 10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

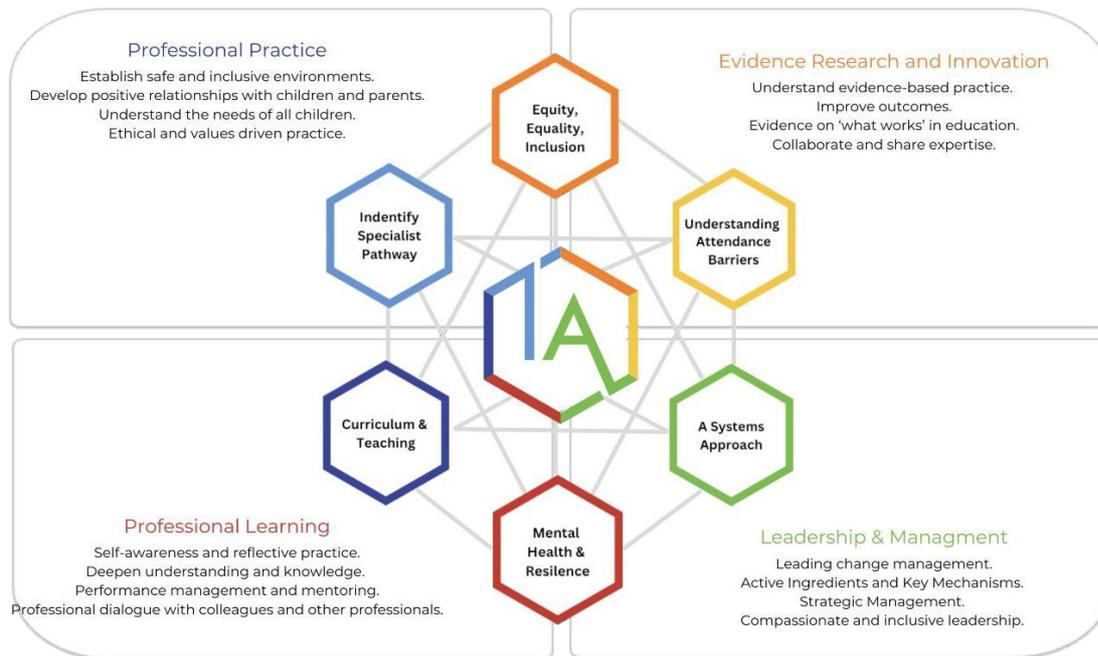
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Inclusive Attendance School

### Inclusive Attendance Professional Development Model

Our attendance approach is fundamentally guided by the Inclusive Attendance professional development model. Comprising six tailored Learning Modules, this model empowers us to deepen our understanding by facilitating continuous professional learning for all staff. Within this model, the four domains of practice ensure the provision of professional learning, professional development, evidence-based practices, and exemplary leadership and management to seamlessly integrate theory into practice.

