

Attendance Policy



Last Reviewed by:	Rebecca Thompson
Date of review:	September 2023
Due for next Review:	October 2024
Headteacher:	Rebecca Thompson

This version covers the current COVID-19 attendance codes

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
5. Attendance monitoring	6
6. Roles and responsibilities	7
7. Monitoring arrangements	7
8. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes	8
Appendix 2 – Recording non-attendance related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) (as provided by the DfE).....	10

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. School procedures

3.1 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:20 The register for the second session will be taken at 13:20 and will be kept open until 13:40

3.1a First day response:

On the first day of absence, for any child who has not been marked as arrive, If a student is missing on a morning, our admin team will call home and leave a message.

If they are unable to get through then the deputy DLS and child welfare officer, SLT or Parent support advisors will be informed.

Our admin and deputy DSL and child welfare officer have regular EWO meeting and update the head weekly on attendance with an ongoing RAG report.

Our aim is to support pupils, parents and carers to ensure their child has good attendance.

We understand that for some pupils, school attendance can be a challenge due to medical needs, or social and emotional based anxiety. Our deputy DSL and child welfare officer is trained in EBSA and will work with the PSA's in supporting pupils and families and liaise with the Head teacher and SLT to make reasonable adjustments and also outside professionals.

Attendance 2022/2023:

Highfield's overall attendance figure for years 7 to 11 2022/2023 was 89.52 % National average for special schools is 89%.

Highfields overall attendance figures for Post years 12 to 14 2022/2023 was 90%.

3.2 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 08:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents are requested to contact School on 01924 264240, the answerphone will be on until 08:00, please leave the name of your child, class and reason for absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask 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 unauthorized and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorizing these absences.

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.

Parents can contact the class teacher via Class DOJO, stating the time and date of the appointment and name of your child, contact school admin or the Key stage lead via class DOJO or email.

- admin@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk
- Semi Formal and SCERTs Pathway abates@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

- Formal Pathway jhickey@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk
- Post 16 asheppard@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. This must be done in writing to the Headteacher.

Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

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

Currently most of our students arrive in school via school transport, should buses be late, the Passenger Assistant will contact school to advise us

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a child is absent from school and you have not informed school you will be contacted, either by the admin staff or your child's class teacher via Class DOJO on the first day of absence

3.6 Reporting to parents

You will receive a breakdown of your attendance in every Annual Review and at the of the school year.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- *If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.*
- *Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.*
- *The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;*
- *Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.*
- *Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs';*
- *To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during*

term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorized absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a Monthly/half termly 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 3.2)

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

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

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.

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.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 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.

Governors receive termly attendance update via the head teachers report.

6.2 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 issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The head teacher attends regular special heads meetings and attendance of special schools is monitored with a view to always be striving to improve.

6.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and 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

6.4 Class Teacher

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

6.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Assistant Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

8. 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

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

Appendix 2 – Recording non-attendance related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) (as provided by the DfE)

We have defined a set of sub codes for schools to use to consistently record non-attendance related to COVID-19 and help them to complete the educational settings status form.

Set of sub-codes

The set of sub codes to record non-attendance related to COVID-19 are:

Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code X02: Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

This code is used for pupils who are self-isolating because they have symptoms of COVID-19 but they have not yet had a positive test.

Code X03: Not applicable for this academic year

Code X04: Not applicable for this academic year

Code X05: Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)

This code is used for pupils who are required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) red list rules.

Code X06: Pupil who is clinically extremely vulnerable if shielding is advised

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. However, this code is used if shielding is advised nationally or in a local area by DHSC, Public Health England (PHE) or UK Health Security Agency. In this scenario, pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school.

Code X07: Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in government advice

This code is for pupils who as part of local or national restrictions to education settings are specifically advised not to attend school for public health reasons related to COVID-19.

Code X08: Pupil not attending school in line with advice from Directors of Public Health as part of outbreak management

This code is for pupils who are advised not attend school, for public health reasons, as part of formal contingency planning (sometimes called outbreak management) advice related to COVID-19. This code can only be used to record restricted attendance where this has been advised by the relevant public health authority.

Code X09: Pupil or student required to self-isolate as a close contact of a confirmed case

This code is for pupils or students who are advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are not fully vaccinated and are over the age of 18 years and 6 months. There is no requirement for children or young people under the age of 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccine status, to self-isolate whilst awaiting the results of their PCR test where they have been a close contact.

Code I01: Illness

This code is used for pupils who are absent because of non-COVID-19 related illness or sickness.

Code I02: Illness confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

This code is used for pupils who are absent because they have tested positive for COVID-19.

Management information software suppliers are implementing these changes at their earliest convenience. Where schools are using these sub-codes, they will still need to consider on an individual basis whether Code X is the appropriate code for a given non-attendance. They will

need to ensure that Code X is only used where a pupil does not attend school because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from either Public Health England (PHE), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

Where a pupil's non-attendance does not meet these requirements, it should not be recorded as Code X and schools should consider whether another code can be used

Appendix 3 - Formal Non-Attendance Warning letter

|



Gawthorpe Lane
Ossett
West Yorkshire
WF5 9BS

Headteacher:
Mrs R. Thompson

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

Formal Non-Attendance Warning letter for **Name** Attendance Percentage: **%**

I wrote to you recently concerning the irregular attendance of (Student Name). Unfortunately, there has been no improvement and **Student name/s** attendance is currently **%**. Government legislation states that once a student's attendance falls below 90%, they are deemed to be a 'Persistent Absence' student. This means legal action can be taken against parents/carers or an Education Supervision Order issued to the student.

Unless satisfactory attendance is made and maintained, further action will be taken. Your child will be subject to the Fast Track monitoring process which will involve a home visit with myself and the Education Welfare Officer. Following this meeting, you will be issued with a penalty note. If there is no significant improvement, you are at risk of a fine.

Penalties under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1) and (1a) for failing to ensure a child attends school regularly are as follows:

A person found guilty of an offence under the section is liable, on summary conviction, to:

- A fine not exceeding Level 4 on the Standard Scale (£1,000)

However, if the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) above, the parent knows that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without justification to cause them to do so, he/she is guilty of an offence, a person guilty of an offence under subsection (1a) is liable on summary conviction to:

- A fine not exceeding Level 4 on the standards scale (£2,500)
- Imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months
- Both above

A Penalty notice may be issued, this represents a £60 fine (if paid with 21 days) or £120 fine (if paid after 21 days) or £120.00 fine (if paid after 21 days but within 28 days). If payment of a Penalty Notice is not received within 28 days, a prosecution will be brought against you.

It is necessary to point out that it is your responsibility to ensure your child receives a full-time education. Please note further illness will NOT be authorised unless proof of illness is given to school, i.e., note from GP, copy of prescription, medical appointment etc. Highfield School does not authorise holidays in term time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Your Sincerely,

Rebecca Thompson
Head Teacher



Appendix 4 – Attendance Letter

Gawthorpe Lane
Ossett
West Yorkshire
WF5 9BS

Headteacher:
Mrs R Thompson



Date

School Attendance

Dear

At Highfield School we are keen to ensure that all students have excellent attendance, our targets for attendance is a minimum of 95% for all students. When a student's attendance falls below 95% this will impact on their learning and development in school.

As part of our efforts to improve levels of attendance at school I am writing to express concerns that your child has had some recent absences. We need you to work with us to ensure this excellent level of attendance is both reached and sustained throughout the year.

[Students Name]'s attendance is currently **[9%]**, a copy of your child's register is enclosed with this letter.

In the first instance we will be monitoring **[Name]** attendance over the next four weeks to see if there is any improvement. I must advise you that if absences continue, you are at risk of being issued with a formal warning letter which may lead to legal action under section 444 (1) and (1a) of the Education Act 1996. We will also arrange a meeting in school/virtual with myself and the Education Welfare Officer, Karina Dexter, present is an improvement in attendance is not seen.

Please note further illness will NOT be authorised unless proof of illness is given to school i.e., note from GP, copy of prescription, medical appointment etc. It is necessary for me to point out that it is your responsibility to ensure your child receives a full-time education. It is also your duty to secure regular attendance at school unless your child is prevented from attending by reasons of sickness or other unavoidable cause. Please note Highfield School does not authorise holidays in term time.

If you wish to consult further with myself, please contact me on the above address or on 01924 264240.

Your Sincerely,

Rebecca Thompson

Head Teacher

|



Tel: 01924 [264240](tel:01924264240) Email: admin@highfield.wakefield.sch.uk Web: www.highfield-school.co.uk