

Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy

Audience:	Parents School staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards
Ratified:	REAch2 Education Committee 17 th March 2022
Other related policies:	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Complaints Procedures Policy Behavioural Policy Children Missing Education Policy Home Visit Policy Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Policy owner:	Gill Ellyard – Director of Education
Review frequency:	Every 3 Years



At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.

Integrity	We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour
Responsibility	We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements
Inclusion	We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style
Enjoyment	Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved
Inspiration	Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full
Learning	Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing
Leadership	REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual

Overarching Principles

In order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance and punctuality is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school, on time.

REAch2 and its schools are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Promoting and modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance and good punctuality.

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance and punctuality expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance and punctuality behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The *attendance officer* is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.

- Have been permanently excluded.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance and punctuality of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.

How This Relates to National Guidance and Statutory Requirements

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- *Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy*

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency for which the school has granted leave

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Lateness:

- Arrival at school after the beginning of the school day but before the register has closed

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance and/or punctuality. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school, or poor punctuality, could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Pupil expectations

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and need to be ready for school, helping parents/carers to ensure that they arrive at school punctually.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Meeting with parents.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. This is required even if the parent has already contacted the school. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the school office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The procedure is outlined below.

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s).
- On day two, repeat the above procedure.
- When no contact has been established after three days, the school will conduct a home visit on day 3. However, if the child is known to be vulnerable or there are concerns for a child's welfare, a home visit may be conducted on the first day or a request may be given for a safe and well check from the police. This may also result in a referral to Essex Children and Families Hub.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the *attendance officer*.

If a pupil's attendance drops below *93 percent*, the attendance officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries. (*CME statutory guidance pg 8, para 18*).

Parental involvement

The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, punctuality and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance and punctuality, e.g. social services.

Parents will be expected to:

- Treat staff with respect.
- Actively support the work of the school.
- Call staff for help when they need it.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance / punctuality or require support.

Attendance register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence (for other reasons)
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

Please see the appendix to this policy for information on register coding and management of attendance and absence related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years** from the date of the last entry.

Attendance officer

If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the *attendance officer* who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the *attendance officer* has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

The *attendance officer* will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence and will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.

Lateness

The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

The school day starts at **8:50am**. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. Registers are taken as follows throughout the school day:

- Registers are marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- After lunch, registers are marked by **1:00pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The register closes at **1:10pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- Pupils attending after **9:00am** will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

Reception expectations

The expectations for pupils in our school in Reception under the age of 5 years is the same for those who are of statutory school age. The early years are a critical time to establish the good habits and routines needed throughout life and to get the key messages about the importance of attendance and punctuality at school across to parents and carers.

Regular attendance from the point that a child attends an educational provision has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Families should know that good attendance and being punctual are expected when their child takes up a school place. As attendance is an issue that affects all age groups, there needs to be as much consistency as possible between early years and school settings. This includes expectations around holidays, which for school-aged children are not permissible in term time.

Term-time leave

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, **the headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time in most cases**. The headteacher will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within *one week* of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the parent will be requested to sign the pupil out on InVentry. Our lunch time hours are *12:00pm - 1:00pm*. Pupils will leave the school premises within *10 minutes* of the start of lunch and will return no later than *5 minutes* before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child *at the school office* when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register *at the school office*. A member of staff will be available *at the school office* before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

If a pupil is expected to be leaving the school premises, they are required to do so – pupils will go home as soon as they leave the site and will not loiter outside the premises. If a pupil expected to leave no longer has reason to do so, e.g. a medical appointment is cancelled, they will inform a member of staff at the school office immediately.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a *half-termly* basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.50am and *1:00pm*, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. Please refer to REAch2 Missing Pupil Policy.

[https://reach2.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/Policies/Missing%20Pupils%20Policy%20\(Sept%202020\).docx](https://reach2.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/Policies/Missing%20Pupils%20Policy%20(Sept%202020).docx)

Referral to the Child Missing Education (CME) Service

In line with Children Missing Education (2016) and Essex's procedures

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Education_Access/Documents/Education%20Access%20-%20CME%20and%20EHE%20Team%20-%20Policy%20and%20Practice%20Guidance%20document.pdf

we will work with local agencies and make timely referrals as required to ensure that circumstances where children are missing from education are swiftly and appropriately responded to. We will inform the local authority the details of pupils who have been absent from school for 10 continuous school days and where contact cannot be made with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence and the absence has not been reported. In Essex, schools are required to notify the local authority, via the Missing_Pupil_Checklist, of any child falling into one of the following categories:

- A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence
- A pupil ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family is not known
- A pupil has not returned from holiday within 10 schools days of the expected date of return
- A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the young person is unknown

Pupils deemed at high risk If a pupil is missing from school and the child is subject to a child protection plan and/or is a looked after child, the school must notify the key worker within the first 24 hours of the unauthorised absence, if contact cannot be made with the family home.

Where it is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm, or where the school has information or reason to suspect that the pupil has been the victim of criminal activity or is at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, the school should notify the Children and Families Hub and/or police without delay and then make a referral to the CME and EHE Team as soon as possible afterwards.

Religious observances

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

Appointments

As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s)..

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Young carers

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality

The school will acknowledge good attendance and/or punctuality in the following ways:

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways

- A yellow star (to be displayed around the class doorframe) for 96%+ attendance for the week and a gold star (to be displayed around the class doorframe) for 100% attendance for the week. Certificates also given to these classes.
- Recognition in weekly Celebration Assembly for classes in each phase with the highest attendance at or above the school target of 96%.

- Individual certificates every term to pupils who qualify: 100% and 96%+.

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is *96 percent*.

Newhall Primary Academy has adopted the following attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance and punctuality meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance and/or punctuality falls below the standard.

Threshold	Intervention	By whom
100-97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily and weekly monitoring takes place (first day calling, daily attendance email and weekly attendance figures). • Assembly is used to share and celebrate attendance figures with pupils. • Telephone call and/or consider home visit if welfare/safeguarding concerns are present. • Annual awards for pupils that meet and exceed the school's attendance target of 96%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class teacher encourages attendance • Attendance Officer – first day calling
Below 96%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If attendance/punctuality dips below 96% and is either unauthorised or the reasons provided are questionable, a letter (Stage 1 Letter) informing parents of this is sent out, offering support from Attendance Officer. • Three-week period of monitoring takes place where an insufficient reason for absence is provided (unauthorised). • Follow up with the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Officer
Continuation below 96% and no improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If attendance/punctuality continues to drop, a letter (Stage 2 Letter) informing parents of this is sent out, requesting a meeting with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Safeguarding Team. • Four-week period of monitoring takes place. • Team Around the Family offered. • Other interventions to be considered here as appropriate. • Follow up with the family. • Consideration for Penalty Notice if threshold met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Officer • Safeguarding Team
Penalty Notice Referral	<p>Penalty Notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous 10 school weeks. Parents must have been issued with a Legal Action Warning Letter with accompanying Legal fact sheet and given opportunities to inform the school of any factors impacting on their ability to ensure their child attends school regularly. Warning letters are valid for 18 calendar weeks.</p> <p>The Local Authority advises that the following template is used for irregular school attendance referrals as this has been specifically designed to enable the progression of cases if appropriate. This letter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Officer (in liaison with Head Teacher) • Local Authority (statutory action)

	must be on headed paper from the school or accredited persons issuing the notice. As outlined on Page 4 in the link below: Link	
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Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every *three years* and more often as required in order to be in accordance with any changes to statutory requirements by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is *September 2024*.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

