

February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance and Punctuality Update 2025–2026

At our school, we are proud of the caring and inclusive environment we provide for all children. We know that good attendance and punctuality are essential for children to thrive socially, emotionally and academically.

We are writing to share our updated attendance procedures and to explain how we will continue to work with you to raise standards this year.

Why Attendance Matters

Every day in school counts. Even small amounts of absence can quickly add up and impact learning, friendships and confidence.

The Department for Education expects schools to take a **“support first” approach**, which means we will always aim to understand any barriers to attendance and work with families to overcome them. However, we also have a statutory duty to monitor attendance closely and act where concerns arise.

Our Expectations

- Children should attend school **every day** unless they are genuinely unwell.
- Our target for all pupils is **96% attendance or above**.
- Attendance below **90%** is classed as *persistent absence*.
- School starts at **8:35am**. Children should be in class ready to learn at this time.

Our procedures

1. Daily First-Day Response

If your child is absent and we have not received a reason:

- We will make a phone call on the first day of absence.
- If we cannot reach you, we will send a text and may call again.
- If we are unable to make contact and have concerns, our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Denise Steele may carry out a home visit.

We complete a daily absence report by 10:00am to ensure all children are accounted for.

2. Early Support and Monitoring

We will be monitoring attendance closely throughout the year.

- If attendance falls to **92% or below**, we will contact you to discuss concerns.
- If attendance falls below **90%**, your child will be classed as **persistently absent** and we will arrange a supportive meeting to agree next steps.
- We will also review attendance from previous years, including Reception and Year 1, to offer early support.

Our aim is to identify patterns early and provide help before attendance becomes a serious concern.

3. Clear Communication

You will receive:

- Attendance information leaflets
- Updates via newsletters
- Personalised letters where attendance causes concern
- Regular reminders about expectations

Attendance policies and key contacts, including our Designated Attendance Lead, are available on our school website.

Holidays in Term Time and Penalty Notices (Updated 2026 Guidance)

Schools are not permitted to authorise holidays during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Family holidays, travel costs or availability of accommodation are not considered exceptional circumstances.

In line with current national guidance, if a child has **5 or more days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence** within a 10-week period, this may result in a **Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority**.

The national framework for penalty notices states:

- The fine is **£80 per parent, per child**, if paid within 21 days.
- If not paid within 21 days, the fine increases to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable within 28 days.
- A second penalty notice within a three-year period will automatically be charged at **£160 per parent, per child** (no reduced rate).
- A third offence within three years may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, which could result in a fine of up to **£2,500**, a parenting order, or other legal action.

Please note: penalty notices are issued **per parent and per child**. For example, two parents taking one child out of school without authorisation could receive two separate fines.

We strongly encourage families to plan holidays during official school breaks. Term dates are published well in advance to support forward planning.

If you believe there are exceptional circumstances, a request must be made in writing to the Headteacher **before** any leave is taken.

Punctuality

Arriving on time is just as important as attending.

- School gates close at **8:35am sharp**.
- We will now send automated texts if your child arrives late.
- If your child is late more than twice in one week, you will receive a personalised message detailing:
 - The number of late arrivals
 - The total number of minutes missed

Minutes late quickly add up and can mean lost learning time.

Our Commitment

Improving attendance is a whole-school priority. All staff are working together to:

- Create a welcoming and supportive environment
- Encourage a strong sense of belonging
- Offer breakfast club and extra-curricular opportunities
- Support families where barriers arise

We are committed to working in partnership with you. If there are challenges affecting your child's attendance, please speak to us as early as possible so we can help.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Together, we can give every child the very best opportunity to succeed.

Yours sincerely,

M Dowell
Headteacher