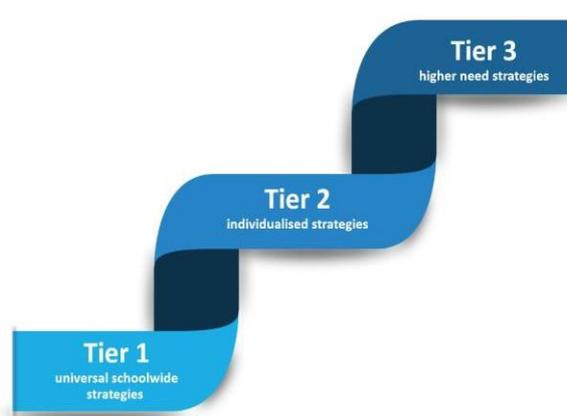


### Annual Inclusive Attendance 7-Month Development Programme

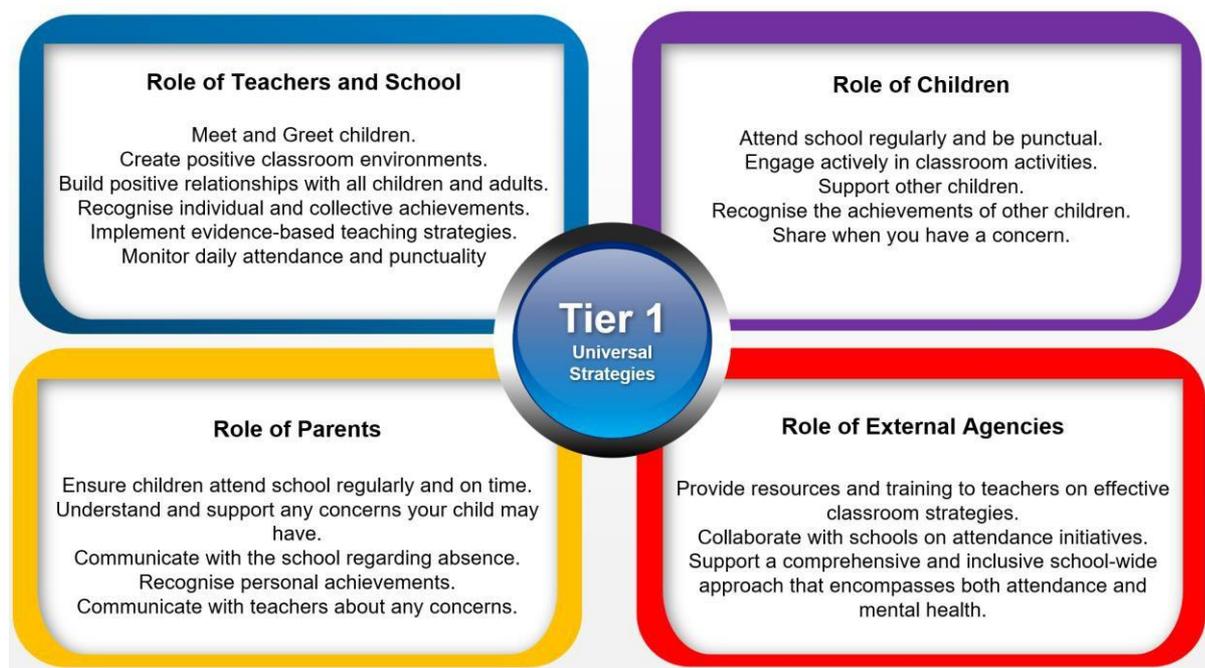
Year after year, we review and further enhance our attendance practices through dedicated participation in the Inclusive Attendance 7-month development programme. This investment allows us to remain at the forefront of educational change and extends unparalleled support to our children and their families, equipping them with access to the finest possible assistance.

### Multi-Tiered System of Support

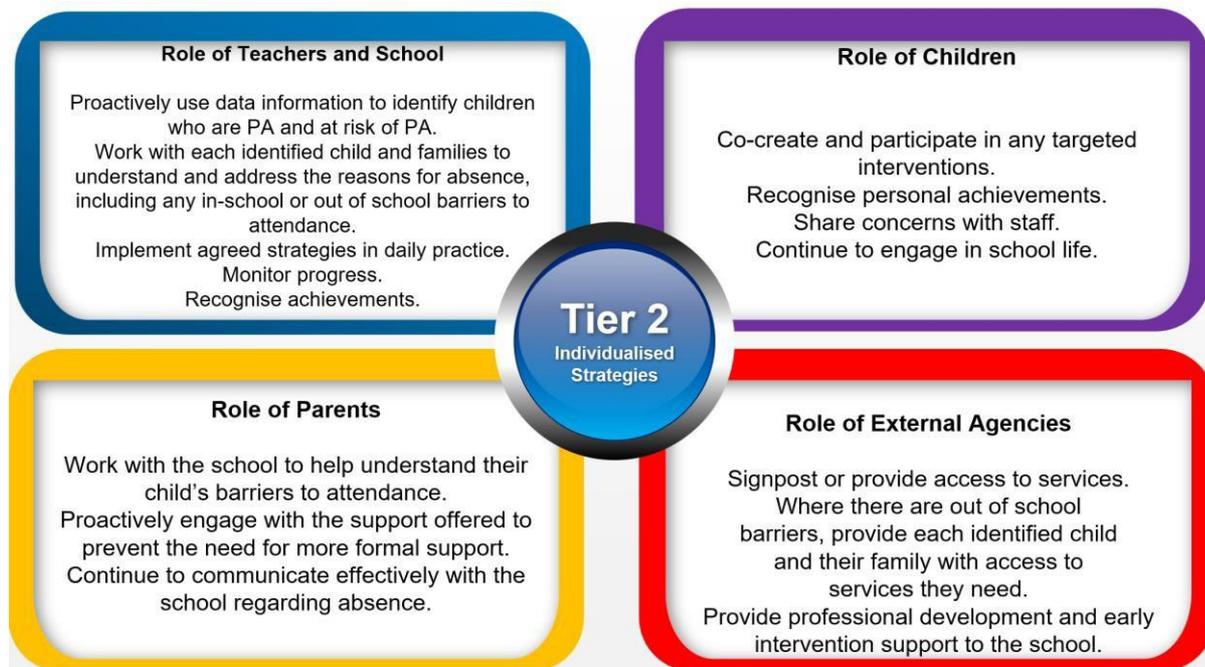
To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, we implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority. Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of the system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidelines.



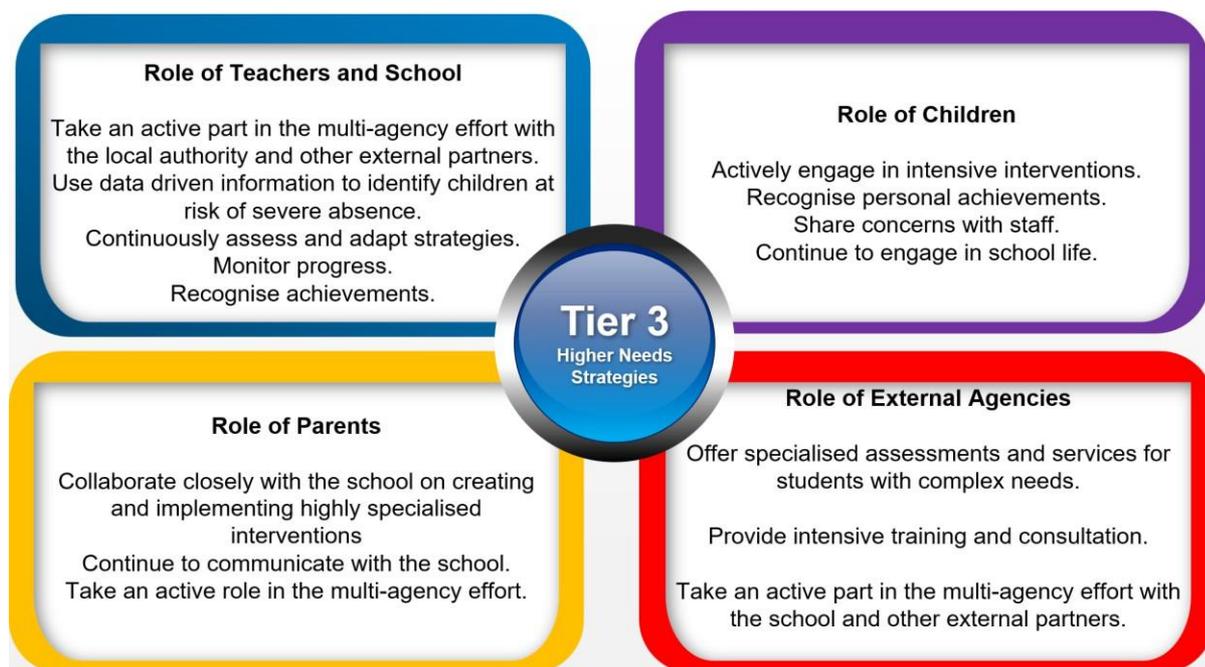
**Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.**



**Tier 2 - Individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.**



**Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.**



## Recognition-Based Approach

Our attendance philosophy is rooted in a recognition-based approach that recognises both personal and collective achievements. This approach serves to cultivate positive environments, nurture relationships, foster inclusivity, and ultimately cultivate intrinsic motivation among our children, families, and staff.

## The Importance of School Attendance

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system.

- *Academic Achievement:* Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- *Knowledge Acquisition:* School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing school days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- *Social Development:* School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- *Building Routine:* School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- *Teacher Interaction:* Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.
- *Preventing Knowledge Gaps:* Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- *School Engagement:* Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.
- *Legal and Parental Responsibility:* Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to legal consequences.
- *Community Well-being:* High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities.