

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Policy	reviewed	By whom?
Attendance Policy	14/09/2025	Kay Hard

Next review date	14/09/2026
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Overview

This policy sets out the systems and procedures at Pushforward for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. We encourage the whole school community to be involved with systems and procedures.

This Policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable and achieved by many young people. The Department for Education and Local Council set out a target of 96% for all young people. Recognising the needs of our Young People, we therefore expect attendance to be a minimum of 90%. It sets out the principles, procedures and practices the school will undertake.

This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024 reflects the new National Framework and states that improving attendance is everyone's business. It states that attendance is the essential foundation for positive outcomes for all young people including their safeguarding and welfare.

Aim

The aim of the policy is to ensure the regular attendance of all to ensure that they receive their legal entitlement and can benefit from full-time education and their school experience. This includes attainment, well-being, social development, wider life chances and which offers the best opportunity for their needs to be identified, and support provided.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Objectives

To ensure the regular attendance of young people we will:

- provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that young people feel safe and know that their presence is valued.
- ensure parents are aware of the school's expectation of attendance to be at least 96% and raise awareness that attendance is a high priority, through parent/carer meetings, our school newsletter and other communications.
- work with families in a supportive way to remove any in-school barriers and to explain what good attendance looks like and why it is so important.
- ensure attendance is monitored by Senior Leaders, in the school, through weekly attendance meetings.
- report all unexplained absences to the LA
- Liaise with the Local Authority (LA) and other relevant agencies as needed for those young people whose health needs do not allow them to attend school full-time.

We expect parents to:

- Provide the school with up-to-date contact numbers and changes of address, when they occur.
- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.
- Ensure that their young person arrives at school on time each day.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their young person, aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Understand the importance of ensuring regular communication and updates to the school.
- Notify the School by telephone or email when their young people is unable to attend, on the first day of the absence, giving the reason for the absence. Where absence continues after the first day, continue to notify the school, by telephone or email.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



- Where transport is provided, liaise directly with Transport regarding any transport issues as the school is not responsible for transport.
- Keep the school well informed, in cases of lengthy absence of more than a few days.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a young person's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision of whether to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher.
- Whenever possible, all appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency has arisen, this could be a letter/appointment card.
- Let the School know if their young people is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; or if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Provide written explanations of any absence and medical evidence for whole-day appointments as well as medical evidence for persistent absence from school due to alleged illness.
- Only request a leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. The decision about whether any leave of absence is authorised or not rests with the Headteacher

Registration

The register is taken twice a day, between the registration period of 9.00 am-9.20 am for the morning and at 1.15 pm for the afternoon session.

The class teacher takes registration electronically via database (should the system be inaccessible then the teacher will take a handwritten register of attendance and ensure this is immediately taken to the office).

This registration is then logged and reviews by the office/attendance officer

Absences for all young people of compulsory school age show whether the absence is one where:

The school has either given approval in advance for a young people of compulsory school age to be out of school or HAS ACCEPTED an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for absence.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Any absence which is either not approved or remains unexplained within the 5 days of the absence, will be recorded as unauthorised.

All other absences will be recorded as unauthorised and may be referred to the school's Attendance Officer (AO). Parents may not authorise any absence; only the Headteacher may do this. All absences are treated as unauthorised until the school agrees and accepts an explanation as satisfactory. It is up to the parent to put a request to the Headteacher or provide an explanation for the Headteacher to consider.

Registers are legal records, and we will keep every entry in attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry.

Young people will be entered on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the young people will attend school.

Procedures for monitoring absence are as follows:

Registration periods 9.00 am – 9.30 am 1.00 – 1.15 pm

Where a young people arrive outside of the registration period, they will be marked as 'Late' using the 'L' code.

This means the school will accept the explanation given for the late arrival as valid and reasonable e.g. a late bus, a car breakdown, a one-off family difficulty and no action will be taken.

- If your young people continue to be late/is frequently late with the same or similar explanation, the school may speak or ask to meet with you to identify any issues that are causing your young people to arrive late at school to provide support.
- If your young people still arrive late, the school may decide not to authorise the late arrival and enter an unauthorised late mark 'U'.

