

Attendance Policy

September 2023

‘Because Children Deserve Better’

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Contents

1. Aims
2. Legislation and Guidance
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Recording Attendance
5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance
7. Attendance Monitoring
8. Linked Policies

1. Aims

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life by:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every learner has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure learners have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) May 2022, 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](#)
- Part 3 paragraph 15 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- [The Education \(Learner Registration\) \(England\) 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board

The board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil Pivot expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Directors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Pastoral & Welfare Lead

The Pastoral & Welfare Lead is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Facilitating targeted intervention and support to learners and families
- Working with Local Authorities to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, on Arbor
- Take/make calls from parents and learners about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents and learners to the pastoral & welfare lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Participate in attendance meetings

Promoting Regular Attendance

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all learners and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. It also cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all learners want to attend and can learn and thrive. To help us achieve regular attendance at Pivot provisions we will:

- Give parent/carer's details on attendance in our regular contact.
- Report to parent/carer's regularly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance
- Reward good or improving attendance

4. Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all learners on 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 learner 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not for all learners of compulsory school age.
- The nature of the activity if a learner is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

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

Pivot Academy Leeds East:

Learners must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15am and will be kept open until 9.45am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

Pivot Academy Kirklees:

Learners must arrive in school by 9.15am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15am and will be kept open until 9.45am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

Unplanned Absence

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school admin staff via phone call/text/email (see also section 7).

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 learner'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 as long as the learner's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parent should contact the admin staff via phone call/text/email at least 24 hours before 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 learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should advise school staff of the expected return time.

The learner's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and Punctuality

A learner 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.

If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked to meet with the school to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any learner we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the learner'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 learner's emergency contacts, the school may: make further phone calls throughout the day; conduct a home visit; contact the Safer Schools Police Officer (SSPO); contact other professionals involved with the family i.e., social worker, YES/YOT workers; contact LA Truancy Team.
- 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 we have had no contact by the third day of absence a home visit will be carried out (by the Social Care team if necessary). If no contact can be made, we will request a welfare check from the SSPO.
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation as required with our social work team.

- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Learner Support Service and placing school where appropriate.
- If a child is absent but has left home for school, please refer to missing procedures at the end of this document.
- If further contact cannot be made within 5 days, then the attendance and learner support services will be notified.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at termly consultation meetings or more regularly should attendance become a concern.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a learner during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for. The Headteacher should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is therefore unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and on the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school admin. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Directors prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 learner's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller learners 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 Age 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 learner is

attending educational provision.

- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday.
- Study Leave.
- Flexi-schooling requests, parents should write to the Headteacher outlining their request. For further advice see <https://www.home-education.org.uk/articles/article-flexi-schooling.pdf>

Legal Sanctions

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 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:

- 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 learner 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.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Pivot provisions use a variety of strategies to promote and celebrate attendance.

These include:

- Positive praise
- Personalised timetables to support transition
- Reward points, learner shops
- Celebration assemblies
- Providing transport, collecting learners and providing bus fare
- Meeting with parents/carers
- Phone calls home
- Home visits
- 1:1 support in school
- Working with other agencies such as CAMHs, SCOPE, YOT, Social services.
- Attendance stated on termly reports
- Creative timetabling
- Welcoming environment with meet and greet
- Strong home school links and relationships with key adults
- Free school meals – breakfast and lunch
- Flexible uniform policy
- Fresh start every day

7. Attendance Monitoring

At Pivot we understand that a vast majority of our learners have had issues with attendance before coming to our school. Our monitoring processes take this into account whilst also striving for a minimum of 96% attendance for all our learners. Attendance is part of our weekly Leadership meetings as the school recognises the need to celebrate improvements regularly as well as offer focused timely support should attendance become a concern.

Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual learner level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Board of Directors.

Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify learners or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these learners 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 keyworkers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with learners 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 learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner 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 learners 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.

8. Linked Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School