



Attendance Policy

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Statement of intent

The Shrubbery School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies. Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Marcia Cooper and can be contacted via mcooper@shrubberryschool.co.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, January 2024)
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Children Act 1989
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE 19 August 2024)
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE August 2024)
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE September 2023)
- Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023)
- 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024)
- Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2024)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures (DfE, May 2020)
- Children missing education (DfE, September 2016)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017)
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018)
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE February 2023)
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023)
- Remote education guidance (DfE, updated February 2023)
- SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The proprietor has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a person to the attendance officer role.

- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with parents regarding attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.

3. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8:50am** and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:30am**. Pupils will have a morning break at 10:40am and a lunch break at **12:00pm**, which will last until **1:20pm**. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

The morning register will be marked by **8:50am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

- The morning register will close at **9:20am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:20pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

- The afternoon register will close at **1:30pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 8:45am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school MIS system.

6. Attendance register

The Shrubbery School uses Bromcom to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

= planned whole school closure
 / = Present in the morning
 \ = Present in the afternoon
 L = Late arrival before the register has closed
 C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
 S = Study leave
 C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
 C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
 E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
 J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
 I = Illness
 M = Medical or dental appointments
 K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
 R = Religious observance
 B = Off-site education activity
 G = Unauthorised holiday
 O = Unauthorised absence
 U = Arrived after registration closed
 N = Reason not yet provided

X = Not required to be in school
T = Traveller absence
Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
V = Educational visit or trip
P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
W = Attending work experience
Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. The headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil’s previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Medical and dental appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child’s absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:45am and 1:20pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Attendance intervention

To ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Attendance certificates handed out at the end of each term.

11. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally. If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this.

12. Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use several methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC etc
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The proprietor will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data. The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

14. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The proprietor will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The proprietor will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

15. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information. When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

16. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

The Shrubbery School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A report of children with attendance below 96% is sent to the SLT detailing weekly and annual attendance to date.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code.
4. Any N codes not established after are recorded as an unauthorised absence and a DSL is notified of the unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90 percent, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.
6. The pupil's attendance is monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child.
7. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continue until attendance stabilises to 96 percent.

Why is good attendance important?

Regular attendance is essential for children to achieve their full potential. Pupils with higher attendance do better in school and achieve better results. Regular attendance is essential for children to get the most out of their time at school including attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

What does the law say?

The law in the UK requires that all children between the ages of 5 and 16 attend school regularly. As a parent or guardian, it is your responsibility to make sure your child attends school every day unless there is a valid reason for absence, such as illness.

Can we take a holiday?

Schools have a legal duty to make sure children attend school regularly. Taking your child out of school during term time can have a negative impact on their learning and progress. Permission for a holiday during term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

What about medical appointments?

We encourage parents to make medical or dental appointments outside school hours. If this is not possible, parents should get the school's agreement in advance and the child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Good attendance is everybody's business

What can you do to help?

- **Encourage good attendance**
- **Support our schools focus on improving attendance**
- **Inform us on the first day of absence and keep us up to date throughout the absence**

Our approach to attendance

- **We will monitor attendance that falls below 96%**
- **We will celebrate good attendance**
- **We will work with parents to identify and overcome barriers to good attendance**
- **Our attendance policy sets out how we will work together to improve attendance and can be found on our website.**