

Attendance Policy



The Cottesloe School

Policy Type:	Statutory
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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure students have the support in place to attend school

2. The Cottesloe School's approach to attendance

The Cottesloe School is proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance.

At The Cottesloe School, we are driven by an unwavering commitment to making school attendance a top priority, fully integrated with every aspect of school improvement. Using the Inclusive Attendance Model, we support children and families to connect, belong, and thrive.

A Multi-Tiered System of Support

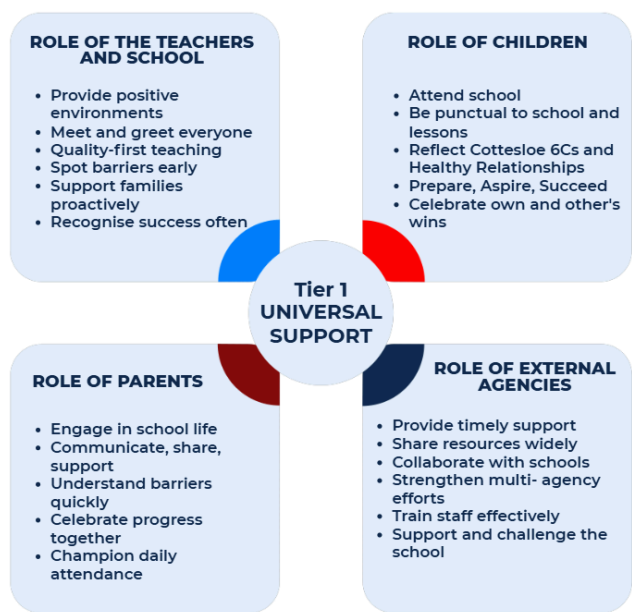
To support a comprehensive approach to attendance, The Cottesloe School implements a Multi-Tiered System of Support. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority. Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of this system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" statutory paper 2024.



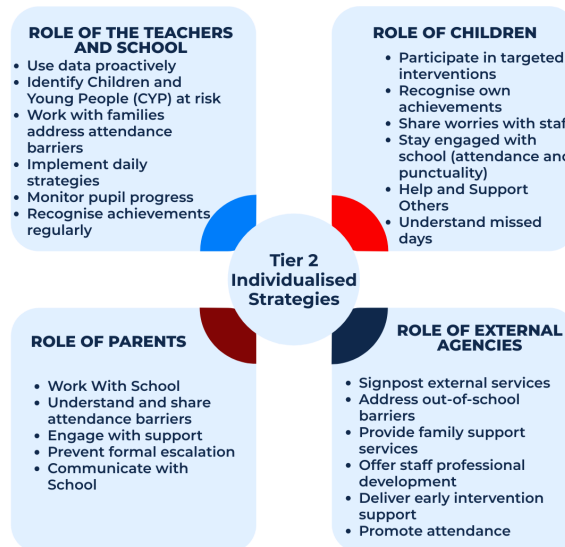
A three-tier framework where teachers, schools, children, parents and external agencies work together to improve attendance, adopting the following:

- **Research informed** - It follows the DfE's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance.
- **Data-Led Decisions** – Collect and analyse attendance data at every tier to explore the most impactful strand of inclusion
- **Training at Every Tier** – Ensures staff have the right training to deliver attendance strategies effectively. Key tiers are 'chunked' to ensure agency
- **External Agency Support** – Agencies help with data analysis, resources and training to strengthen schools' efforts. MTSS aligned with LEA requirements.
- **Children & Parents Involved** – Co-create interventions and keep communication open for success.

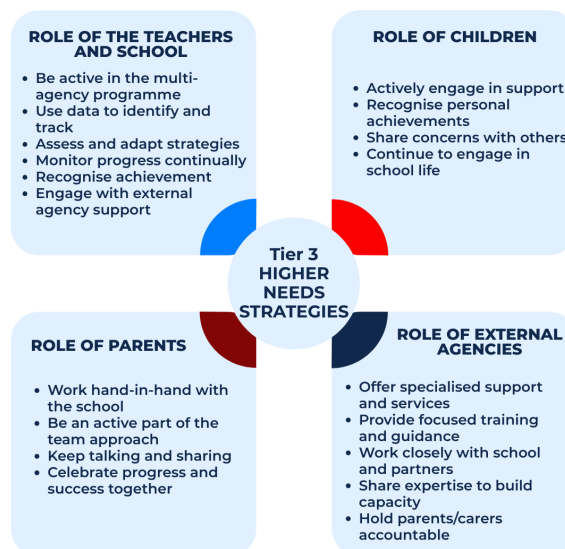
Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



Tier 2 - Individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Significant attendance concerns. Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



Each tier has its own pathway, with Tier 2 being separated into Tier 2a, 2b and 2c. This separation of Tier 2 promotes alignment and agency, ensuring the right support is given to the right student, at the right time.

Tier 2 and 3 have assisted pathways, ensuring staff and parents know precisely where

any student is on the attendance pathway. By ensuring transparency throughout our attendance policy and framework, we promote the cohesive partnership between school and parents/carers, which we all know is so vital for student success

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

4. Shared responsibilities

The inclusive attendance strategy and approach emphasise the importance of collaboration between all key stakeholders. This promotes clarity of expectations for all and a unified approach to attendance. Our expectations include:

FOR OUR STUDENTS	FOR OUR PARENTS/CARERS	FOR OUR STAFF
 <p>Be Present: Attend school every day and be punctual for all timetabled lessons, recognising that every lesson is an opportunity.</p>	 <p>Prioritise Attendance: Place a high priority on attendance and punctuality, reinforcing the school's ethos at home.</p>	 <p>Promote the Ethos: Foster a welcoming, engaging, and safe learning environment where students feel valued and motivated to attend.</p>
 <p>Be Ready: Arrive at school and lessons prepared to learn, with the necessary equipment and a positive, focused mindset.</p>	 <p>Report Immediately: Contact the school before 8:30 am on the first day of any absence, providing a clear reason, and maintaining communication for extended absences.</p>	 <p>Monitor and Intervene Early: Accurately record attendance and punctuality in every lesson, making early contact with families when unexplained absence or patterns of concern are identified.</p>
 <p>Take Responsibility: Understand the strong link between attendance and personal achievement, and actively seek support from staff if challenges arise.</p>	 <p>Avoid Term-Time Absence: Strive to book medical appointments and, crucially, family holidays outside of school hours or term time.</p>	 <p>Build Relationships: Maintain positive, respectful relationships with students and families to facilitate open communication and identify barriers to attendance effectively.</p>
	 <p>Partner with the School: Work proactively and collaboratively with staff to address and resolve any barriers that impact their child's regular attendance.</p>	 <p>Provide Support: Implement supportive, timely, and appropriate intervention strategies to help students return to and sustain full attendance after any period of difficulty.</p>

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- The allocation of an attendance link Governor and active involvement of the governor
- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies, reinforcing that attendance is everybody's responsibility
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Being proactive in reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the appropriate staff to be able to do so

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

4.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher or relevant Senior Leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

4.5 Class teachers/form tutors

All staff must ensure the accurate recording and reporting of attendance registers. Tutors will support student attendance by collaborating with parents/carers and staff members to minimise barriers that prevent students from attending school on a regular basis.

4.6 School admin/office staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Work with colleagues to ensure registers are accurate and any anomalies are investigated and rectified
- Contact parents/carers to seek clarification for any unknown student absences. This may be done using text messages, phone calls and/or formal letters.

4.7 Parents/Carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carer, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time.
- Work with the school to ensure their child's attendance remains above 96%
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Keep to any attendance agreements or contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting and working with the Attendance Officer and relevant staff within the Pastoral Team (Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Tutor)

4.8 students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time.
- Be prepared and ready for the day (uniform, equipment for learning)
- Understand the correlation between attendance and progress, reaching out to staff for support if needed

5. The importance of attendance

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- **Academic Achievement:** Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- **Knowledge Acquisition:** School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- **Building Routine:** School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- **Social Development:** School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- **Preventing Knowledge Gaps:** Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.

- Community Well-being and sense of belonging: High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities, and promote a sense of belonging to our school community

Factors Influencing Attendance

There are many factors which can impact on a child attending school. If you have any concerns, you should contact your child's tutor as soon as possible:

Health Issues: Children may experience physical or mental health issues that lead to absences. Chronic illnesses, infections, and mental health conditions can impact a student's ability to attend school regularly.

Family Circumstances: Family-related factors such as bereavement, family illness, or caring responsibilities can result in absences from school. In some cases, students may need to take time off to support their families.

Bullying and Safety Concerns: Experiences of bullying, harassment, or safety concerns at school can deter students from attending. They may fear for their safety or well-being, leading to increased absenteeism.

Transportation Issues: Difficulty in accessing transportation to school, especially in rural areas, can affect attendance. Lack of reliable transportation options can lead to sporadic attendance.

Socioeconomic Factors: Families facing financial difficulties may struggle to provide necessary resources for their children to attend school regularly. Issues such as lack of appropriate clothing, food, or a stable home environment can contribute to absenteeism.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): Students with special educational needs may require additional support and accommodations to attend school regularly.

Academic Challenges: Students facing academic difficulties or feeling overwhelmed by coursework may avoid school. They may fear falling behind or failing in their studies.

Peer Pressure and Social Factors: Influence from peers can impact attendance. Children may avoid attending school to align with the behaviour of their peers or to engage in social activities outside of school.

Parental Involvement: Parental support and involvement in a child's education can positively influence attendance. Lack of parental engagement may lead to increased absenteeism.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all students 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student 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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Class registers are completed within the first 5 minutes of every lesson.

The school day starts at 8.30 am and ends at 3.00 pm.

All students are required to be present in their assigned tutor room by 8:30 AM.

6.2 Unplanned absence

A parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence each day of an unplanned absence by 8.30 am, or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by calling the absence line or emailing the school absence email.

Absence line - 01296 689720

Student Absence email address - studentabsence@cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask the student'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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

6.3 Planned absence

Parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers are expected to provide evidence of the appointment. This can be in the form of, but not limited to, a doctor's note, appointment card, NHS app screenshot showing the appointment details or appointment letter. Failure to provide suitable evidence may result in the absence being unauthorised.

Parents/carers requesting leave of absence should complete the relevant request form, found on the school website. Link provided [leave of Absence request](#)

The student's parent(s) must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

6.4 Lateness and Punctuality

Any student arriving at school after 8.30 am must report and sign in at student reception. Students who are persistently late for school without a valid reason* will be supported accordingly. This support includes, but is not limited to: learning conversations, parent/carer meetings, detentions, or suspensions. The school's objective is to proactively engage with the parents/carers and students to explore reasons for the lateness, implementing the appropriate support to remove lateness. The school monitors both being late to school and lessons.

*The school will have the final decision on whether to authorise a student's late arrival to school.

A student will be deemed late if they are 4 or more minutes late to a lesson or tutor time. Any student who is detained by a teacher, causing lateness, will be given an authorised late-to-lesson pass, excusing them from any late mark or sanction. If a student arrives to a lesson in excess of 10 minutes late, without a valid reason (decided by the school) the student may be sanctioned as per the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

6.5 Following up on unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason or notification from parents/carers, the school will:

- Send a text message to alert parents/carers of their child's absence and to remind them to contact the school to provide a reason for their child's absence. If no reason for absence has been provided by the parents/carer, a follow-up phone call will be

made. This will be followed up with a phone call. If no reason for absence has been given by the end of the week (even if the student has returned to school), a formal letter will be sent notifying parents/carers of the unauthorised absence.

- On the first day of unexplained absence, and for all subsequent days, contact the student's parent/ carer to determine the reason for absence
- Identify the correct attendance code to use, recording it appropriately
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to ensure the safeguarding of the child. If unexplained absence continues, the school will involve other professionals such as the Designated Safeguard Leads, Education welfare officer and other external agencies. Where no contact from parents/carers continues, a home visit will be organised, and a Child Missing in Education (CME) form will be submitted to the County.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Explore other interventions, including Attendance Support Meetings (ASM), Attendance Contract Meetings (ACM) and/or refer the absence to the relevant parties to consider issuing a penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 10.3 below), as appropriate

6.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 4.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels. Daily attendance records can be viewed by parents/carers through the My Child At School (MSAC app).

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will use various rewards and incentives to improve student attendance. This may include, but is not limited to, celebrating attendance in assemblies, use of certificates, positive contact home (via email or phone), tutor group and Year group attendance competitions, and tangible rewards.

Attendance Support meetings (ASM) and Parent Contract meetings (PCM) will also be used to support and monitor the attendance of a student(s).

We acknowledge that students may face legitimate barriers to attendance, such as medical illness or injury. We are aware that this should not hinder them from being recognised for attendance efforts or improvements. Our recognition and rewards system is designed to celebrate all attendance successes, including:

- Students achieving 100% attendance
- Students demonstrating significant attendance improvements
- Students who have shown a commitment to improving attendance

The school actively explores new recognition strategies, guided by various forms of feedback, to continuously foster an ethos of regular and consistent school attendance

8. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

8.1 students absent due to Complex barriers such as mental or physical ill health, SEND or EBSNA (Emotional Based School Non Attender)

We recognise that every student's educational journey is unique, and attendance can sometimes be challenging due to factors such as medical needs, illness, or mental health. As a school, we are fully committed to supporting your child. Our dedicated staff team brings a wealth of specialised experience, including supporting students who are Emotionally Based School Non-attenders (EBSNA). We work in partnership with you to explore individualised, supportive interventions and pathways to promote consistent school attendance and continued access to a quality education

The school will work with relevant parties, including families, the Local Education Authority, and the Department for Education, to ensure the appropriate support is provided.

Where a student has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the student's needs, the school may engage with external agencies to explore supportive intervention.

8.2 students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school will work with all relevant parties to create a suitable reintegration package for the student. This supported return to school or education will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering feasibility, impact and the specific needs of the student.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Parents/carers will be issued a half-termly attendance report. This will be issued during the first week of the new half-term, providing parents/carers with an opportunity to reflect, celebrate and discuss any attendance patterns with their child.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough punctuality and attendance analysis to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to key staff, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is when a student misses 10% or more of school. This equates to 19 school days of absence over the course of an academic year.

Severe absence is when a student misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school

- o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- o Explain the help that is available
- o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- o Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

10. Authorised and unauthorised absence

10.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- **Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution**
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any near future leave that coincides with school holidays.
- Where absence is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, if the school is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- To attend a funeral of a close relative.
- Out of school programmes such as performing arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence may be required.

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 entirely granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via <https://www.cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk/parent/absences>. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more details)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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 student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

10.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

10.3 Penalty notices

The school must consider requesting that Buckinghamshire Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or student

Any person who has care of a child or student i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, or subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

10.4 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, Buckinghamshire Council may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of 5 weeks for the improvement period, however, this is subject to review based on the specific needs of the child.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

11. Off Rolling

The school is unreservedly committed to keeping all enrolled students on our register until they complete their statutory education or successfully transition to a formal, documented next destination. We explicitly state that off-rolling, defined as the removal of a student from the school roll for reasons relating to school performance data (e.g., attendance figures, exam results, or behaviour issues) rather than legitimate exclusion or planned transfer, is strictly prohibited.

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or when guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated

13. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)

E	Suspended or excluded	student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	student is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In police detention ● Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays