



# THE BLUE SCHOOL

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*Whatever you do in word or deed,  
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*Colossians 3:17*

Policy:	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
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## 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 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:

- 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 policy 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 body

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.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

### 3.3 The attendance officer (AHT / SENCo)

The school attendance officer:

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

### 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using Arbor. This information needs to be recorded accurately using the correct codes.

### 3.5 School admin/office staff

School admin/office 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.

Gates open for pupil arrival at 08.40 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am  
The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm (Year 5, 6 and Reception) and 1.15pm (Years 2, 3 and 4).

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. This can be done through a message left on the school answering service or via email to [absence@theblueschool.com](mailto:absence@theblueschool.com).

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

All requests for absence should be made via an Absence Request form from the school office or via the online version. Leave is normally only permitted for urgent medical appointments. We understand that hospital / orthodontic appointments are almost always during the school day and authorise these. Routine doctor and dentist appointments should not be made during school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

## 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

## 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 a phone call home. A message will be left if there is no answer, and we expect parents to respond in a timely fashion to update the school
- 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

A child's attendance is reported annually in the child's end of school report. The school may however be in contact before this time if there is:

- a drop in a child's attendance below 96%
- persistent absenteeism
- concerns of a safeguarding nature regarding non-attendance

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments if these are determined by the provider and cannot be booked outside school hours
- 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.
- attendance of a wedding or funeral
- interview at another school or to sit an entrance examination
- up to **two** visits per year for the purposes of selecting a destination secondary school

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

To help reduce persistent absence, The Blue School does the following things -

- Class teacher monitors attendance and discusses with parents/carer when initial concerns arise
- When a child's attendance drops below 96% and no lower than 94%, Phase Leader discusses with parents/carers
- 94% to 92% attendance, **Amber** letter sent home to parents. Attendance is monitored for 4 weeks, if there is no improvement, meet with AHT for attendance to discuss issues and possible school support
- Below 92% attendance, **Red** letter sent home, parents/carers to meet with Education Welfare Office (EWO)

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The 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 headteacher, 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 The Blue School we have the following procedures in place to ensure that pupil's attendance is as high as possible:

- Clear arrival times shared with parents, carers and students
- Clear guidelines on outcomes if attendance percentages drop
- Rewards for 100% attendance
- A phase based attendance and punctuality competition

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly and monthly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to email or call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2), unless it is a statutory 48 hour absence from school which will be logged on the child's attendance.

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues 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.

The Blue School collects and stores attendance data using electronic registration, within Arbor, our management information system. The data is used for the following purposes:

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

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by AHT Character and Community. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Rewards and Behaviour policy
- Children Missing Education procedures

## 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

## Authorised / Unauthorised Absence codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	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

## Appendix 2: Attendance Letters

### Green Attendance Letter

School Letterhead

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name.....

DOB.....

Attendance.....%

I am writing to congratulate.....on achieving 100% attendance this term. This is an outstanding achievement.

Excellent attendance and punctuality at school are crucial for your child's success both personally and academically.

We are delighted with this level of attendance and thank you for your support in ensuring that your child attends school regularly.

Best wishes,

Ms R. Jones  
Headteacher

## Amber Attendance Letter

School Letterhead

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of Child.....

DOB.....

Current attendance.....%

I am writing to you about your child's attendance. As I am sure you are aware, regular attendance is important so that pupils can maximise their educational opportunities.

We are concerned that your child's attendance has fallen below the acceptable level of 96% and it is my duty to bring your attention to this.

The school will continue to monitor your child's attendance for 4 weeks and if there is no improvement, you will be invited to come into school to meet with Mr Matheron (AHT responsible for Attendance) to discuss the circumstances of these absences and ways in which we can support you in improving your child's attendance.

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Ms R. Jones  
Headteacher

## Red Attendance Letter

School Letterhead

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of Child.....

DOB

Attendance.....%

As you are aware, we have been monitoring your child's absence from school over a period of time and have been very concerned with the low level of attendance achieved during the term.

Despite having the opportunity to meet with Mr Matheron to discuss support to improve your child's attendance, there has been no significant improvement and therefore, we will be making a referral of this case to the Hounslow Educational Welfare Service.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Matheron should you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Ms R. Jones  
Headteacher