



Salterns Academy Trust

THE SALTERNS ACADEMY TRUST: TRAFALGAR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Trafalgar
S c h o o l

Learning today, leading tomorrow

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Date published: February 2017

Date Reviewed:	Sept 2024	Reviewed by:	G Pearse	Next review:	Sept 2025
Summary of changes made:	Updated based on new DFE attendance guidance.				

CONTENTS	PAGE NO
UNCRC.....	3
Aims	3
Legislation and guidance	3
Purpose	3
Recording attendance	4
Unplanned absence	4
Planned absence	5
Lates and punctuality	5
Authorising term time absence	5
Legal Sanctions	6
Supporting students who are absent or returning to school	8
Monitoring arrangements	8

UNCRC

Article 28: (Right to education): The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

The 1996 Education Act states that it is the duty of parents to secure education of students of school age. Trafalgar School seeks to ensure that all its students receive an education which meets their needs and maximises opportunities for each student to realise his true potential.

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 students
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

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

Purpose

The school recognises that regular and full-time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school career. Optimum levels of attendance can only be achieved when

responsibility is accepted and shared by all concerned: Governors, school staff, parents, students and the local community.

The school has a key responsibility in promoting good attendance. Portsmouth City Council is equally committed to supporting this in providing advice on improving attendance in conjunction with support for individual students.

To meet these aims, the school has established a system of rewards and incentives which recognise the efforts of students to maintain or improve their attendance and timekeeping. It will challenge and seek to improve the attitudes of those who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student 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, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school day starts at 8:50 and ends at 15:00. Students must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 and will be kept open until 9:20. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:20 and will be kept open until 13:50.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:50 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff or notifying us through Class Charts.

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 the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student'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 student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence using the leave of absence request form.

Lateness and punctuality

A student 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

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- 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(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate
- Conduct a home visit if a child is absent for more than 5 days without a satisfactory reason.
- Consider it a safeguarding issue and contact Portsmouth MASH if a child is absent for more than 5 days without a satisfactory reason.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via Class Charts and also through termly written reports.

Approval for term-time absence

The Executive Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student 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
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

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

- Illness (including mental-health 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 student'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
- 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 student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Other reasons the school may allow a student 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 student is also registered (dual registration)
 - Attending provision arranged by the local authority
 - Attending work experience
 - If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student 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

Legal 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 Executive 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)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- 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

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 student must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the student'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 student, 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.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Each House is encouraged to have good attendance by various means:

- During assemblies attendance is highlighted and the basic statistics for each House should be read out.
- Each House's statistics should be published on the attendance notice board by the Attendance Team.
- Regular updates should be published on Trafalgar TV and social media, indicating attendance news, such as the time and place of the attendance draws.
- During celebration assemblies, held each term, those with 100% attendance are announced and are awarded a certificate.

Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The school will work closely with students and their families with complex barriers to attendance, including agreeing bespoke strategies for removing in-school barriers e.g. student mentors, attendance buddies, safe spaces for unstructured times.

Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school is committed to supporting students back into school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence. They will be supported to catch up academically and, in some instances, will be offered a reintegration timetable to avoid overloading them.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Ensure that the needs of the individual student are recognised when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

Student-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.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students 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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who 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
- 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 students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by **Pete Dudley, Assistant Headteacher**. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays