

Attendance Policy

'We will enable each child to thrive personally, socially and academically, preparing them for the future by creating an environment that promotes wellbeing, encourages curiosity and celebrates individual success.'

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1. 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.

2. 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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- 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 Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Recording attendance accurately in the register, and sharing 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
- Making sure all 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 through review in the Education Committee.

3.2 The Headteacher

The 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
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND
- 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/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively

3.3 The Attendance Champion

The designated senior leader 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, in partnership with the Head
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at TPS is James Edwards and he can be contacted via:

JEdwards@twickenhamprep.co.uk

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 senior leaders 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

The attendance officer is Miss Jade Harris and can be contacted via office@twickenhamprep.co.uk

3.5 Form Teachers

Form 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 in the morning and afternoon.

3.6 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the senior leadership team or form teachers, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

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

- All 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 8.40 a.m. 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon). It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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.

The school day starts at 8.30 a.m. and ends at 3.15 p.m. (Pre-Prep) or 4.00 p.m. (Prep)

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40 a.m. on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.40 a.m. and will be kept open until 8.50 a.m. The register for the second session will be taken by 1.30 p.m. for Pre-Prep classes and 1.55p.m. for Prep.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.40 a.m., or as soon as practically possible, by completing a form on MSP or by calling or contacting the school office.

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. Further specific information on the detailed procedure for Morning Registration can be found in Appendix 1 of the **Missing Pupil and Collection Policy**.

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 will be notified of this in advance.

The School will inform the Local Authority (LA) of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Any parent who needs to seek authorisation for a planned absence for these reasons should either contact the School Office or complete the relevant form on My School Portal (MSP).

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.

The pupil's parent 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 absent, using the appropriate code

For those children who are persistently late, teaching staff with pastoral responsibility will raise this with parents to explore the reasons and to explain the negative effects that lateness can have on pupil wellbeing and development.

4.5 Following Up

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

- Call the pupil's parent 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 arrange a home visit or contact children's services 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(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

4.6 Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of ‘parent’, as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child’s attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will 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 or examination
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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 being those related to a family celebration, such as a marriage or christening or a significant event necessitating all close family to be present, for example, a funeral. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to attend a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via MSP. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent’s religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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
- Attending work experience
- 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

5.2 Sanctions

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.

Notices to improve

If the attendance threshold has been met the School may issue a letter to formally require parents to make steps to help improve their child's attendance. Usually, the first review of attendance will take place in the Spring Term, when there is sufficient evidence of attendance patterns.

The letters to parents will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and punctuality
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of any support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Regular messaging to parents will emphasize the importance of high levels of attendance, including those at the Welcome Meeting events in the first week of the school year by form teachers. Positive reinforcement relating to the importance of attendance will be communicated through the school bulletin, the noticeboard and through social media channels.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

If there is a specific concern for a child which is preventing them from attending school, such as those related to friendships, acceptance, teacher expectations or uniform, dialogue will take place between the teaching staff and family to reach a compromise, with attendance being the primary objective. Where appropriate, staff will make use of in-school support via the Mental Health and Wellbeing programme or connect with external agencies. Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a child has been away for an extended period due to an illness, accident or operation, the teaching staff will work closely to devise a programme that allows a graduated return, potentially considering activities which might present challenges (e.g. sports and PE; trips; moving to lessons which are on different floors) The teaching staff will produce an amended timetable and consider supervision and those activities which might help with catching up with lost learning. The schedule and approach will be devised with parent consultation.

8. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer will regularly speak with the Attendance Champion, Head and DSL regarding any pupils of concern who are regularly late and/or missing school. On a termly basis, a review will be conducted of the attendance statistics for individual pupils.

8.1 Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school will benchmark its attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of termly and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns where required

8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum once every 3 years by the Attendance Champion and the Education Committee.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Missing Child and Collection Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

#	School closed
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday
G	Family holiday (not agreed/excess)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
K	Music Exam
L	Late
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
Q	Open Day
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (After registration closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll