

Attendance Procedure

UTC Reading

Approved by:	[Jonathan Nicholls]	Date: [September 2021]
Last reviewed on:	[September 2021]	
Next review due by:	[September 2022]	

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	4
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	5
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	6
7. Attendance monitoring	6
8. Monitoring arrangements	7
9. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes	7

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This procedure meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

This procedure also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the principal to account for the implementation of this procedure.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this procedure at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the principal
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Advises the principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class Teachers/Team Leaders

Class Teachers/Team Leaders are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School Admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

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. It will mark 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 DfE attendance codes.

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 before 8:30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35 and will be kept open until 9:00.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence before 8:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

To record a pupil absent, you can either notify us via Parent Mail or you can call the school by phoning: 0118 90118 938 1020. Emails to enquiries@utcreading.org.uk can also be used for recording 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 at least 24 hours before 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 absent, using the appropriate code

A report is run weekly to show pupils who are regularly late to school or late to lessons. Once they have been late 3 times in a week, pupils are expected to make up the lost time by attending a detention after school. Parents will be emailed if this situation occurs.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by emailing or phoning the parent/carer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents and carers have access to Progresso (Cloud School) so they can see attendance figures for roll-call and lesson attendance. Attendance will also be reported to parents at least twice a year via written reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as: Illness or death of an immediate family member (please specify relationship to student), the child, parent/carer requires medical treatment, or the child has been offered coaching, training or a scholarship for a talent

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

If your child's absence reaches a persistence absence (90% or below), the Education Welfare Officer will become involved. A letter will be sent home and if attendance doesn't improve, there will be a request for a meeting with the pupil and parent/carer. Further absences after this can lead to attendance panel meeting and then into legal sanctions.

5.3 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 a principal, local authority officer or the police.

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

At UTC Reading we believe that attendance and attainment are strongly linked and as part of our 3 R's (Reading, Respectful, Relentless) we expect students to attend school regularly and on time so they can become resilient and confident learners who are able to achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to society.

Did you know that 6 out of 10 students with an attendance rate of 95% or more gain at least 5 GCSEs at grades 5-9? An attendance rate of 90% is equivalent to missing half a day of school per week!

On a school day, the only place students should be is in school. Students are legally required to attend school every day and should only be absent in real emergencies.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence". This is applicable to all students of compulsory school age up to 16.

We expect all our students to attend school regularly and on time. At UTC Reading we will do our utmost to encourage good attendance from our students and want all students to achieve at least 95% attendance. If a student's attendance falls below 95%, we will contact you to consider how we can work together to support your child attending school regularly moving forward. If attendance continues to fall, we will use other strategies including phone calls from Team Leaders, letters home from key staff, Attendance Panel meetings in school and/or referrals to the Education Welfare Officer. We aim to avoid the latter wherever possible, as we prefer to work directly with families to consider what measures can be put into place to support the student improving their attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer in conjunction with Team Leaders and Pastoral Leaders at our school monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill..

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

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 board.

At UTC Reading we collect and store the following attendance data when pupils arrive and leave school as well as lesson by lesson attendance. For KS5, we do not monitor roll-call AM/PM attendance data as pupils come and go to their lessons accordingly to their timetable. Therefore for KS5, only lesson attendance data is monitored by classroom teachers, Directors and the KS5 Pastoral Year Leaders. So at UTC Reading we:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This procedure will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the Assistant Principal leading on attendance. At every review, the procedure will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This procedure links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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

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