



Madley Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date established by governing body: Autumn Term 2023

Review date: Autumn Term 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AIMS	3
LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE	3
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
RECORDING ATTENDANCE	4
AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.....	5
STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE	6
ATTENDANCE MONITORING	7
MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS	8
LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES.....	8

AIMS

1. 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
2. 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.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

3. This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body

4. The governing body 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.

The headteacher

5. 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
 - Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The school administration team

6. The school employs a business manager and administrator. Between them they:
 - Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
 - Take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
 - Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher
 - Work with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
 - Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

7. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Attendance register

8. 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

9. 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

10. See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

12. Pupils must arrive in school by 0900hrs on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 0900hrs and will be kept open until 0915hrs. The register for the second session will be taken at 1300hrs and will be kept open until 1315hrs.

Unplanned absence

13. The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 0900hrs or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by either leaving a telephone message on the absence mailbox or via the absence recording function in ParentMail.

14. 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.

Planned absence

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

16. 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. The section below on authorised and unauthorised absence explains this in greater detail.

Lateness and punctuality

17. Parents/carers of pupils with ongoing punctuality issues will be contacted by the school admin staff or learning mentor. 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

Following up absence

18. 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.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting to parents

19. The school reports annually to parents/carers on their child's attendance. This is in the form of a printed report generated from our schools management information system.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Approval for term-time absence

20. 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.

21. Parents/carers are required to complete a form to request planned absence during term time. This can be either downloaded from the school website or obtained from the school office and must be returned to the school office at least six weeks before the planned absence. Parents or carers have no automatic right for their children to be absent from school. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Parents/carers should explain:

- The nature and purpose of the absence.
- The duration of the absence and its impact on your children's education, particularly in terms of continuity of learning.
- Family circumstances and the wishes of parents and carers.
- The place or other country being visited and whether the absence is seen as a rare event in your child's or children's school career.

22. 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
- 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

23. Parents or carers contemplating holidays or other absences during school time should first discuss the implications with the Headteacher before making any commitments, especially if the absence is likely to coincide with Y1 phonics testing, Y4 times table testing or KS1 and KS2 SATS.

REQUEST FOR EXTENDED PLANNED ABSENCE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN FOR A PERIOD LONGER THAN TWO WEEKS DURING TERM TIME

24. Pupils are not normally granted more than two weeks (10 school days) exceptional leave of absence in any school year. For absences of more than two weeks the school will explore with parents and carers why the extended absence is necessary and discuss the most appropriate time of year and point in the pupil's career for the visit.

25. If extended absence has been approved parents/carers must notify the school immediately if for any reason your child is not able to return to school by the agreed date.

26. Where a parent or carer has failed to keep the school informed, or where the date of return is repeatedly revised, and the pupil does not attend school for a further period of ten days regulation 9 (1) (e) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 permits the pupil's name to be removed from the register.

27. If there is a dispute about this request the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Service (Telephone 01432 261909)

Legal sanctions

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

29. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, the Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child which rises to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days or thereafter. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

30. 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:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

31. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

32. The school will:

- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
- use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
- monitor whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
- develop good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)

- engage pupils in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions
- ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- apply rewards and sanctions consistently

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

33. The school will:

- establish robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example by:
 - sending letters to parents
 - having regular attendance meetings and conversations with parents/carers
 - engaging with local authority attendance teams
 - using fixed penalty notices
- establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance and evaluate their impact
- engage governors in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.
- welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:
 - lesson resources
 - one to one support
- meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems. Establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
 - lunchtime arrangements
 - support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
 - make regular contact with families to discuss progress
 - consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups

Pupils who are persistently absent

34. The school will:

- establish clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:
 - local authority education welfare and attendance services
 - alternative providers
 - youth services
 - school nursing and mental health professionals
 - children's social care staff where appropriate
- establish good relationships with a network of voluntary organisations and charities to support vulnerable pupils including those with persistent absence, for example:
 - mentoring organisations
 - mental health charities
 - young carers association
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support)

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

35. The admin team at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and reports concerns to the Headteacher. The admin team also provide the Headteacher with weekly absence reports.

36. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). The school expects this to happen every day of absence unless the parent/carer is informed otherwise.
37. If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.
38. If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Local Authority CME team (Children Missing in Education).
39. 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.
40. 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 body.
41. The school uses Arbor, a schools information management system to collect and store attendance data. The school uses attendance data to:
- Track the attendance of individual pupils
 - Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be cause for concern
 - Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

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

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

43. This policy links to the following policies:
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
 - Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	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
Authorised absence		
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day