



SIR THOMAS RICH'S

Attendance Policy

This Policy was produced in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations as amended 2016, the DfE statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance 2024, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Date reviewed: September 2024

Status: Statutory

Responsibility: The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will review this policy regularly. The Trustees' Personnel Committee has responsibility for approving the policy and monitoring its implementation.

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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 pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

We also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, Special Educational Needs policy, and our Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

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

3. Role and Responsibilities

Trustees

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure the School's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the School has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Where the School is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The School's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the School.
- Recognising the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Overseeing the work of the SENDCo in working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the School's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

The Designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The Headteacher has designated Peter Daniell, a member of the senior leadership team, as having overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. He is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis to monitor and analyse attendance
- 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 pupils, 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 pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance updates to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the senior leadership team.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Members of teaching staff and support staff

Members of teaching staff and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the School's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the School's attendance process, legislation, and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.

- ensure registers are taken electronically every lesson and during registration sessions (AM reg and Period 5) and are completed in accordance with the standardised Department for Education register codes.
- ensure that in all lessons an electronic register is taken.
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve a pupil's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance where they are needed.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, parents are required to:

- ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly as required by law.
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment for the school day ahead.
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section Reporting Absence) and include an expected date for return.
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
- use the School as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the School so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- not to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headmaster in writing.
- sign our Home– School agreement.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, pupils are requested to:

- be aware of the School's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable.
- speak to their Form Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- be punctual when arriving at school in the morning and attend morning and afternoon registration on time Failure to be punctual not only disrupts the learning of that pupil, but also the learning of others.
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate equipment for the school day. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable.
- follow the correct school procedure if they arrive late, or depart early from school.

4. Recording Attendance

Attendance register

The School will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

The School will take our attendance register at the start of each school day session, during AM registration and again during Period 5 in the afternoon The register will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil 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.

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.30pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am (30 minutes being the length of the form time). The register for the second session will be taken at 2.20pm and will be kept open until 2.30pm.

A register is also taken at the start of all timetabled lessons by the subject teacher or member of staff. Any unexplained absences are reported back to Reception staff. If a student is late to the lesson, this will be recorded on the register. Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action being taken against the pupil.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the School of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am that morning, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school absence line choosing option 1 (the pupil absence notification), or communicating via parent gateway.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the School in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. (Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences the School can authorise.)

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives late but after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the School will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the School may ultimately contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the School will consider involving the Gloucestershire Inclusion Team.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make any necessary referrals.

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, we reserve the right to issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention.

Reporting to parents

The School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels as part of regular order grade reports.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, their attendance will be monitored. Often this will have been caused by an acceptable reason(s) given for absence. If a pattern of absence emerges, the Attendance Lead/Head of Key Stage/Head of Year/Form Tutor will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The School will also alert parents if they feel that issues of reluctance to attend particular lessons emerge.

School Action for pupils at risk of becoming Persistently absent

When a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (persistently absent) parents will be contacted and strategies put in place to support improved attendance where possible. The School will work with each pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any school related barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, the School will signpost and support any access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, the School will play an active role in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. The School will act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that our school is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the School, we will continue to work with the local authority and partners.

School Action for pupils that are persistently absent

Where absence becomes severely persistently absent, the School will put in place additional targeted support to attempt to remove any school related barriers. Where necessary this will include working with partners. If there is a lack of engagement, the School will hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal action. Where attendance does not improve despite agreed supports in place, the School will work with the local authority to review the need for any legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, we will intensify support through children's social care. As a school we will also work with other schools, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the School and local authority have been unable to contact the parents, the School may remove the child from the School roll. The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

Vulnerable Pupils (including Children in Care)

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor; pupils being

absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign for a range of safeguarding issues. If a child in care is not attending or there are concerns about their attendance, the School will immediately seek advice from the Local Authority's Virtual School and the child's social worker, as well as communicating with the child and parent/carer.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils 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 pupil 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
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a one-off event which is unavoidable, such as the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral.

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

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

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated before the absence, in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s).
- 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 pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil 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 pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil 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

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.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the School issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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 pupil
- 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 pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the School 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.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil'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 does not 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 between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The School recognises that high rates of attendance and punctuality are beneficial to a pupil's educational progress and the development of their organisational skills and self-discipline. The School gives praise to all those pupils whose attendance is 100% each term. This is recognised in a 100% attendance certificate. Those pupils who significantly improve their attendance will also receive a certificate as detailed in our Rewards Policy.

7. Attendance monitoring

During bi-weekly monitoring meetings, the School will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the School and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The School has granted the DfE access to its management information system so that data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils and their families identified where a pupil's absence may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence ()
- Provide regular attendance reports, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Pupil 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 pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the trustees of the School.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil 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	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil 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	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil 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 pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil 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	Pupil'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	Pupil 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	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil 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