Attendance Procedure

2026 - 27

Contents

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its legal obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence.

- Monitoring persistent absence and acting accordingly.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Working with parents/carers and pupils in achieving highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance is important to us as we know that regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways that we can prepare your child for success - both in school and in life. When school attendance is a priority, a child is given the opportunity to have the best start in life.

Good attendance is a key factor to ensure that pupils benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children susceptible to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Our values and ethos

- We learn from real experience. We've spent over 50 years working together with people on the autism spectrum. No one has more practical knowledge of autism but we move with the times and we understand that there's always more to learn.

- We tell it like it is. We share what we have learned about autism, so that more people can make informed decisions and lead the best lives possible.

- We inspire. We celebrate progress, open up new possibilities, spur people into action and motivate change.

- We are courageous. We won't accept ignorance or inequality, and we'll never stop pushing for more understanding, greater support and a better world for people on the autism spectrum.

Our definition of regular attendance is: punctual arrival with good attendance levels, without unnecessary absences from school.

The school considers good attendance percentages to be at levels of 95% or above.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance document 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:

- The Education Act 1996

- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

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

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Timings for the school day

Pupils must arrive in school on time for each school day.

Main School	**Hub**
Start time: 8:50am	Start time: 9:00am
Finish time: 3:00pm	Finish time: 3:10pm

Morning registration will be taken at 9:00am and kept open until 9:30am.

Afternoon registration with be taken at 1:00pm and kept open until 1:30pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents <u>must</u> notify the school on the first day of all occasions of unplanned absence and each subsequent day - including if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

In the event of all occasions of unplanned absence, on each day and any subsequent day, please contact the school directly:
T: 01474 814878
E: helen.allison@nas.org.uk
Alternatively, parents can use the My Child at School app to report absence.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. 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.

In the event that a child has a medical or dental appointment, please inform the school in advance directly:
T: 01474 814878
E: helen.allison@nas.org.uk

Alternatively, parents can use the My Child at School app to report upcoming appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed at 9:30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Careful monitoring of attendance by the Senior Leadership Team is in place to identify where there are ongoing punctuality issues. In these cases, support will be put into place and we will work closely with pupils, parents/carers to address this.

Support will be bespoke, and may include that in the form of:
- Initial discussions with class teacher.
- Further support from a variety of professionals available including Education, and Therapy teams.
- Further support is available for families from our Attendance Officer.

Pupils arriving late after the close of registers at 9:30am will be marked with a 'U' code 'representing an 'unauthorised absence' for that one session (morning or afternoon).

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identifying whether the absence can be 'authorised' or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

In order to keep children safe in education, we require parents/carers to:

Provide a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for their child, at least one of which should be for a different household, where reasonably possible.

If a pupil's absence is unaccounted for at the close of registration, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and parents/carers of that child will be contacted by:

- Calling every contact number that we hold for that pupil.

- If there is no response from any of these numbers, we will carry out a home visit.

- If there is nobody at home, we will inform the police that there is a missing child.

The school may also take the following actions:

- Perform a home visit if the child has not attended school for 10 consecutive school days. This visit can be undertaken by a member of staff at Helen Allison School or an external professional. E.g. social worker, GP, Early Help. If an external professional undertakes the visit, they must inform the school via email that they have physically seen the child and deem the pupil to be safe.

- Report the child to the Local Authority as 'child absent from education'.

- Consult with or refer the matter to the Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports to parents/carers on a pupil's attendance at annual review meetings, however this can be sooner on request.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Amendments were made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and came into force on 1 September 2013. This prohibits Head Teachers/Principals from granting any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

Please note that this is not an entitlement and a family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. This request must be made at least a **week in advance** and cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the leave is taken despite refusal it will be 'unauthorised'. To request term time absence, please contact the school to request a request form.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

- 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.

- Exceptional circumstances which are unavoidable and/or unforeseen.