The attendances officer will check registers daily and log all young people where messages explaining absence have not been received from parents/carers. Telephone calls will be made to those parents to clarify, and log and locate the young person.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Flow chart for registering young people

Step 1	Attendance Officer to identify absent young people from the completed register.
Step 2	Checks to be undertaken to establish whether the absence is known (i.e. reported previously in the contact book as a medical appointment).
Step 3	Telephone calls to be made to parents/carers of absent young people where a call has not been received, from 9.30 am requesting an explanation for the absence. Call attempts will be made to all available contact numbers.
Step 4	Telephone call log to be updated with details of call about young people absence and outcome of conversation.
Step 5	If a message is left, the call will be repeated if a return call has not been received within 2 hours, or by lunchtime. Calling from a school mobile phone and sending to parent(s) email will also be attempted.
Step 6	If no contact has been made with the family by lunchtime. If Social Workers have active involvement and interest, the DSL will be informed and the decision as to whether they are informed will be made.
Step 7	If no explanation has been provided, Attendance Officer will issue standard forms to parents for their completion to enable SLT to consider whether to authorise absences
Step 8	Where no explanation can be gathered from telephone or email contact with parents or known family members, and the absence is more than one school day the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified. They will then inform the CME officer.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Each week, SLT will meet to discuss young people whose attendance is under the school's expectation (without medical impact) or where there are cases of unauthorised absence. Each half term percentage analysis of attendance is carried out prior and discussed to identify young people for discussion. At the meeting, each young people is reviewed and a course of action is agreed between with consideration of early help, attendance contract or social care involvement.

A follow-up discussion takes place to ensure there is an audit trail on actions until the attendance level improves. An agenda is set by the AO and formal minutes are taken.

Deleting young people from the school roll

The school will seek advice from the LA (as appropriate) before removing a young people from the school roll.

Whenever possible, the parents of a young people moving to another area or school will advise the school of the name of the new school, the date they will start and new contact and address details. This will be confirmed with the receiving school

Missing in Education Officer (CME) will be advised and a referral completed if parents:

- move out of the area;
- if a young people has disappeared without explanation;
- if the young people has not returned to school on the agreed return date for holiday taken in term time.

Pushforward is an all-through school and therefore transitions within phases are tracked as part of an internal process. Young people who are transitioning into a new school will be clearly tracked to ensure the safeguarding of these young people. Once the school has ascertained the young people has not arrived at their school (on school roll), there is a clear process to report to the Local Authority's School Admissions Team. Once relevant investigations are made and the young people is confirmed as not on roll, a referral will be made to the young people Missing Education Officer. The CME officer will liaise with social care and family solutions to ensure cross-directorate communication and the safeguarding of the young people. The young people will be tracked by the CME officer (AASSA) until the young people is in receipt of education.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Collating and analysing attendance data

The Attendance Officer is responsible for the collation and analysis of attendance data. This task is undertaken regularly and in accordance with Working Together to Improve Attendance, August 2024.

They will monitor attendance

- any young people who is absent
- any young people who has an unauthorised absence
- any young people who has authorised absence of more than one week's duration (e.g. has been sick for more than one week)
- any young people on an agreed reduced timetable

Senior staff will investigate and contextualise the data further (e.g. Examine a young people's previous attendance history, discuss the absence).

If parents repeatedly fail to provide satisfactory reasons for the absence,

Senior Staff will make a referral to the AO at the LA. Patterns and trends of absence will also be reported to the AO.

The AO will then decide on the action to be taken, including legal action if appropriate.

The school has a legal duty to report the absence of any young people who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the young people is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the young people is at risk of missing education (CME). The school will facilitate all attempts to contact these family through letters, via emails and by visiting the home address. Once notified, the AO from the local LA will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the young people.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Leave of Absence

Leave of absence for holidays

School may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Requests for holiday absences are dealt with on an individual basis and only after the parents have made a written request to the school. The school requires a period of notice of (14 days) to consider a request. The Headteacher will make the decision and ensure a letter is sent to parents authorising or declining a leave of absence (LOA) request.

Other leave of absence

Pushforward will consider other types of leave of absence such as religious events and bereavement. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis

Vulnerable Young people

Young people who are In Care (CIC), subject to a Young people Protection Plan (CP) or Young people in Need (CIN) will be treated with the highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home. Any outside professionals who are also working with the young people and family will also be notified of the absence (Social worker, AO etc).

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Appendix A

Registration codes used at Pushforwards are as follows:

/ = Present (AM) \ = Present (PM)

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Code B: Educated at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable Page 5 of 11

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed Code V: Residential trip organised by the school

Code W: Pupil in final 2 years of compulsory education attends work experience

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.

Secondary School Attendance Policy



Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure