



Coleridge Primary School

Attendance Policy

March 2023

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1. Aims

Our aim at Coleridge is to ensure pupils have excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, in order that they are able to succeed and thrive at school, and maximise their learning time.

In order to do this, we aim to:

- Encourage and recognise good attendance and punctuality
- Teach children the importance of developing good habits of attendance and punctuality
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Liaise with parents regarding attendance concerns
- Have clear procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and act quickly where issues arise
- Set aspirational targets for high levels of attendance, above the national average

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on '[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)'. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

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 headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Arranging targeted intervention and support to pupils and families, alongside the SEND, Safeguarding and Well-Being teams
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Tim Ibbotson** who can be contacted on tibbotson@coleridgeprimary.net.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.05am each morning and 1.05pm (KS2) or 1.15pm (EYFS and KS1) every afternoon
- Notifying the designated senior leader of any attendance concerns they have

3.5 School Admin Team

School admin staff will:

- Take calls and read emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow up any registered absences where a reason has not yet been given by contacting the parent/carers
- Notify the designated senior leader where, after 5 days of absence, still no reason has been given
- Notify the designated senior leader of any other attendance concerns they have



3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. Pupils and parents/carers can come into the school grounds from 8.45am; children can enter their classrooms from 8.50am
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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
- Collect their child on time at the end of the school day (3.15pm KS2; 3.10pm KS1 and EYFS)

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm (KS2) and 1.10pm (EYFS and KS1). The children will be marked as one of the following:

- 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 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

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 as soon as they can, ideally by 9am, by contacting the school office in one of the following ways:

- Calling on 020 8340 3173. Parents/carers can either speak to a member of the team directly or leave a voice message
- Emailing the team on absences@coleridgeprimary.net
- Registering the absence on ParentHub – the school's communication APP.

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

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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.

To request a leave of absence, parents must complete a *Pupil Leave of Absence* form in advance of the absence. A copy of this form can be found on our school website or can be collected from one of the school offices.

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

Pupils arriving late to school should report to the school office to be registered.

Pupils arriving between 9.01am and 9.15am will be marked as late (L). Those arriving after 9.15am will be marked as 'U' to denote significant lateness.

Punctuality is monitored closely by the SLT. Where a regular pattern of lateness is observed, parents will be contacted to discuss where the issues may lie and what support can be put into place.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Any pupils not present at the time of the school register, and where no reason has yet been provided for their absence, will be marked as 'N'.

A phone call or email is made to the parents of any absent pupil and the register updated once specific reasons for the absence have been provided – this will be completed no later than 5 days after the missed session.

Where parents fail to provide a reason for a pupil's absence, it is marked as 'unauthorised' (O).



If the school cannot reach the pupil's parent/carer, the school will continue to call or email on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

In these cases, the school may also contact the pupil's emergency contacts. If they are unable to get hold of an emergency contact, and where there is concern for a child's safety and wellbeing, they may also call the police.

A record of calls/emails will be kept by the admin team and any concerns regarding safeguarding will be passed on to the SLT who will follow them up on the same day the safeguarding concern is raised.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

We believe that effective communication between parents/carers and the school is important for maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality. We will therefore:

- Inform/remind parents of the school's attendance and punctuality expectations during year group curriculum chats or at EYFS induction meetings which take place at the beginning of each academic year
- Celebrate/communicate attendance data regularly in school newsletters
- Remind parents that their child's individual attendance percentage can be found on ParentHub
- Inform parents about their child's individual attendance and absence levels at the end of the Autumn and Spring term via email. These will also be outlined in the child's individual end of year report in the Summer Term.

4.7 Persistent absence and safeguarding

All staff at Coleridge Primary are aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

The school recognises the need for early intervention in cases of persistent absence, and will follow it's unauthorised/unexplained absence procedure (4.5), making referrals to relevant safeguarding agencies where necessary.

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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Absences for a bereavement of a close family member
- Absences for important religious observances, but only for the ceremony and travelling time - not extended leave
- Families requiring time together to recover from, or deal with, trauma or crisis (compassionate leave)
- The school will also make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities



- The school will take into account the needs of families of service personnel if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time

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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. 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.

The school can also grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance, within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 if the local authority have given the pupil a licence for that performance. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the licence specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the school will consider the pupil's attendance record and their attainment and progress data before considering whether to authorise a leave of absence. Furthermore, where the terms of licence do not specify dates it will be again be the school's decision whether to authorise a leave of absence.

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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

All members of the school community have a duty to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality, and good attendance and punctuality should be celebrated and rewarded. Therefore, at Coleridge, we:

- Ensure all staff act as role models and have excellent attendance and punctuality themselves



- Teach about good attendance in assemblies and PSHE lessons
- Promote good habits of attendance and punctuality in class
- Celebrate and reward classes with the best attendance, or most improved attendance, during a school assembly, every other week. The winning classes will be presented with one of the school attendance teddies.

7. Monitoring attendance

7.1 Monitoring and analysing attendance

The school's expectation for attendance is 100%. To help us strive towards this, the school will ensure:

- The designated lead for attendance regularly communicates with class teachers and other relevant professionals, such as the SENCO, the school Safeguarding team, Well-Being department or school nurse, to ensure we have a full understanding of each pupil's barriers to attendance.
- The designated lead for attendance monitors and analyses attendance and absence data regularly and reports concerns to the rest of the SLT.
- Appropriate actions are agreed and put into place after these discussions, such as letters or scheduled meetings.
- The senior leadership team looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, in order to develop strategies to address these patterns and help mitigate against them in the future.
- They benchmark the school's 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 Body.

7.2 Improving attendance

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, and the SLT has deemed it appropriate to do so, the following procedures will be put in place:

- The class teacher or teaching assistant will raise the concern with the parent or carer in person to discuss the reasons for the increase in absence.
- If attendance continues to decline, the parent/carer will be sent a letter from a member of the school senior leadership team, highlighting the concerns around attendance or punctuality and offering support and guidance should they need it.
- If there is still no improvement, the parent/carer will be sent a second letter outlining the concerns and suggesting strategies for improvement.
- If the attendance continues to decline, the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting in school with the Deputy or Assistant Head. Alternatively, a home visit can be arranged. During this meeting, strategies for improving a pupil's attendance will be discussed and agreed.
- If absence rates continue to rise, the parent/carer will be invited into meet with the headteacher and/or the school's Education Welfare Officer. During this meeting, further strategies for improving attendance will be put into place in the form of a formal parent contract. Failure to comply with the rules of the contract may lead to the parent being issued with a fine.



7.3 Persistent absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. In cases where a pupil is considered a persistent absentee, the school will devise a set of strategies to support the family. These strategies will be agreed by the SLT, in conjunction with the school wellbeing team and the SEND department, and will always be individualised to the family. These strategies may include:

- Regular meetings and/or wellbeing reviews with the parent/carer to discuss the pupil's attendance and engagement at school
- ELSA sessions to support the child
- Morning check-ins with a trusted adult
- Purposeful tasks and responsibilities given to the child to help encourage them into school
- Parent workshops to help establish morning and bedtime routines at home
- Sessions arranged with the school nurse
- Family buddies
- Access provided to wider support services, such as Early Help or Families First
- In exceptional circumstances, a reduced timetable may be introduced for a fixed period of time.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, or every 2 years by the Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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	Approved 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

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
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