Reasons that an absence may be classed as an **unauthorised absence** include:

- Going on holiday or travelling abroad without prior agreement from the Principal – as explained in section 4.1.

- Days off for birthdays, shopping trips or cosmetic appointments.

- Absence due to bad weather when the transport links are still running and the school remains open.

The Safeguarding Team meet regularly to discuss pupils causing concern and this includes where there are concerns relating to attendance such as:

- Overall level of attendance is below 90%.

- Lengthy absence.

- Period of unauthorised absence.

- Sporadic absences or pattern of absences.

Termly tracking of attendance highlights where attendance is poor and we deploy a range of strategies to support families with this:

- Class teachers will communicate with parents/carers.

- In some cases, a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform that there are attendance concerns.

- Pupils may have case studies or Attendance Success Goals.

- Strategies planned and deployed will include input from a multidisciplinary team, including therapy/education teams and Attendance Officer.

4.2 Attendance Success Goals

Attendance Success Goals will be used on a case-by-case basis. Where concerns are identified with a student's attendance, this will be discussed with class teams, Attendance Officer, parents and the student if applicable. Any actions will then be added to their individual Attendance Success Goal. This will be reviewed frequently and updated when required.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school works with pupils and parents/carers to support regular attendance, for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements and providing good home/school communication systems.

For many of our pupils, transition times of day can be challenging and there are bespoke programmes in place devised by professionals to support with a smooth transition to school. Professionals also provide support to parents/carers where necessary to devise strategies for a smooth transition from home and to decrease pupil's anxieties at these times.

Parents/carers are encouraged to access specialist support and guidance from a range of professionals and there are also regular workshops, events and training evenings held at the school related to a range of topics related to autism to support parents/carers with their children.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning on all occasions and each subsequent day if their child is going to be absent, including for reasons due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents and carers are expected to call the school on each day that their child is absent on all occasions and each subsequent day, including when they are ill.

Due to the nature of our pupil's sometimes complex needs, each case will be individually considered, however, should absence be causing concern we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Our School collects and stores attendance data on systems including Bromcom. It is used to track the attendance, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Registers are a legal responsibility and the information used to report census information.

Student attendance data may be shared with Parents/Carers, Local Authority, Local Authority Attendance Services, Children's Social Services, Early Help, Police, and other external stakeholders when required.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.2 The Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal.
- Works with Education Welfare Officers (EWO) to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

7.3 Attendance Officer

The attendance officer is responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information. The attendance officer meets with the schools Education Welfare Officer once a year to undergo an attendance audit.

7.4 Office staff

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

8. Off Rolling

All schools in England (including independent schools) must inform their Local Authority when a pupil is removed from the roll.

Pupils will be removed from roll with the consent of the Local Authority where they have been placed by the Local Authority and where the Local Authority refuses to give consent, at the direction of the secretary of state.

This will include circumstances where:

- The pupil has registered at another school
- The pupil has been permanently excluded
- The parent has elected to home educate the pupil and has notified the school in writing
- The pupil has ceased to attend school and is no longer residing within reasonable distance
- The pupil has failed to return to school within 10 school days immediately following the end of an authorised leave of absence

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Principal and the school's Attendance Officer. At every review, any updates will be shared with parents/carers.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes have been updated according to DFE updates in August 2025.

Attendance Codes

Code	Full name	Description
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.

Attendance Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Authorised Absence

C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.

M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Barges (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.

Unauthorised Absence

G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Q	Unable to attend	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.

Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.

Administrative codes

Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Appendix 2: attendance success goals

Attendance Success Goals

Name:	Date:

My fortnightly attendance goals:

-
-

To be reviewed by (date or time):

Week Commencing:

Some of the reason(s) for my absences (what stops me from coming to class/school?):

-
-
-

What I dislike about school:	What I like about school:
• •	• •

The following changes are going to be made;

-
-
-

Any sickness related absence should be reported following the usual school procedure.

Staff Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____