

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Saltaire Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of children who are registered at our school on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- 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 monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Curriculum and Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring the strategies used to improve attendance and the outcomes of these strategies.

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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.3 The attendance officer

Our attendance officer is one of the Family Support Workers. The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- *Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices*

3.4 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.

3.5 School Admin Team

The admin team are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They also follow up any unknown reasons for absence each day by calling parents and contacts.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

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

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

The doors will open each day at 8:50am for children to enter the building. Children must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:05. In Reception, the register will be taken at 9:10am and will be kept open until 9:15am. Children in all year groups will be marked as late (using the code L) until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm in Reception (closing at 12:35pm) and 1:00pm in all other year groups and will be kept open until 1:05pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can inform school of an unplanned absence by:

- Calling the school and leaving a message on the answerphone
- Calling the school and informing a member of staff

- Informing a teacher who will then inform the school office
- Sending an email to Absence@saltaireps.co.uk

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

The school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this 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 using the processes described in section 4.2.

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/carer 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 but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the code: L.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the code: U.

We will monitor children's lateness and if an ongoing pattern causes concern, we will write to parents and carers to raise this. We may choose to invite parents and carers for a meeting to discuss this.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- **Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary**
- **Identify whether the absence is approved or not**
- **Identify the correct attendance code to use.**
- **Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by:**
 - **Telephoning the contacts stored in our system, beginning with Priority 1, then 2, and so on**
 - **If parents or carers cannot be contacted, a follow-up email will be sent and the Headteacher will be informed**
 - **If we have not been able to establish contact by 12:00pm, a home visit may be conducted, if practical to do so - we may not be able to travel to the home address if the family live outside of the local area**
 - **If we have not been able to make contact by the end of the school day, the school may report its concerns to the police using the 101 service**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason,

4.6 Reporting to parents

We report children's attendance information to parents and carers on the termly reports to parents. This information is also available on the school website app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

In exceptional circumstances there are times when a parent may legitimately request a leave of absence which might include the following:

- A parent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday
- There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation
- The holiday is a unique one off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted.

Leave for the purpose of a family holiday will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised holiday absence.

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. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Family weddings - Leave for the purpose of a family wedding will only be granted for the wedding of an immediate family member as follows:
 - Parents or carers
 - Siblings
 - Grandparents
 - Aunts, Uncles or Cousins

The school will only grant up to two days absence for family weddings - any additional absence (for example, when travelling abroad for the wedding) will be classed as term-time holiday.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

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. **The Attendance Officer and Headteacher will regularly monitor (at least monthly) the attendance of all children and will identify those pupils identified as persistent absentees. We will work closely with parents and carers to reduce persistent absence, as follows:**

- **Stage 1: letter informing parent that the child's attendance is below 90%, that the school is monitoring the situation and our expectations for improvement**
- **Stage 2: second letter explaining that the situation has not improved, invite to meeting with attendance officer**
- **Stage 3: invite to meeting with attendance officer and headteacher**
- **Stage 4: If the situation does not improve (or significantly worsens) the school may use the services of the local authority education welfare service (additional cost to school)**

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 4 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		

C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day