

Church Aston Infant School



Attendance Policy

February 2024

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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

We will also promote and support 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 (Headteacher)

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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jenny Griffiths and can be contacted via the school office 01952 386390 or at A2033@taw.org.uk

3.4 The Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Making contact with parents/carers of children whose attendance is causing concern.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing support to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Christine Foster and can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Morning registers must be taken by 8:45am and afternoon registers by 1:00pm.

Class teachers are responsible for reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends everyday on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am 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. We may request proof of date and time for any appointments during school time.

3.8 Pupils

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 the first session of each school day and once during the second session. We use an online system to complete the registers. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

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 08:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45am and will be kept open until 09:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00pm and will be kept open until 13:30pm.

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 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should notify the school as soon as possible on the day of their child's absence. This can be done by speaking to a member of office staff or leaving a message on the school answer machine from 8:30am.

The following information is required:

- Your child's name and year group;
- Reason for absence and nature of illness;
- Likely length of absence if known.

You can inform us by one of the following methods:

By contacting the office directly on 01952 386390, there is an answer phone facility if your call cannot be answered immediately, please leave a message. Or by Email:

A2033@taw.org.uk.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers on the first morning of absence, we will follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone or e-mail. Please do not be alarmed if we call to check on your absent child's progress for our records. You may also receive a call from Education Welfare as part of their routine duties and safeguarding procedures.

If leaving a message parents/carers must leave details of their child's name and the full reason for absence. We do not accept messages to say that a child is poorly or unwell, we may ring back on these occasions to find out the full reason for the child's absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

4.3 Planned absence

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

For medical and dental appointments the school may require evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

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
- After the register has closed will be marked as late (after register has closed), using the appropriate code

Parents/carers of children who regularly attend school late will be spoken to and asked if there are any problems with their child attending school. There are many different strategies that we can put in place to encourage a child's punctuality. These will be discussed on an individual basis.

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:

- Contact 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 the Education Welfare Officer and where necessary, Family Connect and/or the police.
- 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. If no reason can be ascertained then the absence will be unauthorized.
- 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 Family Connect or other external agencies.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

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.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. This available via the school office.

Parents/carers are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Immediate Family weddings (Grandparents, Parents and Siblings)
- Close Family Funerals

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

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

Penalty notices can be issued by local authority officer.

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We build relationships with parents/carers to help improve their child's attendance by inviting them in for meetings.

We support parents/carers by requesting school nurse or community nurse involvement if a child's attendance is affected by illness. This is primarily to offer support to the family and to give them strategies to improve their child's attendance.

Staff members model personal punctuality.

All pupils are greeted by a member of staff in the morning, to give pupils a warm welcome.

We use parent/carers meetings and the school website to get all parents on board with the school's high expectations for attendance.

The school regularly holds school uniform sales and hold a stock from school donations, to help parents/carers who can't afford to purchase new items.

We offer safe spaces around school and make sure the children know they can talk to any adult if they're experiencing any issues e.g. challenges with their friends, anxiety etc and that they will be supported.

Newport Cluster Schools have an Education Welfare Officer and Family Support Worker who can support children who are reluctant to attend school.

We reward very good and excellent attendance by issuing rewards.

School and class attendance figures are shared regularly on the school newsletter.

7. Attendance monitoring

The School Business Manager monitors and analyses attendance daily. Patterns/reasons for absence are recorded and sent to the Headteacher. The Headteacher decides on appropriate action which may include phone calls or home visits from the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Half termly meetings will be held between the Headteacher and the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss children who are persistently absent or at risk of being persistently absent and to develop action plans and procedures to support these pupils to attend school every day.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data 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 body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports 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.

7.4 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 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.
- Closely monitor absences of children who are close to persistent absence levels and engage with parents/carers as to reasons why.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Leave in Term Time Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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: SAC School Attendance Concern template letter

The reason we will send these letters out is to highlight to parents that attendance could trigger EWO input as it is close to 90% which hits the persistent absentee trigger point. Please do not be alarmed at receiving these they are more to keep you informed about your child's attendance. We will try to update you when your child's attendance improves.

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAC1

Dear

Students Name :

Attendance Percentage %.

Attending school is essential for our pupils to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life.

Often, the number of days that pupils are absent accumulate without parents realising how many days have been missed.

Every pupil at Church Aston Infant School, in line with government expectations is expected to maintain an attendance of at least 95%. A 'good' level of attendance would be 96% or higher. It is the belief of many educationalists that missed time from school is detrimental to a pupil's education.

I am enclosing a copy of **name** school attendance record. You will see that the attendance is now %, which falls below the government guidelines. We acknowledge and appreciate that you inform the school of any absences however we hope we can work together to increase attendance to expected levels.

The Educational Welfare Officer monitors all pupils within the school whose attendance level falls below 90% because at that level they become known as a 'Persistent Absentee'. We have brought this to your attention now so that we can work together to ensure that **name** attendance level does not fall below 90%.

If in the meantime if you would like to discuss this further or you feel that there is something we can do as a school to bring about a positive change, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Griffiths

Head Teacher

SAC1 Attendance Increase letter

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAC1(i)

Dear

Students Name :

Attendance Percentage %.

We recently wrote to you informing you of **name** attendance percentage. Attending school is essential for our pupils to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Often, the number of days that pupils are absent accumulate without parents realising therefore we keep you informed by running an attendance report on a regular basis.

I am enclosing a copy of **name** School attendance record. You will see that the attendance has increased and is now %, which still falls below the government guidelines but will continue to improve each day **name** attends school.

The Educational Welfare Officer monitors all pupils within the school whose attendance level falls below 90% because at that level they become known as a 'Persistent Absentee'. We have brought this to your attention now so that we can work together to ensure that **name** attendance level does not fall below 90%.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Griffiths

Head Teacher

SAC1 Attendance Decrease letter

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAC1(d)

Dear

Students Name :

Attendance Percentage %.

I am enclosing a copy of **name** school attendance record. You will see that despite our previous correspondence the attendance % has decreased and is now %, which, I am sure you will agree, is a cause for concern.

Attending school is essential for our pupils to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Often, the number of days that pupils are absent accumulate without parents realising.

The Educational Welfare Officer monitors all pupils within the school whose attendance level falls below 90% because at that level they become known as a 'Persistent Absentee'. We have brought this to your attention now so that we can work together to ensure that **name** attendance level does not fall below 90%.

I would like to meet with you to discuss this further and agree what else we can put in place to support and improve **names** attendance. Please contact me on 01952 386390 to make an appointment to discuss this further.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Griffiths

Head Teacher

Appendix 3: SAL(L) School Attendance Late Concern template letter

This letter is sent out when children are persistently late to school.

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAL (L)

School Contact: Educational Welfare Officer

Dear

Students Name :

D.O.B

Class Group

Following a recent review of attendance it has come to my attention that **name** has been late on a number of occasions. I am enclosing a copy of **name** School attendance record for you.

There may be reasons why this is occurring and I would like to meet with you to discuss this further and agree what else we can put in place to support and improve **names** punctuality. Please contact me on 01952 386390 to make an appointment to discuss this further.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Griffiths

Head Teacher

Appendix SAL 1: School Attendance First Contact from the EWO

This letter is sent once attendance for a child is 90% or below.

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAL1

School Contact: Educational Welfare Officer

Dear

Students Name :

D.O.B

Class Group

As the Education Welfare Officer I have responsibility for improving attendance at Church Aston Infant School, I am concerned to see that following recent register checks, **name** has a school attendance of % which ultimately will have a detrimental effect on **his** achievement and learning at school. Attached is a printout of the school register showing this attendance level and I felt that I should draw your attention to it as soon as possible.

There may be reasons why this is occurring and I will continue to monitor this situation. However, if no improvement is made I will contact you again.

I am always willing to discuss any problems that your child may be having with regards to attendance so if you feel that it would help to discuss the matter with me then please telephone me on the number below and I will make arrangements to discuss this further with you.

Yours sincerely

Bobby Kaur

Education Welfare Officer
Tel: 01952 385525

Newport Group of Schools

Appendix SAL 2: School Attendance Further Contact from the EWO

This letter is sent out if there is no improvement following the SAL1 letter.

Name

Date

Address

Ref: SAL2

School Contact: Educational Welfare Officer

Dear

Students Name :

D.O.B

Class Group

You will recall that I have contacted you before expressing concern over **name** attendance at Church Aston Infant School. I have continued to review **names** attendance and notice that there has been no significant improvement and that it still remains unsatisfactory. I enclose a copy of **name** attendance record, showing an attendance level of %.

Due to the amount of time **name** has been absent from school, I have no other option than to inform you that any illnesses or medical conditions reported, for which evidence is not provided with either an official medical appointment card, copy of any prescriptions issued, or proof from your GP, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I must remind you the law states that:

"The parent of every child of statutory school age is compelled by law to ensure such a child attendsschool unless there is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against you".

I am always willing to discuss any problems that your child may be having with regards to attendance so if you feel that it wouldhelp to discuss the matter with me then please telephone me on the number below and I will make arrangements to discuss this further with you.

I will continue to monitor **name** attendance, however, should there be no improvement, a referral will be made to the Attendance Support Team who will inform you of further action.

Yours sincerely

Bobby Kaur

Education Welfare Officer

Tel: 01952 385525

Newport Group of Schools