



## Attendance Policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

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Chair of Governors:	Teresa Cutler
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## Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance.....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4. Recording attendance.....	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	6
6. Strategies for promoting attendance.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7. Attendance monitoring.....	7
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	8
9. Links with other policies.....	8
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

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### **1. Aims**

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

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

### **2. Legislation and guidance**

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

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

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing body**

The governing body is responsible for:

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

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention 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 Head Teacher and can be contacted via 0121 464 9634.

#### **3.4 The attendance officer:**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Natasha Garrett, and they can be contacted via email at [n.garrett@uffculme.bham.sch.uk](mailto:n.garrett@uffculme.bham.sch.uk) or telephone on 0121 464 9634, ext 2001.

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the schools MIS system (SIMS) via both AM and PM class registers.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and report this to the Attendance Officer.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

### **3.8 Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once after the lunch 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 initials of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not.

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 09.00am on each school day.

The register for the AM session will be taken at 08.45am and will be kept open until 09.30am. The register for the PM session will be taken immediately after the lunch break for each class and will be kept open until 2.00pm.

#### **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 09.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance line (see also section 7).

The school's student absence line can be contacted via telephone on 0121 464 9634, selecting option 1; if the call is unanswered there is the opportunity to leave a voice message detailing the pupil's absence.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Copies of medical appointment letters can be either to the school ([enquiry@uffculme.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@uffculme.bham.sch.uk)) or show at Reception no less than a minimum of 24 hours before the appointment date.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. 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 (L).
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)

When a pupil is persistently late, or a pattern of lateness is identified the school will offer parent/carers a meeting to discuss any ongoing issues and offer support.

#### **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:

- Send a text message and attempt to call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other professionals involved with the child/family.
- 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.

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or the police.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will advise parents/carers about their child's attendance via their Annual Review and School Report. If a pupil's attendance is causing a concern parent/carer will be notified and communicated with more frequently.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Death of parent/carer, sibling, or close family member of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent, sibling, or close family member of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time.
- Leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, e.g., family wedding/funeral.
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, e.g., family wedding/funeral.

If leave is granted, the Head Teacher is the person who determines the number of school days a child can be away from school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two academic weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via an email request to [enquiry@uffculme.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@uffculme.bham.sch.uk) or contacting the school office on 0121 464 9634. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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.

#### **5.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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 to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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. Attendance monitoring**

Attendance is monitored closely at Uffculme School. The attendance officer circulates daily attendance spreadsheets and alerts SLT to any concerning patterns or trends. SLT work with SENCO's to address any identified areas of concern. The Head Teacher reports attendance to Governors on a regular basis.

### **6.1 Monitoring attendance**

The Attendance Officer will:

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

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

### **6.2 Analysing attendance.**

The Attendance Officer will:

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

### **6.3 Using data to improve attendance.**

The Attendance Officer will:

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

### **6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence.**

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

➤ Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

➤ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

### **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the headteacher or member of the senior leadership team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

➤ Child protection and safeguarding policy

➤ Behaviour policy

### **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

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

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

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

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