



Attendance Policy

Policy in effect from: September 2024
Review Date: September 2025



Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

1. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Leader of Mighty Oaks Trust

The Executive Leader is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

The Executive Headteacher

The executive headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising School Administrator to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

THE SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs B Brewer and can be contacted via 01952 387927, becky.brewer@taw.org.uk

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Leading targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer

Mrs Geraldine Lough (the school attendance officer) can be contacted via email admin.priorslee@taw.org.uk or phone 01952 387927

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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

Class teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 9.10am each day and 1.30pm each day.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that appointment cards are provided.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs B Brewer who can be contacted via 01952 387 927, becky.brewer@taw.org.uk

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time

2. Attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents:

- School begins at 8.50am and finishes at 3.15pm.
- All gates open at 8.45am and will be closed at 8.55am. The children can enter the school site through the school gates – by pre-school, reception, the oak tree and the underpass.
- Children will be marked late with U and L codes if they arrive after the gates are closed. Late children can enter school through the school office.
- Registers will be kept open until 9.20am. Pupils who have not arrived in school by this time will be marked with a U code.
- If a child is ill, parents must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence **by 8.50am** or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office on 01952 387927.
- 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 4 days**, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, we will ask parents 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 we are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this, in advance.

3. Information and contact details of school staff to contact about attendance:

Attendance on a day-to-day basis

Please contact Mrs G. Lough (the school attendance officer) admin.priorslee@taw.org.uk 01952 387927

For more detailed support on attendance – Mrs B Brewer (school attendance champion)

becky.brewer@taw.org.uk

4. Planned absence

- If your child needs to attend a **medical or dental appointment**, please arrange these 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.
- If the appointment must take place during the school day, **please notify the school in advance** of the appointment. This will be considered as authorised absence, however, parents must provide the appointment card or other evidence, such as an email or text message.
- To request leave of absence for pupils, you can download a **Leave In Term Time** form (LITT) from the 'Helpful Forms' page of the Parents section of the website [Helpful Forms - Priorslee Academy - Telford](#). The Leave in Term Time form can also be found on the 'Parent and Carers forms' notice board outside the office. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs G Lough (the school attendance officer) 01952 387927 admin.priorslee@taw.org.uk
- The executive headteacher may allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.
- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:
 - Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
 - Attending an interview
 - Study leave
 - A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

- **Exceptional circumstances**

- A leave of absence is granted at the **executive headteacher's discretion**, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- As a **leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances**, a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as these can take place during school holidays
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted **at least 4 weeks before the absence**, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form available from the office. The executive headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- **Illness and medical/dental** appointments
- **Religious observance** – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body
- **Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes** – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently **suspended** or **excluded** from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved **educational activity, sporting activity** or **visit** or **trip arranged by the school**
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (**dual registration**)
- Attending **provision** arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5. The school's day-to-day processes for managing attendance

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason by close of registration, the school will:

- Follow first day absence procedures where office staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is practicable. This will be logged on Bromcom.
- Staff will identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Staff will use the appropriate attendance code on to Bromcom as soon as the reason for absence has been given
- If no response is received, a text message will be sent at 9.30am followed by a further text at 10.30am. These will be sent via Bromcom.
- If the absence continues without explanation, staff will continue to telephone the parents daily for the next 2 days to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This will be logged on Bromcom.
- If, after 3 days, (or sooner where there are safeguarding concerns) the executive head teacher will be informed. All contact will be logged on CPOMS.
- A safe and well home visit will be made by a member of the school's attendance/pastoral team and/or a member of the administration team if no contact is made to the school after 3 days.

- If on visiting the family home no one is present, a compliments slip will be left asking the parent to contact the school. This will be done for the next 3 days where no contact is made. This will be logged on CPOMS. School will also consider a referral to Family Connect.
- At 10 days of unauthorised absence child must be reported under Children Missing in Education Act to the Local Authority. This will be logged on CPOMS.

When issues with a child's attendance persists and it falls to an unacceptable level, school will contact families. The following strategies may be used:

- Attendance support meetings with the attendance officer, the attendance champion, and/or the pastoral lead to offer support to parents to improve attendance
- Support and advice from the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- An early help assessment with the pastoral lead and/or Strengthening Families.
- A referral to Family Connect

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with legal intervention will be used: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate.

6. How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance.

AWARDS:

- **Assemblies**
During weekly celebration assemblies, attendance postcards are presented to those classes with the highest attendance in Key Stage One, Lower Key Stage Two and Upper Key Stage Two. The postcards are displayed on the classroom windows and those classes with the most postcards at the end of each half term are given a class reward e.g. golden time.
- **Individuals**
Children with high levels of attendance are awarded certificates at the end of each term.
- **Parent communication**
Parents are informed of the school's weekly attendance in the Executive Head Teacher's weekly letter. Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance through termly letters, showing graphics of the impact of time away from school.
- **New pupils**
In the new starter packs for reception, parents are informed of how important good attendance is.

7. The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts

- All of our staff work together to promote good attendance and to remind parents and pupils that good attendance is everyone's responsibility. We remind them of the support in place if they are worried, and about the consequences of term-time holidays, including fines, as well as missing out on important lessons.
- School monitors attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
- The attendance officer and the attendance champion meet weekly to look at the absent pupils from that week. This is followed by pupil attendance and half-termly register reviews with the educational welfare officer, where we can identify trends in pupil absence and the EWO can be involved in supporting families, if necessary. School also has support from the local authority attendance advisor each term.
- Specific pupil information may be shared with the DfE on request
- School identifies pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- We use this information to focus our attention where it is most needed.
- We prioritise vulnerable groups of children to minimise children missing from education. By supporting parents of pupils with special educational needs, those in receipt of pupil premium and those on child protection or child in need plans, we hope to prevent these pupils becoming persistent or severely absent.

8. The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence

- Using 'Working Together to Improve Attendance', we have a support first ethos of improving our pupils attendance.
- We target our attendance resources on pupils with persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) and severe absence (less than 50% attendance).
- We consider safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- We recognise that mental health may be affecting pupil attendance.
- By identifying barriers to attendance with families directly, we are able to plan our early help support together.

School EARLY HELP:

- reward systems
- staff being available on the school gates
- support from the pastoral lead
- use of the school dog
- allowing pupils to use a different entrance if the gates are too overwhelming
- wraparound care
- support with travel (if appropriate)

School may also seek support from the educational welfare officer to attend meetings and conduct safe and well home visits.

When necessary, school may seek referrals to other agencies: educational psychology, strengthening families, BeeU, PODS, Children's Autism Hub etc.

Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The executive headteacher, with the local authority, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will approved by the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued. Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

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

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trust Board.

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to

		attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays