



## Ridgeway Primary School and Nursery

# Attendance Policy

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10/11/18		Updated no of days re Religious festivals, funerals, inserted missing in education Croydon link
15/10/2019 Not full revision – updated a timing	3	Updated parents time to call school from 9.30 to 8.30
Sep 21	5	Updated Covid information
Sep 22	Updated throughout due to 2022 DfE guidance	
Jan 23	Throughout - changed reporting absences to through WeDuc only	
Sep 24	Links to DfE Guidance updated, amount of fines updated. Appendix 1 added.	
Jun 25	Completely rewritten – adopted The Key Model Policy and merged with previous policy	

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This policy reflects the vision and aims of Ridgeway Primary School.

Please note the term 'family' in this policy applies to the adult with parental responsibility and legal responsibility for the child.

At Ridgeway, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, families and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential, therefore developing a whole school culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for families and staff as well as clear procedures for involving families and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all families of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website. Ridgeway encourages all families to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. 'At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard.' DFE 2022

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure 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 is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

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

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and families
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The co-headteachers and HST**

The co-headteachers have delegated day-to-day operational responsibilities relating to this policy to Kayley Dunn, Assistant Headteacher, while retaining overall responsibility for its implementation. They are responsible for:

- The 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
- Delegating responsibility to the office team to raise requests to Croydon to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the families of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and families through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'Lead DSL') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, families and external agencies, where needed

- Building close and productive relationships with families to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their families
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kayley Dunn, Assistant Headteacher, who can be contacted via Weduc message to Ridgeway Office, or via telephone to 020 8657 8063.

### **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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the HST when to request fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Julia Reeve who can be contacted via Weduc message to Ridgeway Office, or via telephone to 020 8657 8063.

### **3.5 Class teachers/Teaching Assistants (TAs)**

Class teachers/TAs are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Monitor absence submissions via Weduc on a day-to-day basis and record it on the register using the correct codes (see Appendix 1),
- Transfer calls from families to a member of the Headship Team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Families**

Where this policy refers to a family member or families, it refers to the adult(s) the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Families are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence on Weduc before 8:30am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where this is unavoidable, see section 4.3 for details of the process.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Kayley Dunn or Julia Reeve, who can be contacted via Weduc message to Ridgeway Office, or via telephone to 020 8657 8063.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time (unless genuinely unwell and unable to participate in learning)

### **3.9 Education Welfare Officer**

The role of the Education Welfare Officer is:

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these families as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure families are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:10pm for Reception and Key Stage 1, and 3:15pm for Key Stage 2.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8:40-8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:20am. Pupils arriving between 8:50am and 9:20am will be marked with an 'L' code (late), pupils arriving from 9:20am onwards will be marked with a 'U' code (unauthorised absence). The register for the second session will be taken at 1:10pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's family must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am, or as soon as practically possible, by using the 'Report absence' facility on Weduc.

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. The school may request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday. 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 families will be notified of this in advance.



### **4.3 Planned absence**

We encourage families 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. Families are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance by completing a Leave of Absence Request Form on Weduc with the relevant evidence attached, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's family notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The pupil's family 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.

Please note that, in the case of absence requests for secondary school entrance exams, only half a day's absence will be authorised. Pupils are expected to attend school for the other half of the day.

### **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

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:50am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the families of these children. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer may carry out unannounced gate checks.

Families should note that children who arrive late after 9:20am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to families whose children persistently arrive after this time.

### **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 family 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 carry out a home visit, contact Social Services, 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the family on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their family to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

## 4.6 Reporting to families

The school will regularly inform families (see definition of 'family', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via real-time information available on the school's communication platform Weduc, and annual written reports issued at the end of the summer term.

Where there are concerns relating to a pupil's attendance or punctuality, letters will be issued to families.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

Please note that, in the case of absence requests for secondary school entrance exams, only half a day's absence will be authorised. Pupils are expected to attend school for the other half of the day.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as **rare, significant, unavoidable events** that could not reasonably have been scheduled outside school term time.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Forms section of Weduc. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 family belongs. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the family's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Family 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

## Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine families for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school considers a penalty notice appropriate, it will submit a request to the local authority, who are responsible for issuing penalty notices. A copy of the request will be retained by the school.

Before requesting a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where families allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the family that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but families do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give families a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of families under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

We promote regular attendance through a supportive school ethos that values intrinsic motivation. Positive learning experiences and strong relationships with staff and peers help to encourage consistent attendance. We maintain open communication with families – not only to raise concerns about attendance and punctuality, but also to acknowledge and celebrate improvements.

## **7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school**

### **7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their families to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

## **7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND**

We understand that some pupils may face difficulties attending school regularly due to mental or physical ill health, or because of needs related to their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We are committed to working proactively with families and professionals to identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.

When a pupil is absent due to these challenges, the school will:

- Maintain regular, supportive communication with families to understand the reasons for absence and to agree on next steps.
- Involve the SENCO and relevant staff in reviewing support needs and planning appropriate interventions or adjustments.
- In rare and exceptional circumstances, implement a part-time timetable as a short-term measure to support.
- Provide access to appropriate in-school support such as our Nurture Breakfast Club, ELSA support, and supported indoor lunchtime arrangements for pupils with ongoing ill health or injury.
- Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance related to their needs, the school will inform the local authority.
- Ensure access to remote learning or alternative educational activities during longer absences, where appropriate and in the best interests of the pupil.

