



SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Attendance Policy

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promoting good attendance
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The school monitors attendance in line with Department for Education guidance. Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of possible school sessions, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of possible school sessions.

2. Strategies for promoting attendance

At the Acorn School we believe that regular attendance is crucial if children are to benefit from their education and achieve their potential. The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come, a place where:

- Children are treated with respect and feel valued
- Children's needs are recognised and are being addressed
- All children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance.

Parents are notified about the school's policy on attendance through communications sent to all parents at the start and throughout the academic year. The school also ensures it communicates any issues early and acknowledges any positive improvements made.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy has regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- School Attendance (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Department for Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026)
- Department for Education, Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools (Updated September 2025)

The School will have regard to subsequent amendments to legislation and updates to statutory guidance.

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4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The board of governors

The board of governors 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

4.2 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
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

4.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher

4.4 Class teachers/Sponsors

Class teachers/Sponsors (or main lesson teachers) are responsible for recording attendance at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and for ensuring that any absence or lateness is identified promptly.

4.5 School office staff

School office staff are responsible for ensuring that attendance information is accurately recorded on Bromcom on the same day and for following up unexplained absences in accordance with the school's procedures.

4.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

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- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

School Procedures

4.7 Attendance register

The school maintains its statutory admissions and attendance registers electronically using Bromcom.

Class teachers / sponsors take attendance at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. A paper register is used in the classroom to record attendance initially. This information is transferred to Bromcom on the same day.

Attendance and absence are recorded using the national attendance and absence codes in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The school follows up any unexplained absence promptly and ensures that amendments to the electronic register are made and retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

See appendix 1 for the school's attendance codes, based on DfE guidance.

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

Pupils must arrive in school at the same time each school day.

- Lower School students arrive between 8.30am and 8.40am as lessons start promptly at 8.45am
- Upper School students arrive between 8.15am and 8.25am as lessons start promptly at 8.30am

Registration takes place twice a day at: 8:45am and 1:30 pm. The formal close of registration for morning registration is 9:30 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.35pm.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.8 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.

- To notify an absence, **please e-mail info@theacornschool.com or telephone the school office on 01453 836508 before 8:45 am on every day of absence, with an explanation.**
- If the school has not received a reason for a pupil's absence, school staff will contact the parent/carer promptly to establish the reason for the absence and ensure the pupil's welfare. The appropriate attendance code will be recorded once the reason for absence has been established.

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We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are genuine concerns about the authenticity of an illness, the school may ask parents/carers to provide appropriate evidence. The school will not routinely request medical evidence and will only do so where it is reasonable and necessary. 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.

4.9 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised provided that the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Please contact the office team on info@theacornschool.com and the office will then inform the relevant teachers and send you an absence request form to be approved by the headteacher

However, 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.

For other types of term-time absence, see the section below on authorised and unauthorised absence.

4.10 Lateness and punctuality

Parents who know their child will arrive late should contact the school and tell them that the child will arrive late and make every effort to get the child to school as soon as possible.

The formal close of registration for morning registration is **9:30 am**:

- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- **Any student arriving after this time will be marked as absent on the register**, using the appropriate code, and signed in on a separate sheet.

The school will identify students whose punctuality is a cause for concern,

- Students arriving late to school are met by the office staff who sign them in and discuss with them the reason for their lateness.
- Teachers will discuss the effects of persistent lateness with students and parents as necessary.

4.11 Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture. Class 11 and 12 students are the exception to this rule as they are allowed off site to go to town during break and lunch by prior consent from their parents (if under 18).

- If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or for a medical appointment, permission is required from their parent/carer and the student is required to sign out in the office.
- Class 12 may leave the site for self-study if permission is granted by sponsor/head of upper school and (if under 18) prior consent has been received from their parents.

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4.12 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer 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, if there is a concern for the pupil's welfare or wellbeing, the school may contact police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- 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.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will arrange a meeting with the parents.

4.13 Reporting to parents

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports, or termly where absence is a concern. Individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools or colleges.

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. 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 at least four weeks before the absence. If you wish to request an absence for any planned appointment or event, you should make the request to the class teacher and the office team via email info@theacornschool.com.
- The office team will send you the absence request form to complete.
- The completed form will be reviewed by the headteacher for a final decision.
- If the absence is not approved then any absence at that time will be marked as unauthorized.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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

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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

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative
- If the headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional

6. Legal sanctions

The school may be required to report persistent absence to the local authority, following their code of conduct.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The office team monitor pupil absence on a daily basis, it will

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and inform the headteacher and class teacher/sponsor.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/sponsors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

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- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

If a pupil's absence goes above 10%, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If, after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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. A meeting with parents will be arranged by the Class Teacher or Sponsor to address any factors that might be contributing to the raised absence rate and discuss and agree appropriate measures to help improve the attendance rate.

The severe absence threshold is 50%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 50%, the pupil will be classified as a severe absentee. A meeting with the Headteacher, or a member of the Safeguarding Team will be arranged to address any factors that might be contributing to the raised absence rate and discuss and agree appropriate measures to help improve the attendance rate, which in the case of severe absence may include requesting support from Education Welfare, or Early Help, depending on the issues involved.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- Been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days, or
- Failed to attend school regularly, or
- Been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing.

Absence data is collected each term compared to the national average and shared with the board of governors

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher and any relevant senior leaders. At every review, the policy will be shared with and approved by the board of governors.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Child protection policy
- Missing Children Policy

10. Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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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	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
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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
S	Study leave	Year 11/13 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

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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