

Attendance Policy

It is the responsibility of all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the contents of all Trust policies and any amendments hereafter.

Changes

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	10 December 2020	CST Trustees	Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated.	Annual Review - no changes whilst CST carry out a whole Trust Attendance Review
2	05 May 2021	CST Trustees		Review - This policy forms the overarching policy for attendance at CST schools. In addition, appendix 2 is a template for the individual CST school to complete with specific details of contacts and processes etc tailored to the setting as relevant.
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Alterations

This Scheme may be altered, added to or repealed by a majority resolution of the Trustees of CST in a general meeting.

Approvals (Every three years)

Version	Date	Approved by
1	4 December 2017	CST Trustees
2	10 December 2020	CST Trustees
3	05 May 2021	CST Trustees

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Cathedral Schools Trust

1. Introduction

Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) aims to work with parents¹ to ensure the highest levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils within its academies/free school; this is with the intention of enabling all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

By law, all children of a compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education; parents have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens.

Safeguarding of all pupils is a priority for the CST and this policy is written with the understanding of the close association between school attendance and safeguarding issues for pupils.

2. Aims of the policy

Our Trust aims:

- to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled; and acting early to address patterns of absence.
- to safeguard pupils and students.
- to increase the overall attendance to comply with the Government's recommended guidelines.
- to reduce unauthorised absences and reduce the level of persistent absence (attendance below 90%).
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently.
- to reduce lateness.
- to implement attendance intervention strategies when required, including home visits.
- to reward pupils with good or improved attendance.
- to make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.
- to support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

² A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

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It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, our Trust schools will encourage parents of Nursery children, and Reception children who are not yet compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

3. Registering of pupils

By law all schools are required to complete an attendance register twice a day, once at the beginning of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session to confirm whether a pupil is present, absent, engaged in an approved off-site educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4. Lateness

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

Punctuality is very important and it is something CST encourages all pupils to take seriously so they develop good habits for future employment.

Research shows that there are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the pupil, which over a year, can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school. Just 5 minutes per day equates to 3 whole days lost.
- The disruption to other pupils in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

A Senior Leader from the school will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Repeat lateness will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice at the discretion of the school.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present. All our Trust schools close their registers 30 minutes after the start of the school day.

A pupil who arrives late **after** the registers close will be marked as absent. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised. If the pupil is late for no good reason, they will be marked with the **unauthorised** absence code 'Late after registers close' (**U**). See DfE Attendance Codes – Appendix One.

5. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

5.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Our Trust follows the DfE School Attendance Guide which states that if authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

Medical evidence may be requested where a pupil has been absent for more than 4 school days due to illness OR where a pupil's attendance is **below 90%** and/or is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Appendix 2 sets out the information for the individual Trust school on how parents should notify their child's school of absence.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the school's 'Pastoral Lead' or 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

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Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

5.2 Unavoidable medical/dental appointments

All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a pupil need to have an appointment during school hours, evidence of this appointment may need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the academy/free school not authorising the absence. It would normally be expected that parents do not take their son/daughter out of school for a whole day for a medical/dental appointment.

5.3. Religious Observance

Our Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for a religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

5.4 - Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

5.5 Exclusions

If the CST school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion must be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

6. First Day of Absence Response

Each of our schools' First Day response process is set out below in Appendix 2. For safeguarding reasons, our schools will contact parents or their emergency contacts to check on any unexplained absences. If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, the school may conduct a home visit or request a Welfare Check from the police.

7. Rewarding Good and Improved school attendance

Each academy/free school has a range of strategies available to support parents/carers and pupils in getting into school and improving school attendance.

Each of our school's reward systems and strategies has been carefully considered to ensure it does not make pupils who have poor attendance, through no fault of their own, feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low attendance rate and its impact on the pupil's own learning or the learning or rewards for the class as a whole.

8. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be

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satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school: see Appendix 2. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

9. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

10. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case. (See DfE School Attendance guidance.)

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a regular basis either daily or weekly as agreed with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by the school, in conjunction with the AP.

11. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document, or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

12. Support for Parents to improve School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

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Each of our schools will try to engage parents into promoting good attendance. CST schools aim to advise and support parents and families that are having difficulties with attendance. Each school has a named contact for support- see appendix 2.

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the designated senior leader with responsibility for absence -see appendix 2 for named person- to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue, and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

13. Penalty notices

When the decision has been made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, parents will be informed in line with the CST school absence procedures. The CST school may send in a request to the relevant local authority for the consideration of a penalty notice, who will then make the final decision about whether a penalty notice will be issued.

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Bristol LA Penalty notice guidance: If a parent takes a pupil out of school on holiday during term time and that absence is **unauthorised for 8 or more continuous sessions, in any 10 week period** the school will request a Penalty Notice be issued by the Bristol local authority.

('10 week period' means a continuous period of 100 school sessions (which would usually be 50 school days). Days when the school is not in session are not counted (i.e. Inset Days, Bank Holidays, School Holidays and Weekends). The 100 school sessions could span two different terms, or indeed, two academic years.)

North Somerset Penalty Notice Guidance: Within North Somerset, the issuing of Penalty Notices is considered appropriate when cases of unauthorised absence for **a period of 10 or more sessions, continuous or aggregated within the previous six months.**

All the CST schools need to have at least two members of staff having completed the penalty notice training - one being a senior leader and the other an administrator.

14. Education supervision orders

An academy or free/school, in conjunction with their local authority, may consider applying to the courts for an education supervision order when a parent/carer fails to ensure their child has regular school attendance.

The academy/free school will inform the parent/carer that they are considering this option prior to the application.

15. Prosecutions

When an education supervision order fails or the application is deemed inappropriate, the academy/free school may apply to the local authority for a prosecution where attendance continues to be poor and when no improvement is seen.

If a parent/carer does not cooperate with the Education Supervision Order (ESO) the parent/carer could be referred back to the court for a potential breach of the Order.

The local authority may prosecute a parent/carer, this could result in a more severe penalty including a fine of up to £2500, a Community Order or, in extreme cases a prison sentence of up to three months.

16. Taking pupils off roll/children missing education (CME)

Should a pupil transfer to another school, the academy/free school will continue to have the pupils name on roll until he/she has been placed on the roll of his/her new school. If a pupil appears not to be attending the school for a 10 day period of time and no contact can be made, the academy/free school will complete a child missing education form (CME) and submit this to the relevant local authority. This may be completed after the young person has been missing from school as unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days.

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The Bristol CST schools will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#) and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk

For St Katherine's – based in North Somerset local authority: follow the link to the policy n-somerset.gov.uk/Children_Missing_in_Education_Policy. North Somerset Contact Information: For advice and guidance on CME processes and procedures please contact: Telephone:0300 1237336
Email: SomersetEducationSafeguarding@somerset.gov.uk

All the CST schools need to have at least two members of staff having completed the training for Children Missing in Education - one being a senior leader, Designated Safeguarding Lead and an administrator with responsibility for attendance and children on roll.

17. Persistently sick pupils

If a pupil is suffering from a long-term illness or on-going medical problem parents may be asked to provide medical evidence from the hospital/G.P or CAMHS. A referral to the Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS) Service may be appropriate, this will be discussed with the parents/carers.

18. Roles and responsibilities

Headteachers and Schools:

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

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

All staff should be aware that it is a statutory obligation to keep accurate records of all pupils' attendance and punctuality; Form tutors/class teachers will register all pupils during am and pm registration.

Staff should be aware that they have a professional obligation to keep accurate attendance records; incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable. Registers provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a court of law.

CST Schools will ensure that attendance information is regularly communicated to parents.

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CST Schools will accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness and will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities- as set out in appendix 2.

The Local Governing Body:

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.

Each of our schools has a link governor for attendance (this is often the named governor for safeguarding), or a committee responsible for attendance. See appendix 2 for the named governor with responsibility for attendance.

Attendance data is included in the headteacher's report for each full governing body meeting. Good practice is to include attendance data by year group, and pupil groups, specifically the attendance of pupil premium pupils compared with all pupil groups.

Each local governing body will ensure that the school website has published the CST policy on their school website and that appendix 2 for each school's specific procedures are up to date.

Board of Trustees:

The Trust has a responsibility for strategically monitoring school attendance across the Trust. Each school will set a target for annual attendance.

The Education and Standards committee regularly reviews the school wide attendance rates and analysis not only by individual schools but also by a range of relevant pupil groups, including year groups, disadvantaged pupils (pupil premium and FSM), SEND and vulnerable pupils. The Trust will review the attendance policy and associated procedures every three years.

Best practice and impact of procedures will be shared across the Trust schools.

Parents/carers:

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the local authority taking legal action.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a healthy condition to learn.

Parents/carers are responsible for immediately informing the academy/free school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence and each day thereafter.

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Parents/carers should not take their child out of school during term time and are to be made aware of the potential consequences of a penalty notice being issued or subsequent prosecution of doing so without the school's prior written permission.

LINKS to OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE PAGES ON ATTENDANCE:

<http://www.stkaths.org.uk/parentscarers/attendance-holidays/#>

<https://bccs.bristol.sch.uk/contact-us/reporting-absencelateness/>

<https://www.trinityacademybristol.org/head/school-day/>

<https://www.victoriaparkprimary.co.uk/attendance/>

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[Letter for parents to request special leave of absence](#)

<http://headleypark.bristol.sch.uk/our-school/attendance/>

<https://stokeparkprimary.org/parents-information/attendance-and-absence/>

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Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence

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O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible

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		attendances
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Appendix 2: Headley Park Primary School Attendance Policy

The importance of attendance

Our mission at Headley Park is to ensure that every pupil leaves our school with the ability and desire to learn more, unlock their potential and make their mark in the world.

Good attendance and punctuality are essential if you are to succeed at school. Research shows that there is a direct link between good attendance and academic progress and achievement. It is absolutely vital that children are in school everyday in order to maximise their learning. Any days missed will have a detrimental effect on children's learning.

Over a school year and school career, this is the impact of attendance at HPPS:

Percentage	No. of days missed per <u>year</u>	No. of days missed over <u>career</u>
100%	0 days	0 days
96%	8.5 days	52 days
94%	11 days	78 days
92%	15 days (<i>3 weeks</i>)	104 days
90%	19.5 days (<i>4 weeks</i>)	131 days
80%	37 days (<i>a whole term</i>)	261 days

Safeguarding

Attendance, as with safeguarding, is everyone's responsibility. As a school we recognise that attendance is a safeguarding matter and that poor attendance may indicate that a pupil's welfare is at risk. We also recognise that parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DFE.

Aims

We will consistently work towards a goal of above 96% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The aims of this attendance appendix is to:

- Maximise attendance rates for all pupils individually and for the school community as a whole;
- Clarify staff roles and responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality; and
- Inform pupils and parents of the procedures that will be followed in cases of absence or lateness.

Working *with* parents

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We can only achieve great school attendance (and therefore great learning outcomes) by working together. The processes set out in this appendix are designed to help improve school attendance for every child and ensure every child is able to reach their full potential over their time at Headley Park.

Promoting school attendance

At Headley Park Primary School, we promote the importance of good school attendance by:

- Celebrating every class who achieve 96% or above attendance each week in Praise assembly;
- Giving the class with the highest percentage attendance at the end of each term an additional playtime;
- Including a fortnightly feature on the school newsletter stating whole school attendance;
- Discussing attendance with children who may need support or guidance related to walking to school or morning routines; and
- Discussing attendance at parent consultation meetings throughout the year.

Improving school attendance

We work hard to support families where attendance has fallen. We do this through:

- Ensuring everyone understands their responsibility for securing good attendance at school;
- Holding weekly attendance meetings with our attendance team to review whole school attendance and investigate reasons for individual pupil's attendance levels;
- Regular communication to parents regarding children's attendance at school;
- A stepped response to falling attendance (see below) including supportive phone calls, emails and meetings to help parents with improving their child's attendance;
- Inviting parents to meet with the attendance leader to discuss ways to improve attendance when needed;
- Contacting parents when children are persistently late at the beginning of the school day; and
- Making home visits where appropriate to support a child in returning to school.

Registration timings

- Our pupils must arrive by **8.40am** on each school day.
- Our morning registers are taken as soon as possible but by no later than **9.05 am**. Registers will be kept open until **9.15am**.
- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**), which counts as present.

Punctuality

Pupils late for the start of the morning and afternoon session will report to the school office. The office administrator will register them in the school system and record their reason for absence (reported as an L registration mark). Anyone arriving after 9.15 am is no longer deemed as late and is classified as U (unauthorised).

Parents/carers of pupils who are late for sessions more than six times in any one term will be invited to a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher to discuss further support. If this does not improve a child's punctuality then a fixed term penalty notice will be requested.

Registers

Accurate and thorough marking of the registers takes place by teachers at the beginning of each school session (am and pm), using the agreed system of codes ('/' for present and 'N' for absent).

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Absence from school

In order to safeguard the children in our school, we have a duty of care to follow up on any unknown absences.

If their child is not going to be in school, parents should inform the school office by telephone before 8.30am on the first day of absence and leave a message on the dedicated absence voicemail.

If we have not heard from parents, the processes we may take are clarified below:

Notification from parent received		No notification from parent received	
Day	Action	Day	Action
1	No further action	1	The office team will call the contact numbers for the child in order to gain an explanation for the absence. They will leave a voicemail asking you to call the school back if no one answers. If no explanation is received by midday, we will call other contacts on the list.
2	No further action (as long as notification has been received on day 2 also or if the original sickness was due to a gastrointestinal cause).	2	If no explanation is received, the office will call all emergency contacts we have for the child. On day 2, the attendance leader is notified that no explanation has been provided. In some cases, we may visit home.
3	In some cases, the office will call home to check in and see how the child is. They will remind parents that we can offer calpol at school and that we send a child home if they are unwell at school during the day. A member of the leadership team will be informed when a child is absent for 3 days.	3	If no explanation is received, the office will call all emergency contacts again. A home visit will be made and a letter posted through the letterbox. If we receive no response, we will call 101. Child Missing in Education processes begin.
4	The class teacher will make a phone call home to check in, remind of the support we can offer in school if a child is not well and to arrange a time to send work home to be completed (if appropriate).	4+	We will continue to follow Child Missing in Education processes. <i>(Education Welfare Service tel: 0117 352 1438 email at childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk).</i>
5	A senior leader will call home for a conversation about the absence.		
6	If a child is still not back at school, we		

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	<p>may not authorise the absence.</p> <p>We may arrange to visit home (particularly if we have not received any medical evidence for the absence).</p>	
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This procedure is to ensure that we know the whereabouts of all our children and to make sure that all our families are safe. This also helps to identify whether an absence is authorised or not and to identify the correct attendance code to use.

Monitoring attendance

Each week, the HPPS attendance team meets to monitor school attendance. During these meetings, the team:

- Check the previous week's registers reviewing coding and outstanding actions, and to identify the reasons for absences across the school;
- Review any child whose overall school attendance has dropped that week and discuss actions that may be required to support improvement;
- Review any penalty notices that may need to be referred; and
- Analyse key trends across the school.

Falling attendance

In cases where attendance falls below the school's expectations, there is a stepped response taken (see below). Individual pupils are discussed by the attendance team in the weekly meeting and the stepped response may be adapted to suit the needs of each individual case.

Step	Who	What	When	Why
1	Class teacher	A supportive phone call or playground check in, checking in and offering support, record on CPOMS	A child's attendance drops below the whole school target of 96%	So that we can gather information about the reasons for absence and so that parents are supported to increase their child's attendance
2	Phase leader or attendance leader <i>(depending on case)</i>	A phone call to remind parents of the number of days missed, record on CPOMS	A child's attendance <u>continues</u> to drop below 96%	So that parents are clear on the number of days missed and the impact on learning. Parents will be made aware of the support available to them
3	Phase leader	Email 1, record on CPOMS	A child's attendance <u>continues</u> to drop below 96%	To inform parents of the no. of days missed and explain that attendance is now being monitored. To provide parents with the opportunity to contact us if they need help. To explain the next steps if attendance continues to fall (they may be invited in for a meeting and medical evidence may be required for future absences, decided on a case by case basis)

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4	Attendance leader	Email 2 and action plan, record on CPOMS	A child's attendance <u>continues</u> to drop and may now be below 90%	To invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for continued low attendance and to prevent the child from becoming a persistent absentee. During the meeting, providing medical evidence will be discussed and an action plan will be put in place with an agreed timescale for improvement.
5	Headteacher	Phone call followed by a meeting, record on CPOMS	If the attendance continues to drop after the action plan has been put in place	To invite parents in so that they are aware of the steps the school will now take. This may include all future absences being unauthorised. At this meeting, the risk of prosecution will be discussed.

Term time leave

Current legislation does not allow any holiday during term time unless there are extenuating circumstances when it will be at the discretion of the Head or Assistant Head Teacher. Therefore, Headley Park Primary school does not authorise holiday absences apart from in exceptional circumstances such as:

- a. Bereavement
- b. Compassionate Leave
- c. Weddings of immediate family members (as long as not abroad)
- d. Educational experiences discussed with the Headteacher in advance of the absence being requested

Therefore any holiday absences will be classified as unauthorised and parents will be informed accordingly.

For a full list of exceptional circumstances, please see the school website.

Requesting term time leave

To request any term time leave, parents must return a 'Pupil Term Time Leave Request' form. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. Wherever possible, this should be **at least four weeks** before the absence. Leave of absences cannot be approved retrospectively. You have to get permission from the Assistant Headteacher/Headteacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances. Parents may be required to provide the school with additional evidence in order to support the request. The expectation of the school is that **term time holidays should not be planned or booked** as a matter of course, as **they are highly likely to be unauthorised**.

Absence will be marked as unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday).
- The pupil is on a family holiday.
- If pupil attendance is already below 90% (this will be discussed with parents in a meeting).

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Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'. Therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent/carer but may have day to day care of the child.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued to parents who do not comply with the school's policy. The penalty is £60 (per parent, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution.

Penalty Notices may be issued when:

- A parent has taken their child on holiday during term without school authorisation especially when the pupil will miss exams i.e. SATs in Year 2 and Year 6.
- A pupil is not in school and after investigation their absence at that time was unauthorised.
- Pupils are regularly late after the register has closed each day.
- A pupil has 8 or more unauthorised absences within the previous 10 week period

Guidance Documents:

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE – updated 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September- updated January 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

School Attendance (DfE – updated January 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

School Behaviour and Attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE – updated May 2020)

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

[School Exclusion \(DfE – updated October 2020\)](#)

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE – updated 2016)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council) and reporting link to Bristol

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme>

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council)

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>