



Attendance Policy (January 2026)

The following policy is based upon *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)*.

1. Rationale

Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. Every member of the community has rights and responsibilities which enable us to work and learn in a school environment in which they feel safe and supported.

This policy outlines the underlying philosophy and management of attendance at the Synergy Schools Federation. It is a working document designed to promote positive attendance and reduce absence from schools within the Federation.

The policy reflects current practice within the Federation. Its fair and consistent implementation is the responsibility of all staff.

The Federation takes an active approach to promoting good attendance. With the support of parents, the wider community, the Local Authority and the pupils themselves, we take a positive approach to safeguard the well-being of all pupils and staff.

2. Aims

To improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim:

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Federation including pupils, parents/carers, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies through the Local Authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.



- To recognise and address the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

3. Definitions

It is the Head of School's or Headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carer informs the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school and gives the reason that it was to go shopping for school shoes, this will not be authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. If a pupil has an attendance rate of less than 90% without a good reason, the school reserves the right to not authorise any absence.

Persistent absence (PA)

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the academic year progresses, but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes.

Absence due to Infectious Diseases

Children will undoubtedly pick up infectious diseases during their time at school, and this means that they are unable to attend. In these cases, school refers to and follows this guidance when advising parents/carers of the time the child is required to remain off school: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/children-and-young-people-settings-tools-and-resources>. This is then noted on the school's Management Information System as to why the child was absent.

4. Registration

Codes

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence (Appendix A). These codes have been taken from *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)*. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

Close of registers

We need children to arrive at school punctually so that they can access all learning opportunities. For this reason, registration formally closes 10 minutes after the start of the school day. Any pupil arriving late but before the register formally closes will be marked with the 'L' code. Any pupil arriving after the register closes (i.e. after 9.10am) will be marked with the 'U' code.

Medical appointments

We encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, the following codes are used:

- If a child arrives back in school before the official close of the register, this will be recorded as 'L' and therefore the child is marked as attending school.
- If a child arrives back after the official close of the register, the child will be marked as 'M' for a medical appointment.

Punctuality

If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the children, which may encourage further absence. We actively encourage all children to arrive at school on time. For any pupil who is regularly late to school, their attendance is discussed with them and their parent/carer and a late letter is sent home. Please see Appendix C.

Requests for leave of absence/taking holidays in term time

Please see Appendix B relating to leave of absence from school requests.

5. Intervening with Attendance Concerns

Start of the Day Procedures

- Without exception, the first job of the day is to take the register in each class. This is always completed within 10 minutes of the start of the school day via our Management Information System.
- Within 30 minutes of the start of the school day, each school's administrator has checked the register, established which pupils are absent and attempted to locate evidence of parental contact. This is usually either a phone call/message; an email or message left on a communication system or; a note sent in via a sibling or close relative.
- Within 45 minutes of the start of the school day, each school's administrator has attempted to make contact with the parents/carers of any absent pupil who hasn't been in touch with the school.

- In the rare occasion that parents/carers can't be contacted, all other pupil contacts will be contacted, in order, to try to ascertain a reason for absence and to complete a welfare check.
- By 10.30am, if no contact is still forthcoming for an absent pupil, the administrator will alert the Head of School/Headteacher (or Deputy DSL in their absence). This senior member of staff will arrange for a welfare check to be carried out at the pupils' home.
- By 12.00pm, if no contact has still not been made, the issue will be referred to the Police.
- Please note that those children who are absent from school and are known to walk to school are prioritised.

Strategies when dealing with Attendance Concerns

We use a range of strategies when dealing with pupils whose attendance is causing concerns. For instance:

- Conversations with pupils
- Conversations with parents/carers
- Warning letters (Appendix D)
- Early Help Assessment
- Fixed Penalty Notices

It is up to the Head of School/Headteacher (in partnership with the Executive Headteacher) to make the decision as to which strategy to use when in order to support and improve a pupils' attendance.

Long Term Poor Attendance

In a small number of cases and when all reasonable strategies have been exhausted, it will be necessary to commence the 'Formal Attendance Procedure' with the Local Authority.

Although the commencement of the procedure is at the discretion of the school on a case-by-case basis, the threshold for the Local Authority to take legal action is 10 unauthorised sessions in the previous 4-month period. This means that a PACE Formal Caution Interview cannot be held until this threshold has been reached.

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (holiday)

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time if there has been a minimum of 10 sessions in a block or accumulative over a four-month period.

There is no requirement for the Formal Attendance Procedure to have been implemented for a Penalty Notice to be issued for unauthorised leave, as this only refers to a specific type of absence, rather than on ongoing issue which the family may need support to address.

To meet the criteria for the issue of a Penalty Notice, the leave of absence would have been requested by the parent, refused by the school as the reason given did not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances, then taken without the school's permission. If the leave was not applied for then it would automatically have been taken without the permission of the Head of School/Headteacher who has full discretion regarding authorisation of the absence. If the Penalty Notice is issued in accordance with the LA's Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices, and not paid, a prosecution through the Magistrate Courts may be pursued by the LA.

For further information, please refer to the '[School Attendance Support Pathway](#)', accessible via the CYPs website.

Appendix A: Absence and attendance codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Attendance codes

Register Code	Description	Notes following 2024 update
/	Present AM	
\	Present PM	
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	New code
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	New code
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made	
I	Illness (NOT appointments)	
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments	
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance	
S	Authorised absence due to study leave	
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence	
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	New code
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Mandatory note required
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity	
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip	
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Mandatory note required/ New code
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday	
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided	

O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description	
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed	
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance	
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	New code
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	New code
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	New code
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	New code
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	New code
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	New code
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	New code
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Mandatory note required/ new code

Archived codes

H - Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday

J - Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an interview

Y - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances

Appendix B – Application for pupil leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term-time

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least 6 weeks before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company and should demonstrate the inability to take holiday leave across the whole academic year.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

If your permission is granted and your child(ren) do not return to school on the agreed date, further absences will not be authorised.

If permission is not granted and your child(ren) does not attend school during the dates you requested or do not return from the authorised absence on the date agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a request to issue you with a penalty notice will be made.

It is the legal duty of parents/carers to secure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school or other educational placement.

Failure to do so is an offence under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 and, following referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention, may be dealt with by the following:

- A Prosecution in the Magistrates Courts under s444 (1) or (1A) of the above Act.
- The issue of a Notice to Improve which may result in a Penalty Notice. For the first offence in a three-year rolling period, a penalty notice is charged at £80 rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days of issue. For a second offence the penalty notice is charged at a flat rate of £160. For a third offence a penalty notice cannot be issued, and a Prosecution will be considered. More information regarding the national framework for penalty notices and possible legal intervention can be found in the North Yorkshire Council Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices. (A Penalty Notice can be issued before the end of the 15-day monitoring period if there are further unauthorised absences or no immediate improvement is achieved).
- An application made to the Family Courts for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child(ren)'s school file.

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING TERM TIME

Name of pupil(s):

Class(es):

Address:

Telephone No:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From.....To.....Total school days.....

Exceptional circumstances for request: (this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)

Signature of parent/carer.....Date.....

For school use only

Current attendance: This is:- Excellent Above average Average
 % Below average Poor

I have considered carefully your request for leave in term-time and on this occasion I will/will not be authorising your child(ren)'s absence for the following reason(s):-

Seen by Headteacher (signature).....Date.....

Decision reached..... Date reply returned.....



Appendix C – Late Letter Template

Dear *****,

According to our records, XXX has been late to school every day this week/ xx times this week.

As I'm sure you can understand, arriving late for school is very disruptive for the class teacher as well as the rest of the class. Often the teacher or teaching assistant has to take time away from working with other children to explain the task and allow them to catch up on the input that children have missed.

Your child may feel embarrassed about walking into the class later than the other children and these feelings can affect the way that they start the school day.

Missing the dinner register can cause further disruption and put the class behind their already stretched timetable. If the register has been taken by the time your child arrives at school, then they are recorded as 'Late'. This is an absent code, which means that although your children might have only missed 5 minutes of the morning session, they are recorded as if they weren't here. This affects their overall attendance rate. An attendance rate of below 90% causes the school concern and further action is taken. The Department for Education also classes any child who attends school for less than 90% as being a persistent absentee, and children are often referred to children's social care as a result of poor attendance.

To clarify the school's timetable, we have a staggered bell at the start of the day:

Insert school specific information

Our final bell sounds at 9.00am. At this time, lessons begin, and all children should be in the classroom, ready to learn.

We do understand and appreciate that accidents can and do happen in terms of arriving late, but when it is happening regularly then we need to try and address this. Please remember that we are always here to help. If you would like to discuss this matter further, do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher, ***** or Mr. White.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix D – Warning Letter Template

Dear

I am writing to you regarding your child's current attendance in school which is currently:

%

An attendance rate of below 90% causes the school concern and further action is taken. The Department for Education also classes any child who attends school for less than 90% as being a persistent absentee, and children are often referred to children's social care as a result of poor attendance.

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of this and ask you to support us in trying to improve this figure by the end of the academic year. There is very strong evidence that clearly shows how poor attendance at school can impact children's attainment at GCSE level, even from as far back as their time in primary school. At Brompton we want the very best for the children and ask for your support here to help us achieve this.

Moving forward, we will continue to monitor attendance regularly and hope to see improvements. If your child's attendance figure does not begin to improve, then we will make further contact and ask to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

We do understand that children will be ill from time to time and pick up various bugs/ infections. However, an attendance figure of 96%+ should allow flexibility for any unprecedented illness that may occur. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, then please do not hesitate to get in contact with myself or your child's teacher at the upcoming Parent Teacher Consultations.

Yours sincerely

Head of School