



PEAK SCHOOL

**Peak School
Pupil Attendance Policy**

Version September 2023

Introduction

We aim to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all our pupils.

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school
- To act early to address patterns of absence
- To improve pupils' progress through good attendance
- To encourage parents/carers to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, carers, pupils, teachers, and governors

Legislative framework

Parents/carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to make sure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement. All pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local Authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of pupils of compulsory school age who are missing education in the area.

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

Expected levels of attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress, and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in

school success. We expect our pupils to have at least 95% attendance. If attendance falls below expectation, we will follow a graduated response to bring about change.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- Ensure that they contact the school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their pupil is unable to attend.

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Early contact when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason
- Regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance
- Follow up support if needed.

Roles and responsibilities for attendance.

- Peak school has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of school staff both teaching and non-teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school.
- Attendance matters are reviewed by Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Local Governing Body.
- The school pastoral lead will support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and will make contact with parents by phone, email or home visits to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved.

Absence

If a pupil is absent, parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence and leave a message on the telephone by 8.35am to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30 am the school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents/carers and reason given. If staff are concerned about a pupil's absence, they will follow a graduated response process. This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits and support from the Pastoral Lead.

Where school staff have concerns about a pupil, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2018).

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school. Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per pupil (KCSIE 2022). Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

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 8.35am or as soon as practically possible by calling the **school office**.

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

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 should request a leave of absence through to form available at the school office.

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.

Lateness and punctuality

Peak school day starts at **9.05am** and finishes at **3.30pm**

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
- Ongoing punctuality issues will be brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team.
- This will be discussed with the Pastoral and Family Liaison Lead and other Early Help Teams.

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 call the family's social worker/first response.
- 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
- 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

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half termly reports attached to each child's attendance report.

Approval for term-time absence

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for (refer to Appendix i).

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as situations such as

- Weddings / funerals/ death of a close relative
- Housing crisis / safeguarding crisis.

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 to the Head teacher. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 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

Analysing 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

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.

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
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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
- Hold attendance clinics to support parents/carers to improve their child's overall attendance

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..

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

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

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing from Education

A 'child missing from education' is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow procedures for dealing with pupils that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any pupils who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education

(Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the pupil jointly with the CME officer.

Appendix (i)

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. The Department of Education make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
2. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, request a leave of absence form from the school office and send it to the Head teacher. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered well before the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of:-
 - the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
5. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, Head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
6. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
7. Once a decision has been made by the Head teacher parent/carer will then receive a letter to state whether the request for leave of absence has been authorised or unauthorised. If you choose to take the unauthorised leave of absence then you will be referred to Derbyshire

County Council which may result in you being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

8. Once the penalty notice is issued parents have 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice.

Parents/carers of the child/ren will have up to 21 days to pay £60 per parent per child, however this amount doubles to £120 for the remainder 7 days, giving the individual parent/carer a total of 28 days to pay the penalty notice.

9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support Head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

*Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments. Physical or Mental).	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school- age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

* My Concern – Reporting system used by my school to log and monitor any concerns about a pupil

** DSL – Designated safeguarding Lead -