



# Ancaster

Church of England Primary School

## Attendance Policy

*"Be the Best You Can Be!"*

Signed by Chair of Governors or Committee Chair:  Signed by Headteacher:	Approved by the Governing Body and Headteacher at a meeting held on:
Next Date of Review: Annual	Linked Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associated policies: Child Protection and Safeguarding</li></ul>

## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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
- Support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly (our school aims for an overall attendance figure of 97%+ for each child), and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy 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:

- [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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.25pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents/carers must notify the school office on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents/carers can ring the school office on 01400 230871 and speak with the school office. Parents/carers should phone the school on every day of an absence to report that a child will be absent. If the school office has not received a phone call by 9.10am-school administrative staff will then endeavour to phone every contact we have been given until a child's reason for absence has been confirmed.

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/carers 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.

### **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/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. We ask that parents/carers notify us ahead of time, where possible, by filling in a leave of absence form which will be signed by the Headteacher.

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 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. We will also mark a child who is late after the register has closed and add notes to our school system to ensure that the reasons are captured and patterns and trends are analysed. The school will undertake top level analysis of lateness figures for all of the children in the school

and this will be addressed via Parent Consultations and Pupil Profile Sheets as well as individual letters to parents/carers where the school feels that there is an ongoing issue.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

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

### **3.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

Teachers will update parents/carers 3 times per year of attendance figures. These will be communicated in November and April in Parent Consultation Meetings and in the end of year report. Top Level Analysis by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will highlight pupils where attendance has fallen below our trigger points of 95%, 90% and 85% to alert parents/carers to Persistent Absenteeism. Following these meetings, we will write letters to parents/carers and agree on a monitoring level in which we will seek to see attendance figures rise. For children where attendance is at a worrying level, or a pattern is emerging, we will then arrange for letters to be sent to parents/carers arranging a meeting to initiate a plan for improvement.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

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

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 headteacher's discretion.

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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' 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, Bar-gees (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

Whilst there is no nationally agreed definition of 'exceptional circumstances', absences could also be authorised in the following situations;

- Family bereavements
- service personnel prevented from holidays outside term-times
- Family crisis/serious issue meaning family needs to spend time together
- Certain exams and recognised short time sporting/ cultural activities (evidence will be needed to provide authorisation)

**Holidays will always be unauthorised unless there is an exceptional circumstance which will act as a reason for the absence. Any parent requesting holidays during term time (via the Leave of**

**Absence Form) will have this absence automatically unauthorised-this may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued if the parent(s) still choose to take their child out of school (See 4.2). Parents/carers will be notified in writing if a request for leave is unauthorised.**

#### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the [local authority's code of conduct](#) for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

#### **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

Whilst the children of Ancaster are expected to maintain good levels of attendance, we will also continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision to ensure that children are attending school. In line with this, we also promote opportunities to reward pupils good attendance and offer an incentive where every child whose attendance is 97% and above receive a certificate each term (6x per year) and have their name entered into a prize draw to win a new book. We celebrate attendance in our special celebration assembly at the end of each term.

In addition to promoting good attendance through incentives, we also work closely with parents/carers to support regular attendance and hold meetings for the most vulnerable pupils to implement a plan for positive improvement in attendance data. We also celebrate this with the parents/carers by acknowledging when attendance figures have risen by writing to the parents/carers in a formal letter.

#### **6. Attendance monitoring**

The Headteacher monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents/carers are expected to phone and report the absence on every day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence data falls below 95% we will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence data continue to fall, 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 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.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 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 Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The Headteacher**

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

In addition, the Headteacher:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Decides on when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **7.4 Class Teachers**

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

### **7.5 Administrative Staff**

Administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system. They ensure that the school system is kept up to date and that the figures are accurate.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day