



Attendance Policy

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1. Our commitment

At Tetherdown, we know that good attendance is vital for children’s learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. Every school day matters. We expect all pupils to attend every day, arrive on time, and be ready to learn — unless there is a valid, unavoidable reason for absence.

Our aim is to:

- Support every child to reach their full potential by attending school regularly.
- Work with parents and carers as partners in education.
- Address any barriers to attendance early.
- Take a clear, fair approach when attendance falls below expectations.

We follow national guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024) and all relevant legislation.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

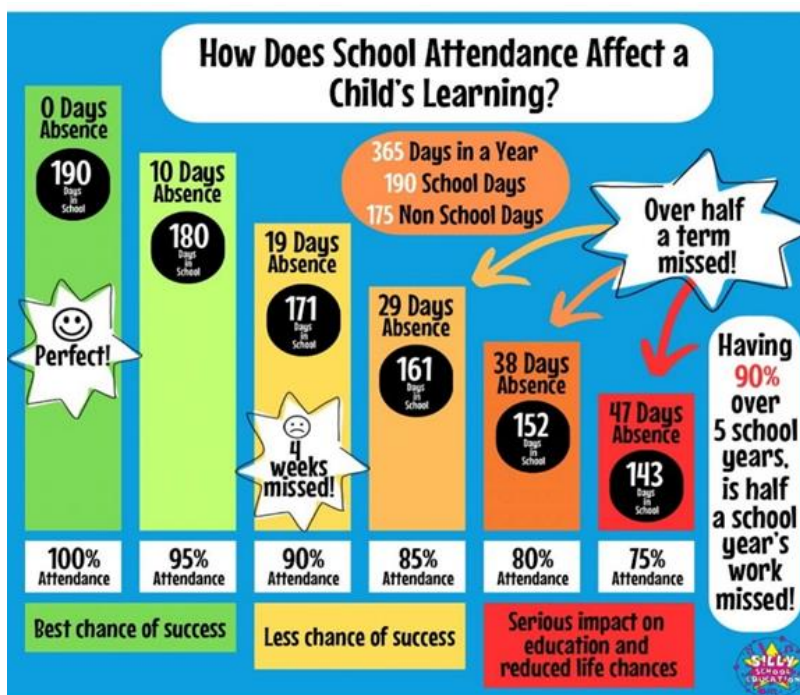
- › Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. **Parents/carers** have a legal duty to make sure their child attends school regularly and on time. Permitting absence without good reason is an offence under the Education Act 1996. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Local Authority

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support in some cases of persistent absence.



- Work with schools in the enforcement of penalty notices, fines and prosecutions in cases that require legal involvement.
- Identify suitable provision and reasonable adjustments for pupils unable to access education due to prolonged ill health.

3.2 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (Attendance Lead) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school with Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance and lateness identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
 - Work alongside other services and teams to support children's attendance. E.g. other schools in a multi academy trust, the Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care, Virtual School and the local community (including volunteers).
 - Follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who are failing to access education in school due to medical and behavioural needs. This goes hand in hand with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
 - Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for children with medical needs.
 - Work alongside the Access and Inclusion team to identify and support children with medical needs preventing them from attending school.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is School Business Manager

In Working Together to Improve School Attendance, the Attendance Lead

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- 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 when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer can be contacted via telephone: 0208 883 3412 and email:

admin@tetherdownschool.org

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:00 and then by 1:35

School office staff will on behalf of class teachers:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.6 Parent and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. **The school day starts at 8:50 AM.** School finishes each day at **3:20PM (for YR, 1 and 2) and 3.30PM (for Juniors Y3-6)**
 - Report their child's absence to the office before 9:00 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
 - Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
 - Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.
 - Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with. Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
 - Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
 - Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.
 - Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time (punctually)

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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The register for the second session will be taken between 1:30pm and 2:05pm.

5 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office and leaving a voicemail by following automated instructions, by speaking to a member of office staff in person, or by emailing the school office. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, for example if a child tells a member of staff that they have been on holiday.

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.

Please read minor illness and attendance guidance from NHS. Or [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

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.

4.2 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers must inform the office with the date and time of any medical or dental appointment and provide proof of the appointment to the school.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.3 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 If a child has ongoing punctuality issues:

- We will monitor patterns, contact parents and offer suitable support where needed

4.4 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/carer 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 visit the family at home or may contact the police if we feel that there is a significant safeguarding concern.
- 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 five working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

4.5 Non returnees

Where a child does not return to school after 10 days after a school holiday, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly via parents' evenings and the end of year report.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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.

In most cases, exceptional circumstances will be deemed to be emergency situations. Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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. Pilgrimages are not included as an example of religious observance
- 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, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- The death or terminal illness of an immediate relative
- The wedding or funeral of a close family member (immediate family plus grandparents, aunts, uncles, first cousins.)
- Respite care of a looked after child
- A housing crisis which prevents attendance
- Participating in sporting events or performing arts competitions at a national or significantly high level

5.2 Definition of Unauthorised Absence

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling for any reason. The child's absence is at 90% or lower.

