

# Attendance policy

## Four Swannes Primary School



### Mission Statement/Vision

At Four Swannes Primary School we believe attendance is at the core of every child's educational development. We continue to aim to offer each child the support needed to ensure they have every learning opportunity possible by promoting good attendance and punctuality to the whole school on a regular basis. We will continue to ensure we have a good relationship with families and offer support and guidance when low attendance becomes a barrier to their learning. We encourage every child to be keen and ready to learn throughout the day and ensure they have a safe and supportive space to learn.

### Aims and expectations:

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

### Attendance Targets:

- To keep whole school attendance above 96%

<b>Approved by:</b>	Alan Moore	<b>Date:</b> 7 <sup>TH</sup> March 2024
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<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
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<b>Next review due by:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
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## 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:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [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:

- 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **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 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
- Vice Chair of Governors (link role) will liaise with attendance officer at least once a term

#### **3.2 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Lisa O'Connor and can be contacted via [LOConnor@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk](mailto:LOConnor@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk)

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Veronica Crowhurst and can be contacted via

[attendance@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk)

### 3.5 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 9am for morning registration and 1:15pm for afternoon registration.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer/business manager (SLT) in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 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 9am 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
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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. 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm

## **4.2 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 by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

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**

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. The school office should be notified as soon as the pupil's parent/carer is informed and they can do this verbally or by email, contacting [attendance@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@fourswannes.herts.sch.uk).

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.

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**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code  
(L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code  
(U)
- For persistent lateness, the attendance officer will inform:

The head of lateness issues

Parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the issue can be addressed

## **4.5 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, the school may inform the appropriate outside agencies, including but not restricted to police and children's services.
- 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 consider involving an education welfare officer

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers have been informed how to access attendance for their children via the school's Arbor (MIS) app which will give real time attendance figures (as a percentage).

All parents/carers are informed of their child's attendance with the annual report.

Attendance figures can be discussed at each of the parent consultations throughout the year.

## 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 circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from those circumstances.

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 two weeks before the absence. 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, 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
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day.

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days.

#### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court:

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.
- Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school encourages good attendance by:

- publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the GB;
- the best class attendance will be published on the school newsletters and a weekly cup given for best performing year group.
- awarding good attendance badges to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance.
- other school incentives to celebrate good attendance include stickers, prizes and stationery gifts

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school 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

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.

### 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:

- Where needed, provide attendance reports to class teachers, 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
- 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

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by our attendance officer and/or Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

[hcc-sapt-attendance-codes-summary-table-september-2024](#)

## Appendix 2 – Health Protection for schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities

The exclusion table below advises on the time period that a child needs to be excluded from school if they have an infectious condition. (Source NHS)

### Health Protection for schools, nurseries, and other childcare facilities

**Exclusion table**

<b>Infection</b>	<b>Exclusion period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Athlete's foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended.
Chicken pox	Five days from onset of rash and all the lesions have crusted over	
Cold sores (herpes simplex)	None	Avoid kissing and contact with the sores. Cold sores are generally mild and heal without treatment
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult your local HPT
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Whilst symptomatic and 48 hours after the last symptoms.	
Diphtheria *	Exclusion is essential. Always consult with your local HPT	Preventable by vaccination. Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by your local HPT
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	Report outbreaks to your local HPT.
Glandular fever	None	
Hand foot and mouth	None	Contact your local HPT if a large numbers of children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances.
Head lice	None	Treatment recommended only when live lice seen
Hepatitis A*	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	In an outbreak of hepatitis A, your local HPT will advise on control measures
Hepatitis B*, C*, HIV	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are blood borne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. Contact your local HPT for more advice.
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted /healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period.
Measles*	Four days from onset of rash and recovered	Preventable by vaccination (2 doses of MMR). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife.
Meningococcal meningitis*/ septicaemia*	Until recovered	Meningitis ACWY and B are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> ). Your local HPT will advise on any action needed.
Meningitis* due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> ) Your local HPT will advise on any action needed

Infection	Exclusion period	Comments
Meningitis viral*	None	Milder illness than bacterial meningitis. Siblings and other close contacts of a case need not be excluded.
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise spread. Contact your local HPT for more information.
Mumps*	Five days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> ). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff.
Ringworm	Not usually required.	Treatment is needed.
Rubella (German measles)	Five days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a> ). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife.
Scarlet fever	Exclude until 24hrs of appropriate antibiotic treatment completed	A person is infectious for 2-3 weeks if antibiotics are not administered. In the event of two or more suspected cases, please contact local HPT
Scabies	Can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment at the same time.
Slapped cheek /Fifth disease/Parvo virus B19	None (once rash has developed)	Pregnant contacts of case should consult with their GP or midwife.
Threadworms	None	Treatment recommended for child & household.
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic treatment.
Tuberculosis (TB)	Always consult your local HPT BEFORE disseminating information to staff/parents/carers	Only pulmonary (lung) TB is infectious to others. Needs close, prolonged contact to spread
Warts and verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gyms and changing rooms.
Whooping cough (pertussis)*	Two days from starting antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. Your local HPT will organise any contact tracing

HPT – Health Protection Team

**\*denotes a notifiable disease. It is a statutory requirement that doctors report a notifiable disease to the proper officer of the local authority (usually a consultant in communicable disease control).**

Health Protection Agency (2010) Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Child Care Settings. HPA: London.