

# The Darent Federation of Schools

## Attendance Policy



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# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims

Reference to the Federation throughout this policy refers to Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School, Kemsing Primary School and all staff and pupils within these school communities.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) – August 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# Attendance Policy

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil 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 Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Executive Headteacher

The Executive 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tom Hardwick and can be contacted via [tom.hardwick@sundridge.kent.sch.uk](mailto:tom.hardwick@sundridge.kent.sch.uk) or [t.hardwick@kemsing.kent.sch.uk](mailto:t.hardwick@kemsing.kent.sch.uk)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Executive Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Executive Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

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The attendance officer Helen Prestage (Sundridge & Brasted) can be contacted on 01959 562694 or [office@sundridge.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@sundridge.kent.sch.uk) and Sarah Menditta (Kemsing) and can be contacted via on 01732 761236 or [office@kemsing.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@kemsing.kent.sch.uk).

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.15am on the same day.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

### 3.7 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 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of 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.

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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.

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.

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See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

### **4.2 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 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling/emailing the school office staff (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 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.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should call/email the school office to advise.

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

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.

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### 4.5 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 conduct a home visit or contact the police.
- 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.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, via weekly newsletters for class attendance and termly letters for those children whose attendance falls below 97%.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Executive Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

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 via email to the school office. The Executive 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 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.

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## 5.2 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. Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Executive 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

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

Weekly celebration of good attendance in celebration assembly and newsletters.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored in termly Pupil Progress Meetings.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 board.

### 7.2 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.

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### 7.3 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

### 7.4 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.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 1 year by the Executive Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.



# Attendance Policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

### Summary of Attendance Codes and Meanings

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 a pupil should be recorded as present or absent in the Attendance Register.

#### 1. If a pupil is present in school the following codes from table 1 should be used

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present at school AM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
\	Present at school PM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.	Attending (present)

#### 2. If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code from table 2 should be used.

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
K	Attending Education provision arranged the LA	The nature of the provision must also be recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity	P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity, which has an educational purpose. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending Work Experience	W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity		Attending an approved educational activity (present)
D	Dual Registered at another school	The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code.	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)

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### 3. If a pupil is absent with leave ( NB schools not required to follow regulation 11 in granting a leave of absence should still use the relevant code)

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
<b>C1</b>	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	Performance licence issued by LA or Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose.	Authorised absence
<b>M</b>	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	Agreement in advance	Authorised absence
<b>J1</b>	Leave of absence for Interview	Agreement in Advance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination	Agreement in Advance	Authorised absence
<b>X</b>	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school	For part time attendance	Not a possible attendance ( neither present or absent)
<b>C2</b>	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	Exceptional circumstances and where the school and a parent have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time.	Authorised Absence
<b>C</b>	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	Exceptional circumstances at School discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence

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### 4. Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them.	Authorised absence
<b>R</b>	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).	Authorised Absence
<b>I</b>	Illness ( not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).	Authorised Absence
<b>E</b>	Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised Absence

### 5. Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
<b>Q</b>	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil as detailed in DfE guidance.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y1</b>	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y2</b>	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y3</b>	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>

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<b>Y5</b>	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are in police detention or similar.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y6</b>	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to any guidance published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>
<b>Y7</b>	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question.	<b>Not a possible attendance</b>

### 6. Absent for unauthorised reasons

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Statistical Value</b>
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for the absence not known.	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>