Our goal is to ensure all pupils feel safe, supported, and included – and to work flexibly to remove barriers to attendance while promoting each child's well-being and educational progress.

## **7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence**

We recognise that returning to school after a prolonged or unavoidable absence can be a challenging time for some pupils. Our approach is centred on understanding each pupil's individual circumstances and working closely with families to ensure a supportive and successful reintegration.

The school will:

- Communicate with families throughout the absence to discuss the pupil's well-being, offer support, and begin early conversations about a suitable return.
- Where appropriate, facilitate Zoom contact with classmates or staff during the period of absence to help the pupil feel connected and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Encourage families to share any concerns or suggestions about what support or adjustments might help their child return and settle back into school life.

- Involve the SENCO and/or Nurture Team as needed to plan personalised support, such as phased returns, in-class support, or reasonable adjustments to routines or expectations.
- Where appropriate, offer access to supportive in-school provisions, including our Nurture Breakfast Club, ELSA support, and indoor lunchtime arrangements, to ease transition and reduce anxiety.
- Ensure all staff involved with the pupil are informed of the plan and are equipped to support their return in a consistent and compassionate manner.

## **8. Attendance monitoring**

### **8.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

The Attendance Officer, Lead DSL and EWO work together to monitor attendance and aim to improve attendance and punctuality.

### **8.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **8.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers for persistent absentees, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

#### **8.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the families of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)



- Work closely with Social Services, where appropriate
- Take a balanced approach when evaluating attendance, considering the point in the school year – for example, 90% attendance in October may be less concerning than the same percentage later in the academic year
- Persistent absenteeism may be added to the child's safeguarding records

If a child's attendance has been identified as a concern or if they are classed as persistent absence the following process will be followed:

- School office will discuss individual cases with the HST.
- Written reminders will be sent to families regarding the child's attendance percentage. Depending on the situation, a verbal conversation may precede this.
- School will support pupils and families by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. This should include a conversation to discuss the reasons for the repeated absence and to agree a plan of action to improve the child's attendance at school.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, school will encourage all partners to work together to support pupils and families to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and families at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them.
- Where absence intensifies the school will work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.
- Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.
- If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an Education, Health and Care Plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer may be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority. Link for form below:

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/education/schools-new/attendance/child-missing-education>

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum three-yearly by the Headship Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Non-collection of children from school

The school has established procedures for safely handing over children at the end of the school day to adults who are not their parent or known carer. Families will be asked to provide the details of the person who will normally collect the child and will be informed of the need to notify the school in advance if this changes, giving details of the person authorised to collect the child. The school will also strive to have the details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency in the event that the child is uncollected.

Families will also be asked to inform schools where children are subject to court orders that limit contact with a named individual.

In the event that anyone who is not authorised to do so attempts to collect the child, the school will not allow the child to leave but contact the family immediately.

If a child is uncollected at the end of the school day, the school will follow the procedure agreed with children's social care:

- The schools will check with the child to see if there are any changes to arrangements for collection and try to make contact with the family, and wait with the child until someone comes to collect them.
- Children will not be released into the care of another parent even where they offer to take the child home.
- The school will contact the MASH Professionals' Consultation Line to seek advice at 4.00pm if there are difficulties in contacting families.
- If all possible means of contact have been exhausted and no contact can be made with the family by 4.30pm, the school will contact MASH and if advised to do so the police, who will arrange to collect the child or make arrangements for the child to be transported to the children's social services office.
- The school will regularly remind families via Newsline to confirm and update contact details and to nominate a family member or friend who can collect the child in the event that they are unable to do so.
- Where children are regularly uncollected or collected late, this should be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead. If there are also child protection concerns, a referral should be made to children's social care via MASH.

### **Additional procedures for pick up time:**

Staff bring children out to the gate (Nur), playground (R/KS1) or the front of the school (KS2) at the end of the school day. Families wait a short distance away.

For years N to 4:

Each child is released as the authorised adult approaches or is located and is recognised by the child and member of staff. Those children who have no adult waiting or have an adult waiting who is not authorised by the family to collect are brought back inside the building whilst attempts are made to contact families. Children will not be handed over to adults who are not their family without authorisation from the family.

For Years 5 and 6:

Staff monitor the children leaving the school grounds to ensure they are confident about going to their agreed adult. If there is a reason why a year 5/6 child may be more vulnerable (e.g. a court order is in place or the child has a specific need), then staff will follow the procedures for years Nur to 4, or may have a specific plan in place for pick up. Children in years 5 and 6 whose families have a pre-arranged agreement with the school to allow them to walk home or to an agreed meeting point leave straight away from the front of the school to begin their journey independently. Staff wait until all children have left or been collected and will support children whose arrangements have changed by inviting them back into school and contacting their families.

Children whose families are late will be brought to the school office to wait to be collected.