



# THE BLUE SCHOOL

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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

*Colossians 3:17*

Policy:	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) by following [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#), 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)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing body**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

#### **3.3 The school attendance champion (AHT C & C)**

The school attendance champion:

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

#### **3.4 Class teachers**

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

#### **3.5 School admin/office staff**

School admin/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

### **4. Recording attendance**

#### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

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

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

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

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

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

## 4.3 Planned absence

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

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code

#### 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by a phone call home. A message will be left if there is no answer, and we expect parents to respond in a timely fashion to update the school
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

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

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

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments. If these are routine, they should be organised for outside of school hours
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Mobile pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh, Irish and Scottish mobile children, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus

people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers). Absence may be authorised only when a mobile family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school

- Exceptional circumstances
- for the purposes of selecting a destination secondary school

The Headteacher will make a decision to authorise term time leave where they deem there are “exceptional circumstances”, and an application is made in advance. Where term time leave is taken for showing a minimum of three days or more (consecutively) and not authorised by the Headteacher, the school will inform parent/carers in writing that the leave is not authorised. The school will include a Local Authority TTL information leaflet which outlines the impact and risk of taking a child out of school during Term Time.

If leave has been taken despite being unauthorised in writing by the school, and once the parents have returned, a referral will be made to the SASS.

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

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

- Class teacher monitors attendance and discusses with parents/carers when initial concerns arise
- When a child's attendance drops below 96% and no lower than 94%, Phase Leader discusses with parents/carers
- 94% to 92% attendance, letter one sent home to parents. Attendance is monitored for 4 weeks, if there is no improvement, meet with AHT for attendance to discuss issues and possible school support
- Below 92% attendance, letter two is sent home, parents/carers to meet with the school attendance support service officer if a referral is made to Hounslow's School Attendance Support Service (SASS)

## 5.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

Where unauthorised absence levels are unacceptable

- For unauthorised leave in term time
- Where parents are unwilling to sign a contract offering support and attendance is below 90% over a six week period without justification
- Where parenting contracts or orders have been unsuccessful, or not complied with
- Where a pupil is in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during days one to five of a fixed term or permanent exclusion

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

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

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

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

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

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

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

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an SAS.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Those children with an absence of greater than 50% will be deemed to be severely absent.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

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

- To track the attendance of individual pupils

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

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

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

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

This policy links to the following policies:

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

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	<p>Pupil arrives late before register has closed.</p> <p>If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.</p>
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
U	Arrived in school after registration closed.	<p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.</p>
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
J	Interview	<p>Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment</p> <p>Code J1 must only be used where a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.</p> <p>Open days, taster days and entrance exams must therefore be recorded with the correct code</p>

		<p>depending on the individual circumstances of the case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a pupil is attending an open day in school time with their parents then a leave of absence would need to be granted at the school's discretion (recorded with Code C where granted).</li> </ul>
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
<b>K</b>	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority.	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead.
<b>M</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N.
<b>Q</b>	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements.	Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and they have not done so, or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a

		holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.
<b>S</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.	Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(7) or (8) for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time.

