

Policy Name	Attendance Policy
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Author	Anthony Merriman
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### 1. Aims

We, at New Avenue School, 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

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

#### **Children Missing Education (CME)**

As all pupils at New Avenue School have EHCPs and complex needs, prolonged or unexplained absence is always treated as a safeguarding concern as well as an attendance issue.

Where a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, or they are absent for 10 consecutive school days without authorisation, the school will:

- Notify the Local Authority without delay and follow local CME procedures.
- Not remove a pupil from the admission register until all statutory checks have been completed and confirmed with the Local Authority.
- Work closely with the LA to ensure safeguarding concerns are considered at every stage, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*.

### Local Authority Notification

In line with Regulation 12 of the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*, the school will:

- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly.
- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been absent without the school's permission for 10 consecutive school days or more.
- Ensure all notifications are made without delay, and that safeguarding concerns are considered alongside attendance.

### Data Sharing

The school will ensure that attendance data is shared appropriately and securely with:

- The Department for Education (via school census returns).
- The Local Authority, as required under legislation and statutory guidance.
- Parents/carers, through regular updates and termly reports.

This supports early identification of attendance concerns and ensures that safeguarding responsibilities are fully met, whilst simultaneously recognising the complex needs of the pupils on roll. Attendance data is also reviewed at SLT level as part of safeguarding monitoring, ensuring early identification of barriers to attendance.

### Elective Home Education (EHE)

Although all pupils at New Avenue School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), parents/carers retain the right to electively home educate. In these cases, the school will:

- Notify the Local Authority immediately, in line with statutory requirements.
- Provide the LA with relevant background information, including safeguarding concerns, details of the pupil's needs, and provision history, to support continuity of education.
- Ensure discussions with parents/carers are recorded formally, and families are signposted to LA advice and support.
- Recognise that EHE for pupils with complex needs and EHCPs carries increased safeguarding considerations, and will ensure these are highlighted in communications with the LA.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The **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

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
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

\*The designated leader for the school is Clare Priday

Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school administrator, via email, on the morning of the same day.

The **school administrator** will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer any concerns, either on safeguarding or persistent absenteeism, to Clare Priday.

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, or report if there has been an issue with external transport.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:00am 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

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

#### 4. Recording Attendance

##### **Attendance register**

Our registers are collated and maintained electronically via the school's internal system, ensuring attendance is logged promptly and securely in line with DfE requirements.

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 (L1) of each school day and once during the second session (L5). 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes (pre-18.08.24) and appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes (post 18.08.24).

We will also record:

- 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 09:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00am and will be kept open until 09:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:15pm and will be kept open until 13:45pm.

### **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 09:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school administrator (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Any requests of this nature should be emailed to Clare Priday.

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.

### **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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If punctuality becomes a persistent issue, we will firstly arrange a supportive meeting with parents/carers to support improvement. If this does not result in improvement, we will involve the pupils local authority.

### **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 will send a member of staff to complete an 'eyes-on' observation.
- 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/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly reports.

## 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### **Approval for term-time absence**

The 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as anything that is deemed as compassionate and / or conducive to the pupil's wider social and/or emotional development.

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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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
- Moving home / care / residential setting

### **Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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 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. Monitoring and Developing Strategies for Improvement

Attendance is tracked on a weekly basis and discussed at weekly SLT. If a pupil has been off for 5 consecutive days, we implement a visit in line with our 'Eyes-on' policy. Due to the small number of pupils, we can implement acute support in a very pro-active manner.

We appreciate that there could be myriad reasons why a pupil is not attending. We will, therefore, ensure we are proactively supporting pupils and their families with re-engagement, including options for temporary outreach, part time timetables, additional support and / or incentivised reward schemes.

## 7. Persistent Absenteeism

Persistent absence is defined as a pupil missing 10% or more of their possible sessions; severe absence refers to missing 50% or more.

At New Avenue School, all pupils attending are considered vulnerable and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Therefore, all attendance concerns are treated as significant and are addressed through a graduated, multi-disciplinary approach that reflects both safeguarding duties and the need to maintain suitable provision.

The school will:

- **Monitor attendance data weekly** to identify patterns of persistent or severe absence and respond proactively to any emerging concerns.
- **Hold regular attendance review meetings** with parents/carers where attendance concerns are identified. These meetings will be led by the SENCo and/or DSL and may include relevant professionals, such as the school's Family Therapist, ELSA, social workers, or local authority representatives.
- **Develop and implement a coordinated support plan**, which may include:
  - Targeted emotional or therapeutic intervention (e.g., ELSA sessions, Family Therapy)
  - Adjustments to curriculum, learning environment, or staffing
  - **A short-term, time-limited reduced timetable**, implemented only with written parental agreement, a clear reintegration plan, and reviewed at least fortnightly. If the arrangement continues beyond six weeks, the local authority will be formally notified in line with DfE expectations.
- **Escalate concerns appropriately** where attendance fails to improve despite intervention:
  - Referral to the **Early Help Hub** for coordinated multi-agency support
  - Submission of an **Inter-agency Referral Form (IARF)** to Children's Services where there are concerns about educational neglect, lack of parental engagement, or safeguarding risk
- **Notify the Local Authority SEN team as early as possible** where persistent or severe absence raises concerns about the suitability of the current placement. In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice, the school may initiate an **early or emergency Annual Review** to reassess the pupil's needs, outcomes, and provision. The local authority will be invited to attend and contribute to the review, ensuring co-production and timely decision-making regarding any required changes.
- **Record and monitor all attendance-related concerns via CPOMS**, with oversight from the DSL, and ensure safeguarding implications are considered throughout.

New Avenue remains committed to promoting high levels of attendance for all pupils, recognising that regular access to education is fundamental to safeguarding, progress, and long-term outcomes. All decisions regarding reduced attendance or alternative arrangements are taken with the best interests of the child at heart, in full partnership with families and the local authority.

## 8. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Anthony Merriman, Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board. In addition, attendance data and interventions are reviewed termly at SLT meetings, with a specific focus on identifying barriers to attendance, safeguarding concerns, and wider pupil needs.

### Updates

Dates	Comments
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19.07.24	Added the new codes presented in latest draft of DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance (Appendix 2).
17.02.25	No updates
10.07.25	Persistent Absenteeism
01/10/25	Legislation and Guidance, Monitoring and Evaluation

## **Appendix 1: New Codes (from 18.08.24)**

### Present at School

1. Code / : Present at the school (/ = morning session, \ = afternoon session)
2. Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

### Attending a Place Other Than the School

1. Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
2. Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
3. Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
4. Code W: Attending work experience
5. Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
6. Code D: Dual registered at another school

### Leave of Absence

1. Code C1: Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
2. Code M: Leave of absence for attending a medical or dental appointment
3. Code J1: Leave of absence for attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
4. Code S: Leave of absence for studying for a public examination
5. Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
6. Code T: Parent traveling for occupational purposes
7. Code R: Religious observance
8. Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
9. Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

### Unable to Attend Due to Unavoidable Cause

1. Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
2. Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
3. Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
4. Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
5. Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
6. Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
7. Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
8. Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

### Unauthorised Absence

1. Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
2. Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

3. Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
4. Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

#### Administrative Codes

1. Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register
2. Code #: Planned whole school closure