

Binfield C.E. Primary School (V.A.)



"Building strong foundations, together, for everyone."

School Attendance Policy

Date Last Updated: (new revised policy) June 2026

Next Review Date: March 2027

Status: Mandatory

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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

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 parents/carers
- 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 Headteacher

The Headteacher is 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or the authorising attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND.
- 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 parents/carers 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 Attendance champions

Attendance champions are 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, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

N.B. the Attendance Champion is the Headteacher and she may choose to delegate some of the above responsibilities to the Binfield Support Partnership team (pastoral team) or other staff as appropriate e.g. creating interventions/reintegration plans; delivering targeted support etc.

3.4 The attendance officers

The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Delivering interventions or any other strategy as directed by the Headteacher

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance accurately and on time on the register using 'Sims for schools' for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office.
- Being an initial point of contact for parents.

3.6 School staff

Office staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school sims for schools system
- Follow-up as a matter of urgency, any absent pupils for whom we have not been informed about their absence and follow Safeguarding protocols as needed
- Monitor daily attendance and alert the Safeguarding team immediately if any pupil under the remit of a social worker is absent from school
- Liaise with Headteacher and attendance officer regularly

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult 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)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time. **The school gates open at 8.30 a.m. and closes at 8.45a.m. School registration is between 8.45 – 8.50 a.m. and 1.15p.m. to 1.20p.m.**
- Call the school to report their child's absence, before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return to school, and where requested provide evidence of reason for absence
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority - this includes following the school attendance policy and local authority attendance strategy.

- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting in the first instance class teacher or Binfield Pastoral Support team.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day for both morning and afternoon sessions, arrive on time and stay until the end of the afternoon session at 3.15pm.

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:

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 gates open at 8.30 a.m. and closes at 8.45a.m. School registration is between 8.45 – 8.50 a.m. and 1.15p.m. to 1.20p.m. The school days ends at 3.15p.m. and it is expected that pupils will remain in school until this time each day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school by 9am on the first day of an unplanned absence. This can be done by telephoning the main office 01344 860106 or emailing the school giving the following information:

- Child's Name
- Class
- Reason for absence and if due to illness, please give details
- If medical advice has been sort
- Expected date of return

Where the absence is longer than 10 sessions, 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 or the reason for absence given, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

It is at the Headteacher's discretion to mark an absence as authorised or unauthorised.

4.3 Planned absence

We encourage parents 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.

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

Any leave of absence should be made using the request for term time absence form given at least two-weeks' notice (the form can be found on this page from our website <https://www.binfieldschool.co.uk/forms-you-may-need/>)

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late: The school gates open at 8.30a.m. and close at 8.45 a.m. promptly. The register is taken and closes promptly at 8.50a.m. Any pupil who arrives:

- After the gates have closed at 8.45a.m. and 9.00 will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L. This includes pupils who are not in time to go through the school gates and have to be processed through the school office as they will not be in time in the classroom to be registered.
- After 9a.m. pupils will be marked using code U
- As a school we recognised that on rare occasions or due to exceptional circumstances, a child may be late. Punctuality is regularly monitored and you may be invited in to discuss how we can work together to improve punctuality. 5 or more lates in a school year is considered as unsatisfactory punctuality and will be recorded on your child's annual school report.

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:

If the parent has not contacted the school before 9am to advise the school of the reason for the absence the school office will contact the pupil's parent 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 visit the family home or contact other agencies including children social care or and the police.

- 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. If no reason is ascertained the absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- Call the parent 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 appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents 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, request the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

4.6 Reporting to parents

At Binfield Primary school attendance is closely monitored and we will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance either via the class teacher or the use of initial attendance concern letters.

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:

- Exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Headteacher

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 approved by the Headteacher, following application using the term time absence request form. The request form should be submitted giving at least two-school weeks' notice.

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, considering 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 two school weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or web site (<https://www.binfieldschool.co.uk/forms-you-may-need/insert-link-here>). Evidence to support any request for leave of absence is requested. Absence due to delayed travel will not be authorised.

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.

Sickness Returns: 15-Day Absence Notification

Requirement: Schools must provide the Local Authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who:

Have been recorded with the absence code I (Illness), for 15 days consecutively or cumulatively due to illness.

Attendance Returns: 10-Day Absence Notification

Requirement: Schools are legally obligated to provide the Local Authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who:

Fail to attend school regularly, or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence is recorded with one or more of the following codes: G, N, O, and/or U (unauthorised absences).

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents 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 issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing 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 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 parents 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 parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are 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 parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents 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 parents 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 take a whole school approach to attendance and will work with children and parents to improve attendance and punctuality.

We encourage parents to discuss any barriers there may be with class teacher or pastoral team as soon as they appear.

Attendance is regularly monitored and communicated to parents either via class teacher, attendance letters or school reports.

We will invite parents to meet with class teacher and family Support officer to implement a plan of support and improvement which may include outside agencies and will be reviewed regularly .

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

When a pupil has been absent for an extended period due to illness or complex barriers the school will work with closely with parents and child to implement a reintegration plan, which will be reviewed regularly. We will:

- Liaise and seek further advice with other professionals including health professionals.
- Provide home-learning work sheets and/or on-line learning.
- Regularly complete welfare checks either through home visits, teams call or telephone calls.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school regularly monitor attendance, punctuality and absence data. This information is shared with the local authority, educational welfare service and the DFE.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence including sibling absence.
- Advise the parent of any concern around attendance either directly or attendance concern letters.

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.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, 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 which can be found on the school's website:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and anti-bullying policy