



School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy agreed: November 2023

Policy review date: July 2026

Approved by: Headteacher and Policy Governor

Our school values high attendance and punctuality and makes its importance clear to all stakeholders. It is imperative for children not to miss lessons if they are to achieve their academic potential at school. This commitment to high attendance and punctuality is covered in our school's prospectus and on the school website.

As a school, we aim to achieve an overall attendance rate higher than 97% and have been consistently successful in this over the past few years.

Children achieving 100% attendance are celebrated at the end of each half term either in assembly or in class, when special gold stickers and/or certificates are given out.

Parents/Carers

- All parents/carers will be notified in writing of their child's attendance and punctuality levels at the parents' evening in February. An attendance registration certificate for the year is sent home with every child's End of Year Report in July.
- The school follows the Birmingham Local Authority guidance for authorising absence during term time and this has been communicated to parents via the school newsletter and in the Welcome to Year 3 meeting. The Headteacher will only consider written requests and may give authorisation in extenuating circumstances. Unless agreed with the Headteacher, all holidays in term time will be unauthorised.
- We ask parents/carers to support the school by not taking their children out of school during term time. Absence due to exceptional circumstances must be applied for by completing an Exceptional Circumstances Absence Form, and submitting this to the Headteacher well in advance of the required dates. Any holiday requests during term time will not be authorised.
- If a child is absent due to illness, we request parents/carers to contact the School Office by 9.30a.m. on the first day of absence. We then ask for notification of the reasons for absence in writing upon their return to school.
- The parents/carers of any child who is absent and not accounted for will be contacted by school office staff as soon as possible in order to ascertain the reason why.
- If a child has a medical appointment, we request that the school is informed in advance. If possible, such appointments should be outside the school day whenever possible. School office staff will record all messages relating to absence (incl. medical appointments) in their mark book and diary.

Dealing with Low Attendance

- We employ the services of an Attendance Officer from Walsall City Council. Their support includes six half termly visits, including home visits/phone calls where necessary.
- The Inclusion Leader is responsible for attendance will monitor it regularly and identify those children falling below the expected threshold. Any child with a low attendance rate will be investigated and their individual Attendance Record will be studied for patterns or blocks of absence. In order to prevent this, the Assistant Headteacher monitors all those children whose attendance drops below 90% and meets with the Attendance Officer each half term to discuss ongoing issues.

- Parents/carers will be contacted whenever necessary in order to raise concerns about any persistent absence and discuss the reasons for it. If possible, appropriate support can be provided to help improve this.
- If necessary, a referral to the School Nurse team may be made to highlight any specific medical issues that may need addressing. Other agencies could also be contacted as appropriate.
- The Attendance Officer could be asked to make a home visit, telephone the parent(s) or send a letter, or invite them to attend a meeting in school, in order to investigate the reasons for a child's poor attendance. The aim would be to improve the child's attendance in school by offering support and guidance.
- If necessary, parents/carers will be reminded about the statutory requirement for their child to attend school regularly. If the situation does not improve, a referral would be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- If a child is absent from school for more than five days without authorisation and no communication regarding the reasons for this, the office staff will alert the DSL and a referral will be made to the 'Children Missing from Education' department. (Tel: 0121 303 4983).

Lateness

- The Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers stand by the school gate from 8.40 a.m. until 8:55 a.m. in the morning.
- Children use their Year Group entrance to go straight to their classroom.
- The school bell is rung at 8.55 a.m. and the school gate closes automatically at this time.
- Children arriving after this are deemed to be 'late' and their names are taken by a member of the school office.
- Arrivals between 8:55a.m. and 9.30 a.m. will be given an 'L' code on the register. After 9.30 a.m. the code will become a 'U' (unauthorised absence).
- If a child is regularly late, a letter (and the individual Attendance Record) will be sent home and/or the parents will be contacted by phone to discuss the reasons for this. Support and advice will be offered if appropriate. The Attendance Officer could also be involved if needed.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police 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 check with 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

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.

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). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Senior Leadership Team

- The Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance obtains regular reports to monitor attendance rates and punctuality, and takes action accordingly.
- Staff will be reminded to report any concerns they may have to the SLT regarding children who have time off school.
- The Headteacher reports on the school's attendance and punctuality to Governors in her termly report.
- There is a named Governor, Gill Stack, who monitors the school attendance record as part of her Safeguarding role.