



# **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**APPROVED: November 2024**

**REVIEW: November 2027**

## 1. Introduction

Waterside Primary Academy is committed to creating a learning environment which encourages and supports high levels of achievement for all pupils. An essential part of striving for excellence is achieved through regular attendance and punctuality. In addition to learning valuable life skills, pupils absent from school miss out on important teaching and learning that can never be retrieved. Therefore, we expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved and are proactive in challenging poor attendance and punctuality.

|   |      |                |
|---|------|----------------|
| 0 days of school                        | 100% | Perfection     |
| Equates to 2 days off school each year  | 99%  | Excellent      |
| Equates to 5 days off school each year  | 97%  | Good           |
| Equates to 10 days off school each year | 95%  | Slight Concern |
| Equates to 20 days off school each year | 90%  | Concerned      |
| Equates to 30 days off school each year | 85%  | Very Concerned |

## 2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

From September 2024 there is a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions equivalent to 5 school days (each morning and afternoon counts as one session) within a rolling 10 school week period, after which a penalty notice must be considered by the school.

The new rules mean it is no longer possible to take a child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

### **3. Our Expectations**

All members of our school community must strive to create a culture in which students come to school every day (without question), to enjoy their schooling and leave with a sense of achievement.

At Waterside, our minimum expectations are:

- Attendance is 97.5%
- Punctuality 97.5%

However, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

### **4. Aims of policy**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.

### **5. Rights & Responsibilities for Attendance**

There are legal obligations on:

- Parents to secure education for their child(ren) and to send them to school.
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.

#### **5.1 Headteacher**

The role of the Headteacher is:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of this policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Buckinghamshire County Council's policies and procedures.

## **5.2 Deputy Headteacher**

The role of the Deputy Headteacher is:

- To take responsibility for attendance and punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- To oversee the analysis of half-termly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- To liaise with external agencies such as Buckinghamshire County Council's Attendance Team and make referrals, where necessary.
- To write to parents to inform them when their child's attendance is below 96%.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- To work with the teachers to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend this policy and its effectiveness, as required.

## **5.3 Office Staff**

The role of the Office Staff is:

- To record the precise reasons for absence and update class registers on Arbor, when informed.
- To check the school phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the DHT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To monitor persistent absentees and meet weekly with the DHT to discuss findings.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after morning and afternoon registration, including contacting parents when the registers close and no reason has been given for absence.
- To report concerns to the Local Authority, as requested by DHT.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

## **5.4 Class teachers & Learning Support Assistants**

The role of the class teachers and learning support assistants is:

- To take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on Arbor by 8.55am and 1.10pm for all classes.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance/punctuality through Arbor.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are obtained and filed in the school office.
- To provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

- To establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties.
- Along with the DHT, work with pupils and their families when attendance is a concern and work to overcome barriers to good attendance.
- To promptly inform the DHT of pupils who persist with poor attendance/punctuality.
- To feedback to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality concerns at Parents' Consultations & in yearly reports.

### 5.5 Parents/Guardians

The role of the parents/guardians is:

- To ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- To promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform.
- Wherever possible, avoid medical and dental appointments in school time.
- Inform the school on each day of their child's absence. We may call you to ask for additional information.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence and appropriate evidence as soon as their child returns to school.

### 6. Illness

If a child has a minor illness (e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc.), parents should bring them in to school and inform the school office who will pass on the information to the relevant staff to monitor during the day.

Any occurrence of sickness and diarrhoea means that children cannot return to school for 48 hours from the last occurrence. Please do not send your child to school before the 48 hours is up, as we will be contacting you to collect them. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents must do the following:

*Contact the school first thing in the morning (and any subsequent mornings) and state the exact reason why. This should be done by calling 01494 786608.*

### 7. Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.45am and the register will close at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time up to 9.10am will be marked as present but having arrived late (L code).

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

### 8. Appointments

If pupils have a dental, health, clinic, secondary school or hospital appointments, parents should let the school

know at least **one week in advance** in writing, including a printout of the appointment details. Without such evidence, the absence will be marked as **unauthorised**. Parents should bring their child to school before/after appointments (as appropriate). **Where possible we would prefer if all appointments were made outside of school hours.**

## 9. County Attendance Team

Waterside Primary Academy works in partnership with the County Attendance Team to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. This includes the Headteacher and appropriate staff meeting with the attendance officer for regular meetings to discuss and review attendance. The school and the attendance officer work with identified individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When the attendance does not improve sufficiently and after discussion with the attendance officer, the school may apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued, invite parents or guardians to a meeting (see Contract Meetings below) to offer support or may make a formal referral to County Attendance Team.

## 10. National Thresholds

From September 2024, schools will need to consider a Penalty Notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 week period would start on the first day of unauthorised absence. Half of a day (am or pm) is considered as a 'session'. The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons. The ten school week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 in the Autumn term.

## 11. Penalty Notices

Under the new national framework, a penalty notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a pupil fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A pupil's absence must have been unauthorised for at least **10** sessions (one session is half day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term in a period of ten school weeks. Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents is £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within between 22 and 28 days). Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action would be pursued. Under the new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge will be £160.

Failure to pay the fine within 28 days will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the County Attendance Team under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of penalty notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the County Attendance Team.

## 12. Parenting Contracts & Penalty Notice for Irregular Attendance

Fixed Penalty Notices may also be issued for irregular attendance during the school year. In order to prevent this from occurring, the school will work with parents/guardians and the County Attendance Team to draw up and agree a parenting contract to rapidly improve attendance. These contracts will be produced at a 'Parenting Contract Meeting', with a formal invite sent out at least 7 days in advance.

## 13. Term Time Leave

In line with Buckinghamshire County Council Attendance Team's flowchart and the 2016 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is **not authorised under**

**any circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil;
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil; and
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6months of recovery and medical evidence required).

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

#### **14. Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

*Weekly Celebration Assemblies* - Achievement Assemblies are held every week on Friday. The class with the highest attendance/punctuality receive the attendance cup. Attendance figures will be displayed on our attendance board in the hall.

All of the rewards are awarded at the discretion of the Headteacher.

*Parent Consultation Evenings* - This provides an opportunity for teachers to share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary, a target for improving attendance is set.

#### **15. Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

*Class registers* – these are recorded using Arbor. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

*Morning Register* - Class registers are open from 8:45am until 8.55am. At that point, the teacher submits their final register. After this, children must sign in at the office. Children arriving between 8.55am and 9.10am will be marked as late. If a child arrives after 9.10am, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless a satisfactory reason is given. Phone calls will be made to parents/guardians at 9.15am if a child is not in school by this point and the school has not been made aware of a reason for the absence. Should no contact be made, members of staff may visit home to ensure that the child/ren are safe and to determine the exact reason for absence.

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may keep registers open for longer e.g. poor weather conditions.

Afternoon Register - Registers must be submitted by staff straight after lunch, before afternoon lessons commence. For EYFS, KS1 and KS2 classes, this will be done by 1.10pm.

#### **16. Attendance Communication**

The school will send out regular communication, including phone calls and letters, regarding attendance and punctuality. This is to ensure that everyone is kept informed about attendance and punctuality and Waterside Primary Academy, especially those whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern.

#### **17. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher.

The success of this policy will be evaluated by considering feedback from pupils, teachers, support staff and parents. This policy will be reviewed through consultation with staff and revised for the Local Governing Body to approve.

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

| Code | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| /    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| \    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| B    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| Code                      | Definition                  | Scenario   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| C                         | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E                         | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| H                         | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| I                         | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment   |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |

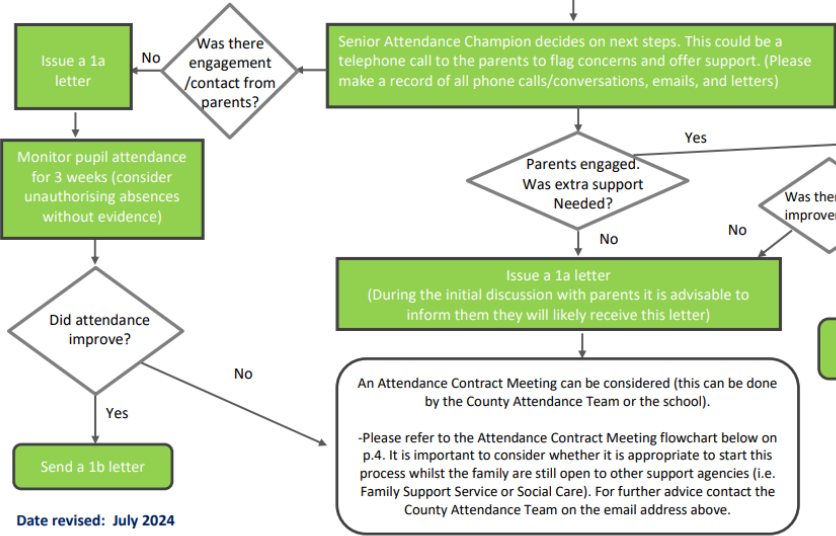


# IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

Email contact details:  
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

**Key**  
Green = School actions

Attendance Officer and Senior Attendance Champion meet regularly to analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils and cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place. See pages 20/21 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance for further information



Put a support plan in place with parents. See page 2. Referrals can be made to:

- EBSA support [EBSA@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:EBSA@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- FSS [Get help from the Family Support Service | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- FSS Advice and Support [Advice and Support for Buckinghamshire Families | Family Information Service](#)
- MHST [Bucks MHST Referrals | Oxford Health CAMHSOxford Health CAMHS](#)
- CAHMS [Make a referral | Oxford Health CAMHSOxford Health CAMHS](#)

Please make a record of referrals and support offered.

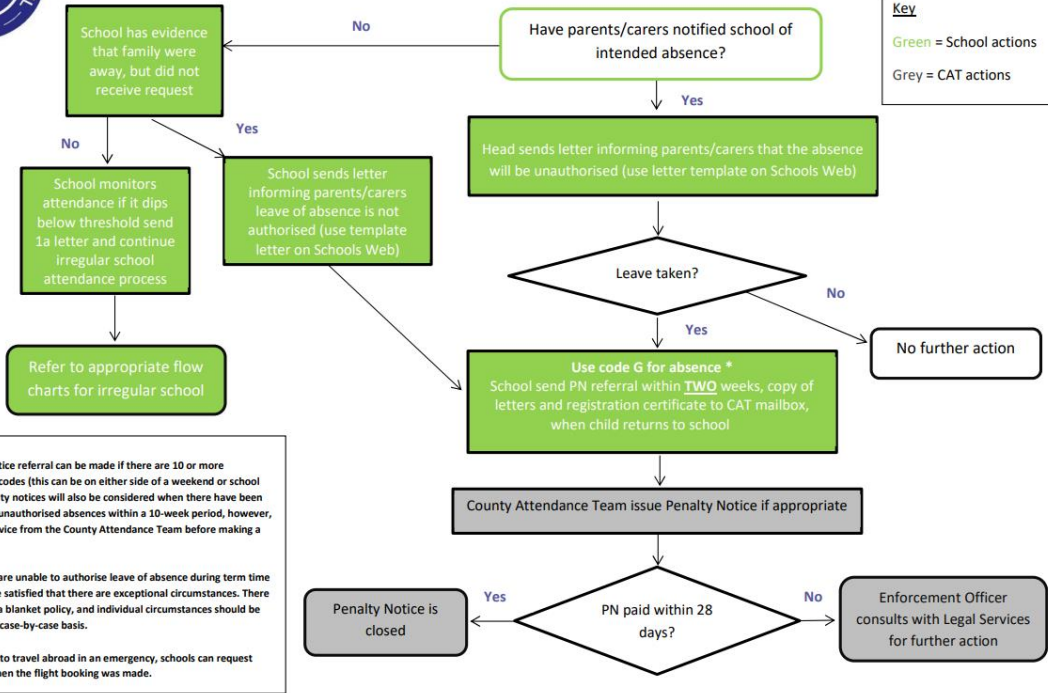
Date revised: July 2024



# TERM TIME LEAVE OF ABSENCE FLOW CHART

Email contact details:  
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

**Key**  
Green = School actions  
Grey = CAT actions



\* A penalty notice referral can be made if there are 10 or more consecutive G codes (this can be on either side of a weekend or school holiday). Penalty notices will also be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period, however, please seek advice from the County Attendance Team before making a referral.

Headteachers are unable to authorise leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. There should not be a blanket policy, and individual circumstances should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If a family had to travel abroad in an emergency, schools can request evidence of when the flight booking was made.

