



Attendance Policy

2023-24

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SECTION 1: AIMS

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.

SECTION 2: LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY 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](#)

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

SECTION 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The principal 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the Trust-lead for attendance to ensure policies and procedures are being followed

Appendix 2 details the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is, and how they can be contacted via telephone number and/or email address.

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 headteacher
- Advising the member of the leadership team responsible for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Appendix 2 details the name of our attendance team.

3.5 Class Teachers and Form Tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office using the school's MIS system.

Form Tutors will also track and support the attendance of identified "Focus Students" to ensure they are not PA

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, to 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

3.7 Students

- Students are expected to attend school every day on time
- Students are expected to attend every timetabled lesson on time
- For our sixth form students, pupils are expected to call the school to report their absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

SECTION 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of a compulsory school age only)
- 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.

Appendix 3 details the times of the school days pupils must arrive in school by, and what times registers will be taken.

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 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school attendance team. The contact details for this can be found under Appendix 2, alongside details of the how to notify the school of an unplanned absence.

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.

Whilst details of how parents should request leaves of absence can be found under Appendix 3, we encourage parents/carers, however, 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

Appendix 3 details how the school identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

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:

- Text and call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- On the second consecutive day of unexplained absence the school will contact the pupil's emergency contacts if parents / carers remain uncontactable.
- On the third consecutive day of unexplained absence the school may conduct home visits or contact police to conduct a welfare check if no contact can be made with all forms of communication supplied by the parents/carers.
- In cases where parent/carers continue to be uncontactable over a period of time, the academy will consider a referral to social services. Details of this can be found in the academy's safeguarding policy.
- When contact is made the school will identify whether the absence is approved or not
- The attendance team will 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

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will inform parents of absence on the day, and each subsequent day, that a child is not in school. This will be followed up, and should absence become persistent, a parent meeting will be requested. If absence becomes severe, or if the parent meeting does not result in improved attendance, the school will consider home visits and

referrals to Early Help and/or social services for additional support. In each of these circumstances, parents/carers will be informed of their child's attendance. More formally, the school will write to parent/carers each term to report their child's attendance.

SECTION 5: AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 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.

'Exceptional circumstances' are decided at the discretion of the headteacher only.

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 communication with the attendance officer. 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 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
- Study Leave – coordinated by the school only

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.

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 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.

SECTION 6: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Strategy	Explanation
Daily absence calls for students who are not in school	On the first day of absence, and each subsequent day of absence, schools will contact parents reminding them of the expectation for students to be in school and offer support and guidance where necessary to get the student back to school as soon as possible.
Attendance Fortnight Rewards Report	Each Half-Term the school will hold Attendance Fortnight. Students with attendance between 80-92% will be monitored on an Attendance Rewards Report which is signed by the form tutor and parents on a daily basis. Rewards are issued at the end of the fortnight for all students with 100% attendance.
Letters home	In cases where attendance has met a threshold warranting monitoring or concern, and, in cases where attendance has improved or warrants celebration, letters will be sent home to parents informing them of this.
Parental Contract meetings	Should attendance continue to decline, parent contract meetings to set attendance targets will take place to promote good attendance.
Home visits	In cases where attendance is a concern, home visits (either conducted by the school or the Police) will take place to encourage students back to school.
Referrals to Early Help/Social Services	In cases where the school has exhausted its supportive measures, referrals to external agencies will take place to help improve attendance.
First day of return check-ins	On the first day of a return after an absence, the form tutor will make time to have an informal check-in on the student.
Weekly Attendance Data Meetings	Each week the SLT lead will meet with Attendance Officers, Heads of Year, SENCO to discuss attendance trends and actions further support and interventions where required.
Half-Termly reporting of attendance data to the Leadership Team	A half-termly data report consisting of whole school, year group and vulnerable group attendance is discussed at the leadership team meeting alongside updates on the annual academy action plan.
Termly Attendance meeting with Herts Attendance Team	A termly review takes place with Herts Attendance Team West to look at support mechanisms, case studies and further interventions.
Weekly attendance updates to form groups	Weekly attendance updates celebrating successes of attendance will be shared with students during tutor time or in assemblies. This can also be put on display.
Celebration assemblies for attendance	At the end of each half term, a celebration assembly will take place, including a celebration of attendance. Students who have either achieved 100% attendance for the term, or 100% attendance for the year, will receive a certificate.
Termly meetings with the Trust-wide attendance support	The Trust-wide attendance support will meet with the attendance teams once a half term to review data and ensure the relevant thresholds have been implemented at the right stage.
Prosecution	Should attendance not improve, families will be prosecuted for poor attendance. This will incentivise this particular family into improving attendance, and deter other families from not attending too.

SECTION 7: ATTENDANCE MONITORING

7.1 Monitoring Attendance:

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly 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

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, 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

A full list of attendance strategies to reduce persistent absence can be found in section 6.

SECTION 8: MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Trust Lead for attendance – Sara Poolman. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

SECTION 9: LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be

		absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

APPENDIX 2: KEY CONTACTS IN THE ATTENDANCE TEAM

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance	Mr Nagle	Telephone – 0208 950 9502 Email address – j.nagle@thegrange.futureacademies.org
Attendance Officer	Ms Dobbs Ms Garvin	Telephone – 0208 950 9502 Email address – attendance@thegrange.futureacademies.org
Local authority attendance support team	Ms Vanessa Curtis	Telephone – 01442 453486 Email address - attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk

To notify the school of an unplanned absence, please contact the Attendance Team at attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 3: TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

At The Grange Academy, the following times apply:

- Pupils must arrive at school by 8.30am
- The first register is taken at 8.35am and will be kept open for no longer than 40 minutes after the session begins.
- The register for the second session is taken at 1.20pm time and will be kept open until 1.40pm.
- Students are considered late to school if they arrive after 8.35am. For these students, they will receive an L code. Students who arrive after 9.15am time (the time the register formally closes) will be given a U code which counts as an unauthorised absence.
- Punctuality will be tracked and monitored across the academy. For students who are repeatedly late, the school will follow the same attendance procedures as for absence, including parent meetings, home visits and referrals if necessary.

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