

Attendance Policy

The Mead Infant School and Auriol Junior School



Approved by:	James Knights & Tracy Creasey	Date: 01/09/23
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

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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

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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

At Auriol, the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kelly Taylor and can be contacted via TaylorK@auriol.surrey.sch.uk.

At The Mead, the designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Tracy Creasey and can be contacted via head@mead.surrey.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
- 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 and designated senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer at Auriol is Nicola Peake and can be contacted via PeakeN@auriol.surrey.sch.uk.

The attendance officers at The Mead are Alison Compton and Roberta Carslake

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 9:00am for morning registration and 1:15pm for afternoon registration
- Raising initial concerns regarding attendance directly with parents

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the designated senior leader and class teacher 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
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- If absence becomes a concern, work with the school to understand any barriers to attendance and proactively engage with the support offered

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.

Auriol Junior School

At Auriol, pupils must arrive in school by 8:40am on each school day (gates will be open from 8:30am).

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40am and pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the school office. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm.

The Mead Infant School

At The Mead, pupils must arrive by the following times on each school day

- Nursery: 9.00am
- Reception: 8.50am
- Year 1 & Year 2: 9.00am

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and pupils arriving after this time must sign in at the school office.

The register for the second session will be taken at the following times:

Nursery: 12.00

Reception: 12.35

Year 1 and 2: 1.15

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 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office staff on info@auriol.surrey.sch.uk or attendance@mead.surrey.sch.uk (see also section 7).

Parents should leave a message or details including their child's name, class and reason for absence.

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 providing the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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.

Auriol Junior School

For all known periods of absence, parents should request this using the 'Leave of Absence request form' which can be found on the school website within the 'Parents' tab or by requesting this directly from the school office.

The Mead Infant School

For all known periods of absence, parents should request this using the 'Leave of Absence request form' which can be found on the school website within the "Attendance" tab in "School Information" or by requesting this directly from the school office.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Any child arriving after the doors have closed in both schools should be taken to the school office. Parents/carers will be asked to sign their child in giving a brief description of the reason for their child's lateness.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (Auriol registers close at 8:55am and The Mead registers close at 9.30am)

Where the school has a concern around the number of late marks for a pupil, parents/carers will be contacted directly by the child's class teacher, school attendance officer and/or designated senior leader.

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:

- Contact the parent/carer or the other emergency contacts held by the school until a response is obtained and staff know that the child is safe, if no telephone call or email is received from the parent/carer by 9:00
- If there is no response from any of the contacts held by the school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed and where the pupil has been identified as vulnerable, this will result in external agencies being contacted or a home visit to ascertain that the child is safe
- If there is no response from a home visit, all efforts will be made to establish the safety and well-being of the child/ren. This may involve working with other agencies e.g. children services and the police
- For any child whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally, for any children where the school has significant concerns that are not currently working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into CSPAR may be made. The school may also seek further advice from the Inclusion Service (IS) and/or any other professional service it feels is appropriate.

For all other pupils, appropriate and proportionate measures will be taken each day until absence is explained.

The school will:

- Identify whether the absence is approved
- 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

The school will inform all parents about their child's attendance and absence levels every term. Attendance will be shared during autumn and spring parents evening and within the summer written report.

Where there are concerns from the school regarding a child's attendance, the school attendance policy will be followed and further direct communication will be made with parents/carers. Initial concerns will be raised by the class teacher, if there is no improvement a letter of concern will be sent, followed by a meeting and further evidence required for absences if there is no improvement. If appropriate the school may involve the local authority.

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 one-off events which are unavoidable.

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 one week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website within the parents tab or directly from the school office. 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
- Entrance exams will be authorised for the half day (AM or PM) during which the exam falls, up to a maximum of 3 sessions, including sitting of the 11+ exam. Any further absence relating to an entrance exam will be recorded as unauthorised. This includes any absence on the same day, directly before or after an exam, and additional days around the exam.
- 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 immediate family.
- 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.

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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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

Every term, classes achieving high levels of attendance will be celebrated within end of term assembly celebrations.

Attendance of all pupils is regularly monitored and those requiring additional support due to persistent absence concerns will be directly contacted in accordance with this policy. Individual supportive measures are put in place where required with parents, pupils and school staff working together to improve areas of concern.

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:

- Provide regular 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

If a pupil is persistently late, direct contact will be made by the child's class teacher, designated senior leader and/or attendance officer to ensure that parents/carers are aware of lateness and support is provided where necessary

Where persistent absence occurs (a child's attendance falls below 90%) the following stages of communication will follow:

- 1) In the first instance, the class teacher will contact parents/carers through parents evenings or via other communication
- 2) If attendance does not improve, a stage one persistent absence letter will be sent directly to the parents/carers informing them of their child's current attendance and that the school will continue to monitor attendance
- 3) Where absence persistently remains below 90% the following half term, a stage two letter will be sent directly to parents/carers. Within this letter, parents/carers will either be notified of the school's continual monitoring, or they will be invited to a meeting between parents/carers, the child's class teacher and designated senior leader. Within this meeting, all parties will agree priority targets and a review date.
- 4) If no improvement is made, a stage three letter will be sent directly to parents/carers requesting all future absences to be justified with medical evidence. The external school inclusion officer will be directly informed and invited to provide support.
- 5) If there is still no improvement there will be referral to the local authority inclusion team

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of three years by the designated senior leader and attendance officer. 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
- Supporting children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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 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
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 (30 minutes or more)

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