



Coleridge Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2025

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1. Statement of intent

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. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

In order to ensure that children have high levels of attendance, 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
- Ensure our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(As amended\)](#)
- [The Children \(Performances and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 1963](#)
- DfE (2024) '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'
- DfE (2025) '[Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2025](#)'
- DfE (2025) '[Children missing education](#)'
- DfE (2024) '[Providing remote education](#)'
- DfE (2024) '[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Emotional Health and Well-being Policy (SEMH) Policy



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 monitoring, reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender or disability

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and acting as early as possible to address patterns of absence

3.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The attendance officer at Coleridge 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 8.55am (EYFS & KS1) or 9.00am (KS2) each morning and 12:50pm (EYFS), 1.05pm (KS2) or 1.15pm (KS1) every afternoon
- Notifying the attendance officer 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/carer
- Notify the attendance officer where, after 5 days of absence, still no reason has been given
- Notify the attendance officer 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. Children can enter their classrooms from 8:45am (EYFS & KS1) & 8.50am (KS2)
- Collect their child on time at the end of the school day (3.20pm EYFS & KS1; 3.25pm KS2)
- Call or message the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact details
- 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
- Request leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance
- Promote good attendance with their children
- Proactively engage with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA, and follow any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.



4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep an attendance register, and places all pupils onto this register.

Teachers and other designated staff members will take the attendance register at 8:50am (EYFS & KS1) or 8:55am (KS2) on each school day. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45 (EYFS), 1pm (KS2) and 1.10pm (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 (and an estimation of how long the absence will last) 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
- Registering the absence on ParentHub – the school's communication APP.
- Emailing the team on absences@coleridgeprimary.net

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 after the classroom doors close (8.50am - EYFS & KS1; 8:55am - KS2) but before 9.25am will be marked as late (L). Those arriving after 9.25am will be marked as 'U' to denote significant lateness. A 'U' mark counts as an absence.

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
- Ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.
- 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 its 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, disabilities or mental health issues
- 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, using the 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, barges (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 again be the school's decision whether to authorise a leave of absence.

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 each week. The winning classes are presented with one of the school attendance teddies. The winning Junior classes get an extra session to play on the MUGA during their lunch break

7. Monitoring attendance

7.1 Monitoring and analysing attendance

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. They will report any concerns to the rest of the SLT.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes
- Particular days of poor attendance
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.



The attendance officer will regularly communicate 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.

Appropriate actions are agreed and put into place after these discussions, such as letters or scheduled meetings.

The attendance officer will 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 attendance officer will raise the concern with the parent or carer to discuss the reasons for the increase in absence.
- If attendance continues to decline, the parent/carer will be sent a letter from the attendance officer or member of the SLT 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 attendance officer. 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 in to meet with the attendance officer, 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. Penalty notices and legal interventions

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after [one term](#), the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents/carers
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 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 five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.



9. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

10. Monitoring arrangements

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, or every 2 years by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. 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.

Attending		
Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
l	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
P	Approved sporting activity	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
K	Attending provision arranged by LA	Pupil is attending a place for educational provision arranged by the local authority

Unauthorised absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
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

Authorised absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for pupils participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Authorised leave of absence	Leave of absence for part-time pupils
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
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	Traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed



Do not count towards attendance figures		
Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and have not done so
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend	Pupil unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend	Pupil unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Pupil unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend	Pupil unable to attend due to the school site being closed
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupil absent due to being in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend	Pupil absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
Y7	Unable to attend	Pupil absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school
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