Severe absence

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

5.3 Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday.

Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers agreeing to term-time leave for holiday purposes. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete an Absence Request Form – available on the school website [Parents - Exceptional Leave of Absence Request \(Page 1 of 4\)](#) - and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day. Proof of flights will also need to be provided if the request is abroad

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed an Absence Request Form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

5.3 Legal sanctions

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will listen, empathise and support with attendance. The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the attendance team will seek a legal sanction which will include Fixed Penalty Notices.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

If 10 sessions unauthorised absence in 10 weeks is recorded. **(Stage 1)**

1. The school will decide whether to issue a FPN

- Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If after issuing a FPN, attendance does still not improve **(Stage 2)**

2. The school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution.

- Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

A penalty notice of £160 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

6. Supporting Pupils with Long-Term Medical Needs and SEND

Tetherdown Primary School is committed to promoting the best possible attendance for all pupils, including those with long-term medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We take a tiered and inclusive approach to identifying and addressing the challenges that may impact attendance. Please refer to the Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy in addition to the below.

6.1 Support for Medical Needs

We provide a universal base of support, with additional, personalised measures when needed. Reasonable adjustments may include changes to transport, routines, access to resources, or lunchtime arrangements. If a pupil cannot attend school, we collaborate with the Local Authority (LA) and relevant services to explore alternative educational provisions. Medical information may be requested to tailor support, and all adjustments are regularly reviewed.

6.2 SEND- and Health-Related Absences

Pupils with SEND or mental/physical health conditions may struggle more with regular attendance. We follow procedures aligned with the SEND and Medical Needs Policies, making reasonable adjustments as required under the Equality Act 2010. For pupils with an EHCP, we work with their SEN Caseworker to support attendance. If absences relate to mental health, we work closely with families and may involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when appropriate.

6.3 Local Authority Support and Reintegration

If a pupil is absent for more than 15 school days due to health issues:

The school will notify the LA and provide relevant information.

We will support the pupil's reintegration, maintaining their connection to school life and peers during absence.

6.3a Individual Action Plans

To reduce stress for pupils with health related or SEND attendance challenges, we may create individualised action plans, which can include:

Termly reviews

Pastoral support and tailored questionnaires

Support from internal or external specialists

Adjustments like reduced timetables, phased returns, or access to quiet areas

Our goal is to help all pupils attend regularly while meeting their individual needs in a nurturing environment.

6.4 Attendance for Performances and Activities (Including Paid Work)

Pupils participating in performances or activities requiring absence from school must obtain a performance licence from the LA. The school ensures pupils continue to receive an appropriate education during these absences.

Key points:

Arrangements, such as private teaching, must be approved by the LA.

Education provided must meet minimum requirements:

At least 6 hours per week

At least 3 hours per day over every 4-week period

On school days the pupil would normally attend

No more than 5 hours of education in any one day

If a licence specifies absence dates, no further school authorisation is needed. If dates are not specified, the headteacher may approve absences, provided attendance does not drop below 96%. Without an LA-issued licence, no absences for performances or activities will be authorised.

7.Strategies for promoting attendance

First and foremost, good attendance is encouraged by our dedication to make school a safe and enjoyable place for all. School staff work hard to create a space where children want to attend school every day by ensuring safe playtimes, an engaging curriculum and warm relationships.

Good attendance is celebrated, and the benefits of good attendance are explained. We celebrate good attendance by:

- Giving certificates to children who have had exceptional attendance (98% and above) at the end of the academic year.
- Letters home from the Headteacher when attendance has been significantly improved.

We will regularly include information about the importance of good attendance in our school newsletter and emails.

8.Attendance monitoring

8.1Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

8.2Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide termly attendance updates and reports to the governing body.

8.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Make contact via letter, phone or email and discuss any potential barriers to good attendance
- Hold regular, face-to-face, meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, for example the Education Welfare Officer
- Ask permission to speak to relevant medical professionals, whereby doing so could remove barriers to a child attending school
- Make referrals to Early Help, where appropriate and wanted, to remove any barriers to good attendance that may exist.

The school is committed to preventing children from becoming persistently absent and will adhere to the following procedure, as recommended by the local authority.

- If a child's attendance is equal to or lower than 93% for the year, or if a child has three or more unauthorized absences, then a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform them of the fact. The child's attendance will then be monitored.
- An attendance review will be held two weeks after the letter has been sent. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be contacted and invited in for a meeting to see if any assistance to removing barriers to attendance can be removed.
- A second review will be held two weeks later. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be contacted and invited in for a meeting with our Educational Welfare Officer.

- A third review will be held two weeks later. If attendance has improved, monitoring will end. If attendance has not improved, then the parents/carers will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Attendance Lead.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
 - Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical needs

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register