



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1: Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2: Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Commitment to Attendance

The staff of The Colleton Primary School are committed, in partnership with families, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building schools which provide the best education possible for young people.

Regular attendance is key to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage families to ensure that their/our children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Regular school attendance at The Colleton Primary School will set pupils up for positive attendance throughout their school life.

4. Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there are good reasons for their absence;
- Arrive on time; and
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all families will:

- Ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy, their legal responsibilities with regard to their child's education and the requirement to ensure their child's attendance at school;
- Ensure their child attends school every day throughout the academic year unless the school has approved the leave of absence;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is prepared for the school day;
- Telephone or email the school each day by 9.30am if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance. Provide a FULL reason for the illness i.e. high temperature, sore throat, vomited, as we need more information than 'poorly' or 'not well' to be recorded as a reason for absence;

- Follow up any phone message with a written explanation for the absence by email, including providing medical evidence when requested;
- Avoid making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day;
- Notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details and ensure they provide more than 1 emergency contact number for their child; and
- Keep to any attendance plan they make with the school and/or local authority

School staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Ensure Registers are taken promptly by 8.50am and again at 1pm (start of the afternoon session) using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Ensure 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 and the name and position of the person who made the amendment;
- Also record for pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not, the nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity and the nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances;
- keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made;
- Contact families when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received by 9.30am, to explain the absence;
- Send a written request to families where a pupil's absence is unexplained;
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues the school staff will consider involving an education welfare officer;
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their family to improve attendance;
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals;
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 10 as appropriate);
- Provide families with their child's percentage % attendance when requested and in end of year reports;
- Work with families when there are concerns over a pupil's lack of regular attendance;

- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school;
- Notify the Education Welfare Service when a pupil fails to attend school regularly or when a pupil has missed 10 school days or more without permission (whether consecutively or not): this being a legal requirement;
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level and identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern;
- 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 families;
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns; and
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board;

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence OR has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, OR when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to families, OR when the Headteacher has not approved a families' request for leave of absence.

Families should be aware that it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not. There is an expectation that a honest reason is given for the absence. If the school suspects this is not the case this will be followed up with families.

In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any family to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost).

6. Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils and families using the Wraparound morning session, the grounds are open at 7.30am. All other pupils and families should not arrive before 8.30am. The doors open at 8.40am.

- Registration takes place at 8.50am and any pupil who arrives between 8.50am and 9.15am will be recorded as late to school;
- After 9.15am the lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (This could lead to prosecution by the local authority if the problem persists);
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

7. Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Families should arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Families are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out at the office on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.
- When a pupil is being collected from school, families are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their families will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

8. Leave of Absence - Term time

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school holiday dates, INSET days and other important dates are published on the school's website and families are asked to note these when planning holidays and family events.

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

At The Colleton we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure pupils achieve their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement. However, we also recognise that there may be occasions when a family considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If there are exceptional reasons for requesting leave of absence during term time, the following procedures will apply:

- The family with whom the pupil normally resides must complete and submit a Leave of Absence form at least one month in advance of the requested absence or as soon as the exceptional circumstances are known. The school reserves the right to refuse requests where they are submitted out of this time frame. Forms are available from the School Office and Website. The Headteacher (or person authorised to do so on the Headteacher's behalf) will consider the application, and will decide whether or not the application can be granted on the basis of 'exceptional' circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the specific circumstances of the particular application. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. The School will endeavour to respond within 5 working days to the family who submitted the application.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the pupil's absence will be authorised.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- In some incidences of a wedding of a close relative
- Open days
- Entrance exams

- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

9. Addressing Attendance Concerns

The Colleton Primary School collects attendance and absence data daily and weekly from the Registers. This information is forwarded to the Local Authority and the Department for Education. This collecting of data also enables us to identify those pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern. Should this apply to your child, the Headteacher will contact you to make you aware of the concern. If your child's attendance does not show an improvement you will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to agree an Attendance Action Plan.

10. Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) The 10 sessions do not need to be consecutive.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice 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 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far

- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

11. 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Hold regular meetings with the families 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, listen and understand barriers to attendance, explain the help that is available, explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence and review any existing actions or interventions;
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant;
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence; and
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

12. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform The Colleton Primary School in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate is supplied

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the S2S website as a pupil missing education.

13. Elective Home Education

Families have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows families to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should families wish to follow this route then this needs to be put in writing to the Headteacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll.

The school will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to inspect the education put in place at home.

14. Governors

It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate attendance at The Colleton Primary School and our figures are presented to the Governing Body on at least a termly basis.

Our Governing Body is also responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, shares the required information with the DfE and local authority, making sure the school works effectively with local partners to remove barriers to attendance and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents;
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs;
- Reviewing regularly and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most;
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge;

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs;
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance; so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data; and
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher/Designated senior lead responsible for attendance

Our 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 penalty notices, where necessary;
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers;
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs;
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels;
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school;
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- Identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance data, expectations and processes;
- Working with Education Welfare Officers and external providers to tackle persistent absence;
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data and making sure they are followed by all staff;

- Arranging calls and meetings with families to discuss attendance issues; and
- Delivering targeted intervention and/or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and families

Reviewed: October 2024

Ratified: 16th October 2024

Review period: Biennially or earlier if the statutory guidance changes

Responsibility: Full Governing Body