



Upper Beeding Primary School

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

March 2023

## 1. Aims

At Upper Beeding Primary School, we are committed to providing a full and enriching education for all children. We believe that children benefit enormously from the education and activities that the school provides, therefore, regular school attendance is essential. Collectively, we do all we can to ensure that all children have high school attendance rates. We have a school culture where every individual is aware of their value and role to play, therefore attendance is promoted by all members of the school community. However, the headteacher, Matt Andrews, is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance: '[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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on [absence statistics](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. School Procedures

### 3.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 08:50am on each school day. The register for the morning session will close at 09:00am and the register for the afternoon session will close at 1:05pm.

### 3.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

To report an absence, parents can telephone the school office on 01903 812288 and leave a message on the school answer machine before 9:20am or telephone to speak to a member of the office staff. Unplanned absence can also be reported by sending an email message to [office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk)

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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. The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested could include:

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### 3.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, 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. To report absence in advance for a medical or dental appointment, parents can either give a written note to the class teacher or inform the school office by either telephone 01903 812288, in person or by email [office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@upperbeedingprimary.co.uk). In some cases, i.e. hospital appointment or if a child's attendance level is already low, we may ask for a copy of the appointment letter. Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### 3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after 9:20am after the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised, using the appropriate code.

In the case of continual lateness a letter will be sent to the parents/carers and a referral could be made to the Pupil Entitlement Team at West Sussex where upon a Fixed Penalty Notice could be enforced.

### 3.5 Following up Absences

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When a child does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- If no note, email or telephone call is received from parents/carers by 9:20am then they will be contacted by telephone call. Where there is no response, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the code 'O', or a 'U' if a child arrives after 9:20am
- Should concerns arise over attendance then discussions will take place with the Pupil Entitlement Team. This may result in a referral.
- Any return to school after a long absence will be carefully planned by the school

### 3.6 Reporting to Parents

The school reports to parents on their child's attendance record at the Spring Term Parents Evening and the end of year school report.

## 4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### 4.1 Granting Approval for Term-time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. There is a requirement that parents/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstances and may be required to meet with the Headteacher.
- Where the Headteacher is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence such as the pupil's attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator.
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences, a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.

Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those parents who give a low priority to attendance.

All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis. School will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance. After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement, the case will be escalated to the Governing Body and ultimately West Sussex County Council.

### 4.2 Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

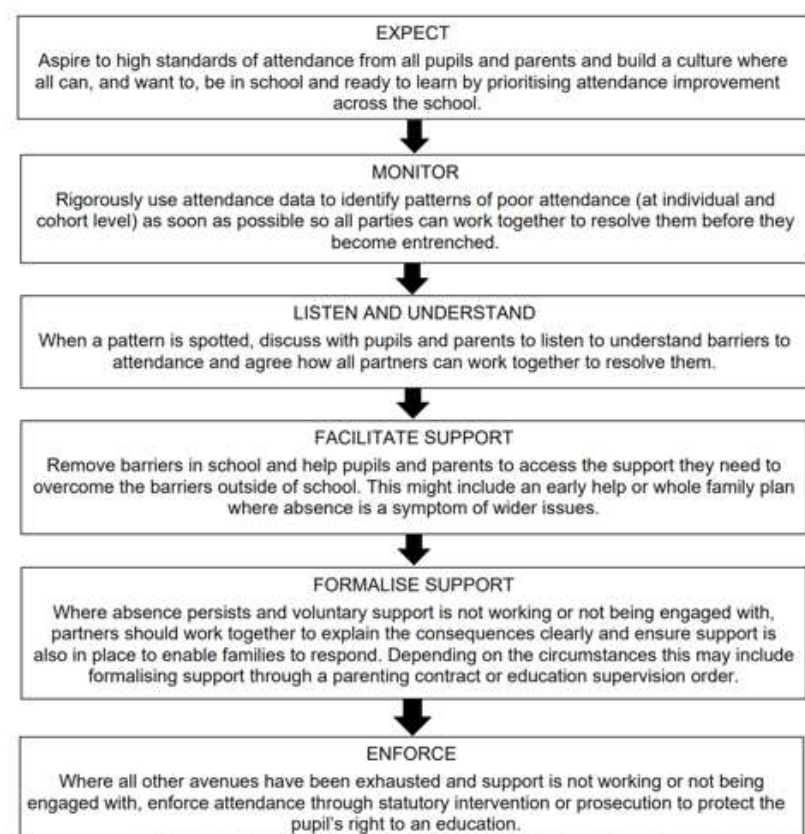
If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Upper Beeding Primary recognises good attendance through:

- Celebrating good attendance in our weekly Celebration Assembly.
- Drawing attention to the excellent outcomes produced by consistently high attendance
- Praising the resilience of children, who have continued to attend school and manage the discomfort of a mild illness such as a cold
- Valuing teamwork is part of our school culture, therefore every child is aware of their value and the impact an absence can have on others

All stakeholders at Upper Beeding recognise that early intervention is essential. Once concerns regarding lateness or attendance are raised, class teachers move swiftly to meet with parents and supportively explore barriers to attendance. If attendance does not improve, the Headteacher explore with the family additional supportive measures including referrals and/or signposting to external services. We work together to improve attendance by:



## 6. Attendance Monitoring

Our school secretary, Christine Gilliam, is our attendance officer, who monitors pupil absence, on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning on 01902 812288, if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill. If a pupil's absence falls below the national average, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Pupil Entitlement Team. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Pupil attendance data is stored on Bromcom and all attendance correspondence is filed by the school office and/or CPOMS (where appropriate).

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### 7.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### 7.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 7.4 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.

### 7.5 Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared and approved by the Governing Board.

## 9. Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## Appendix 1 – School Absence Codes

School absence codes can be found in the [DFE School Attendance Guidance](#)

## Appendix 2 - Days off School add up to Lost Learning

Attendance	Lost learning time	Explanation
100% attendance	0 weeks of missed learning	<b>Perfect attendance</b> Best chance of success Well done!
96%	1 week, 4 days of learning missed a year	<b>Good attendance</b>
90% attendance	3 weeks 4 days of learning missed a year	<b>Poor attendance</b> Missing out on valuable learning experiences. We are beginning to get concerned

80% attendance	7 weeks, 3 days of learning missed a year	<b>Very poor attendance</b> We are seriously concerned and will make Pupil Entitlement aware
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Reviewed and agreed at PW Committee 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023