



# Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

**Including updated COVID-19 attendance guidance  
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Approved by Board of Directors  
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# Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

## Introduction

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

In our Multi Academy Trust (MAT), we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our schools a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

## 1 Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

- 1.1 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in our Trust are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.
- 1.4 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty, which is currently £60 per parent per child up to 28 days. After 28 days and up to 42 days this will increase to £120 per parent per child.

## 2 What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not make it an authorised absence.

## 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 3. Procedures

3.1 The school day begins at 8:55 am.

3.2 The register is taken once the children have settled into class. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school later than 9:05am they are given an **unauthorised absence** mark.

3.3 The afternoon session begins at 1:15pm and the same procedures apply.

3.4 **Whittle** and **Hearsall** –

The morning session at Nursery begins at 8:30am.

**Walsgrave** and **Clifford Bridge** -

The morning session at Nursery begins at 8:30am and the afternoon session at 12:30 pm.

Persistent absence in Nursery may result in your child being removed from the roll.

### If a child is absent without notification

3.5 Where no notification has been received by 9:30 am a text message/call will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office.

3.6 If there is no response to the message and there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school's Pastoral Team, who will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

3.7 The Pastoral Manager will provide a list of vulnerable children to the School Office, Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher which will provide information in the order of priority i.e. Family member, Social Worker, Attendance Officer.

### Missing children

3.7 If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

### Written Notification of absence

3.8 Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, the note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

## 4 Requests for exceptional leave of absence

4.1 If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office. (See appendix 1)

4.2 The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.

4.3 If the child is leaving the country the additional documentation detailed on the Exceptional Leave Request form must be provided.

4.4 If the documentation indicates that a child is going to a Country where FGM is practised then School will contact the emergency services on 101 and provide them with the details about the child.

## 5 Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness

5.1 If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## 6. Repeated unauthorised absences

6.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.

## 7 Rewards for good attendance

7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

### Each Week

-Non uniform Friday

-Every week, each classes attendance will be measured (Friday – Thursday). The class which has the highest attendance or 100% will be invited to wear non-uniform on the Friday of that week as a reward – including the class teacher and TA!

-This will be communicated on a Thursday afternoon to the children and parents and celebrated on the school newsletter each week.

### Each Half Term

-Children who have 100% attendance each week will be given a Golden Attendance Ticket.

-At the end of each half term there will be a raffle draw to pick an attendance winner from each Phase of the school (EYFS, KS1, LKS2 & UKS2). Obviously, the more tickets a pupil has, the greater chance they have of winning.

### End of each Term

-At the end of each term, any child with 100% attendance will receive a '100% Attendance Certificate Award' in special assembly.

-Most improved attendance will also be awarded from each year-group.

### End of the Academic Year

-Special 100% attendance assembly where children will receive 100% Attendance Trophy.

### Each Week (where attendance is needing to be a school priority focus)

-Class individual attendance will be displayed on the classroom door.

-The class with the best attendance each week will receive 5 minutes extra play on a Friday (or 5 minute afternoon play). This will run in each Phase of the school – EYFS, KS1, LKS2 and UKS2.

## **8 Attendance targets**

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

## **9 Monitoring**

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the Local Governing Body to monitor overall attendance and the Head Teacher will produce an annual report. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual Governors' Report.
- 9.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

## **10 Review**

- 10.1 The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

# COVID-19 Attendance Procedure and Coding September 2020

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we Government have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

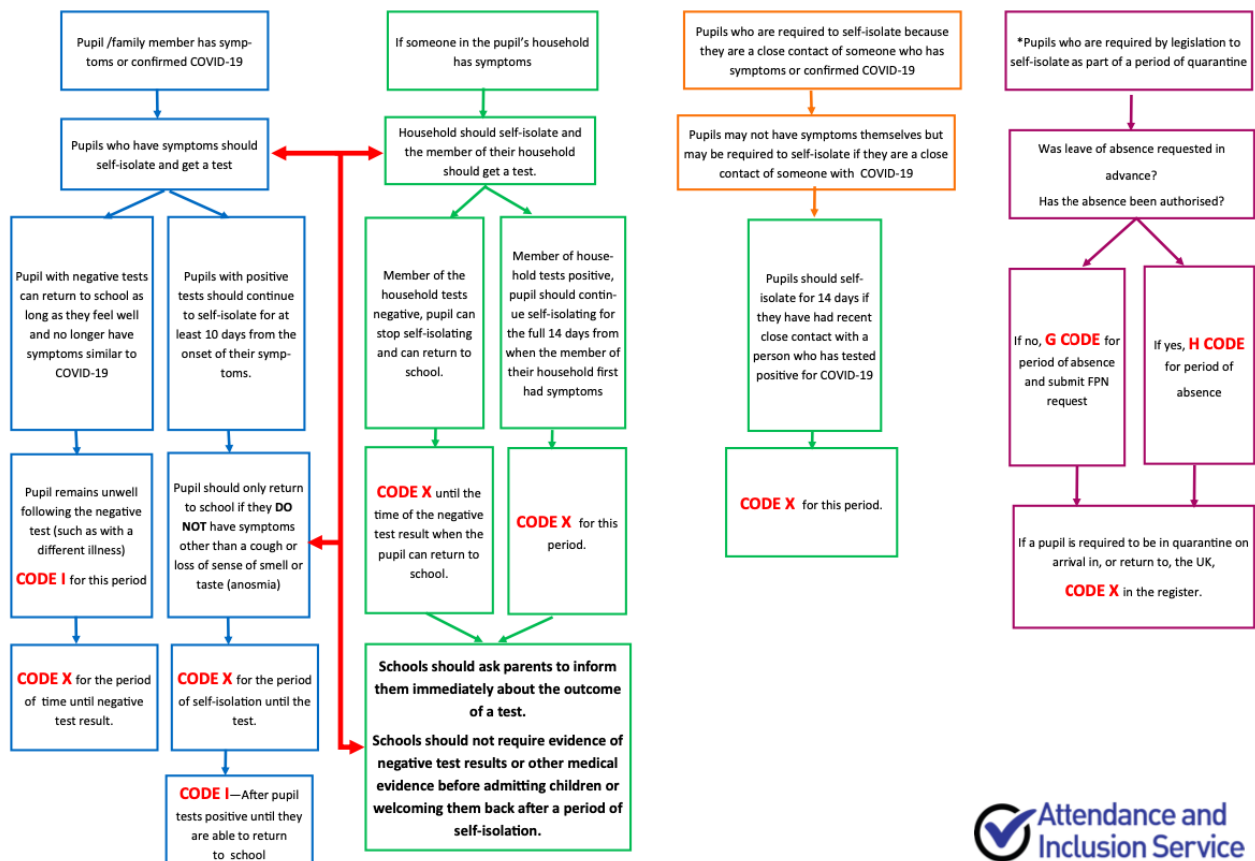
- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

## Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, we will be returning to the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak. In addition, there is a new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak



# Exceptional Leave Policy

## Exceptional leave during the School Day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day parents must inform the School Office so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the School Office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

## Exceptional leave during Term Time

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Children and Families First Service (see school's Attendance Policy).

Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

## Requests for Exceptional Leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an **Exceptional Leave of Absence Form**, which can be obtained from the school office.
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.
- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Should the request fall outside the criteria set out in the school's Attendance Policy, the application will be considered by a Governor on behalf of the Governing Body. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

# Exceptional Leave Request Form

Dear Parent / Carer

Governors' Policy states that no holidays will be authorized during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional in which case; I will consider requests on an individual basis. I am not in a position to stop you taking your child/ren on holiday however, if you do take your child/ren on holiday without permission I will not be able to authorise the request Unauthorised absences are liable to Penalty Notices fines or prosecution for non-attendance.

Child/ren who are absent for more than ten days following the expected date of return may be removed from roll and there can be no guarantee of a place being available at (name of school) on their return.

## Parents/Carers

Name of Child(ren)	1)	Class 1)
Name of Child(ren)	2)	Class 2)
Name of Child(ren)	3)	Class 3)
Name of Child(ren)	4)	Class 4)
Address		Contact details while on holiday:- Name:  Holiday Address:  Holiday contact telephone number:
Reason for leave request		
Date of Leave requested		
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)		
Print full name		

Employer
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I am only able to grant annual leave during the above period for my employee.

Employee Name.....

Employer Signature.....

Full Name.....

Office use only

Name of child (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child (3) \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Current attendance (1) \_\_\_\_\_% (2) \_\_\_\_\_% (3) \_\_\_\_\_% (4) \_\_\_\_\_%

(Attendance is taken for 12 months from the date the form is submitted)

- In line with Governors' Policy I am unable to authorize this exceptional leave request for the above period.

- In this instance I am able to authorise this exceptional leave request for the above period.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(for Office Use)

Letter 1 sent	Letter 2 sent	Letter 3 sent	Letter 4 sent	Penalty Notice Actioned