



# Abbey College Ramsey

## Attendance and Truancy Policy

**Policy Developed by:** Kate Wibberley  
**Reviewing committee:** Education Committee  
**Frequency of Review:** Every two years  
**Date last reviewed:** September 2023  
**Date Approved:** 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
**To be reviewed:** September 2025

## Statement of intent

We recognise the crucial link between achievement and attendance. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent school attendance. This policy is to encourage students to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success. Our primary aim is that all students have 100% attendance

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- DfE (latest version) 'Working together to improve School attendance'  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- DfE (latest version) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This policy operates in conjunction all of the school policies including but not limited to:

- Children Missing In Education Policy (Adopted Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Home Visits Guidance and Procedure policy

## Aims and Objectives

- To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation by maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
- To inform parents/carers of punctuality and attendance issues.
- To identify the causes of non-attendance and act upon them.
- To ensure all staff understand their roles in the monitoring and recording of attendance.
- To maintain and improve attendance throughout the school through rewarding and target setting.
- To monitor and evaluate the processes on a regular basis.

- To give clear information on expected levels of attendance.

## **Attendance Legislation**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

When parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from age five. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

The issue of a penalty notice (PN) under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act may be considered in cases where a student is absent from the school and the absence is unauthorised.

## **The Admission and Attendance Registers**

The law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined. The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Headteacher:

- The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'

The Governing Body

- The Governing Body has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of the school

SLT Link: Mrs K Wibberley

- Understanding of whole school attendance.
- Email contact: [kate.wibberley@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:kate.wibberley@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)

Attendance Officer: Ms T Davis

- Maintain oversight of whole school attendance.
- Email contact: [tina.davis@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:tina.davis@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)

Welfare Department: Mrs L Gregory & Mrs C Peattie

- Supporting school attendance for vulnerable students
- Email contact: [welfare@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:welfare@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)

#### The Attendance Service (Local Authority)

- The Attendance Service expects schools to work with parents and pupils at an early stage to resolve problems, this is nearly always successful. The Attendance Service has a legal role and if other ways of resolving attendance have failed, the Attendance Service can use legal sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the magistrates' court.

#### The SLT link in charge of attendance will:

- Maintain oversight of the attendance of key groups of students, e.g., looked after children, children who are eligible for free school meals, children who speak English as an Additional Language and Children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Monitor the implementation of the school's attendance procedures
- Report on attendance to Governors
- Regularly review attendance procedures.

#### The Attendance Officer will:

- Make first day contact (phone call/ email or text message) with parents/carers to ascertain a reason for absence and if necessary complete a safe & well check to understand reason for absence.
- Record AM roll call daily, including student attendance, and any reasons for absence or lateness on SIMS.
- Update the register of any reason for absence received later in the day.
- Oversee the register system.
- Alert Raising Standards Lead/Welfare/SENCO when concerns arise
- Provide regular attendance information including a weekly report for SLT
- Send attendance letters as per the school's attendance procedures
- Book attendance meetings
- Keep the Senior Leadership Team informed of any issues with the timely and accurate completion of registers
- Pass on attendance data to further education providers and prospective employers as required
- Advise parents/carers that absence that is unauthorised and/or below a certain threshold may result in parenting contracts or legal enforcement including Penalty Notices, School Attendance Orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecution.
- Look for patterns of absence and consider possible causes, working with Raising Standards Lead to help mitigate these as appropriate

#### Raising Standards Leads will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile at assemblies and school events
- Monitor attendance and progress towards attendance targets
- Authorise the sending of letters to alert parents/carers of attendance concerns as per the school's attendance procedures
- Consider the needs of students who are young carers, disadvantaged or eligible for the services premium
- Where attendance falls below certain thresholds, meet with parents/carers to discuss this as soon as possible, offering to provide support as appropriate
- Promote strategies to improve the attendance of individuals

- Work with the relevant colleagues to create individual packages and reintegration plans for excluded students and both short and long-term absentees where appropriate
- Follow up promptly any concerns parents/carers pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to or feeling of wellbeing in school

Welfare Team will:

- Where appropriate contact foster carers and/or social workers to identify a reason for absence and to understand why and when a pupil will return.
- Be involved in meetings with parents/carers of students who are considered vulnerable or are in the persistent absence or severe absence to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- To request additional support through the necessary referrals.
- To support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

Form Tutors and Teachers will:

- Keep accurate and timely registers as per the school's registration procedure
- Ensure attendance is a high profile
- Take actions where students are regularly late, liaising with the Raising Standards Lead as appropriate.

Class Teachers will:

- Keep accurate and timely registers as per the school's registration procedure
- Follow internal procedures if a student fails to register for a lesson
- Give attendance a high profile
- Act where students are regularly late, liaising with the Head of Faculty as appropriate
- When requested, provide suitable work for students who are absent to complete at home and/or to help them reintegrate
- Liaise with the relevant Raising Standards Lead/Welfare/Attendance Officer over any concerns over a student's attendance

The Governor(s) with responsibility for attendance will:

- Meet regularly with key attendance personnel to ensure the academy is working effectively to improve the attendance of all students.

## **Absence procedures**

To allow us to safeguard students, parents/carers MUST contact the school on each day of absence. The exception to this, is in the instance of a planned prolonged period of absence or recovery from a medical procedure.

Absence Line: 01487 812352, option 1 or Email: [attendance@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk)

- A telephone call/ text/ email will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
  - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
  - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.

- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- Fulfil Safe and Well visits when necessary

The school will inform the Local Authority (LA), on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

### **Absence due to medical appointments**

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. If appointments do take place during the school day parents/carers will be asked to provide the office with the appointment card prior to the child leaving the school site. Students are not permitted to leave the school site without the school being informed in advance of the time and nature of the appointment by the parent/carer.

### **Absence due to illness**

When a student has an illness, parents/carers are asked to notify the school attendance lead as soon as possible on the first day their child is unable to attend and then every subsequent day their child will be absent. The school will authorise this absence unless there is a cause for concern about the veracity of the illness or if the student's attendance has fallen below a certain threshold.

In such cases the school will request that parents/carers provide medical information to support the reason for absence; this can be in the form of a prescription or appointment card.

Students will be required to catch up on work missed upon returning and they or their parents/carers can contact the relevant teachers for support with this as appropriate.

### **Extended absence due to a medical condition (more than 14 days)**

Occasionally, a child may suffer from a medical condition which affects their physical or mental health in such a way that it makes it impossible for them to attend school for an extended period. In these circumstances the school and the family will need to work closely together to formulate a plan to support the student to help them return to full time education. Please see the policy on supporting students with medical conditions for more information.

### **Term-time Leave**

High attainment is reliant on good attendance. Term-time holidays will have a significant impact on achievement and progress, and, therefore, our position is not to authorise any, other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles that we define exceptional are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 regulations clarify that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Schools should determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. In these circumstances, an application must be made in writing 4 weeks prior to the leave of absence, with appropriate evidence, to the Headteacher in advance of booking the intended holiday. The school will respond with a decision in writing within one working week. You may be issued with a fixed penalty notice for a holiday taken during term time, without the Headteacher's permission.

### **Punctuality**

Students will receive a sanction if late to school without a justifiable reason. This is at the school's discretion. Persistent punctuality issues will result in an escalation of sanctions as detailed in the schools Behaviour Policy.

Students arriving after 8.40am will receive a late mark. If your child arrives after registers close (after 9.10 but before 10.10), without a reasonable explanation, the U code will be issued, which will count as an unauthorised session.

### **Truancy**

Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.

All students are expected to be in their classes on time, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.

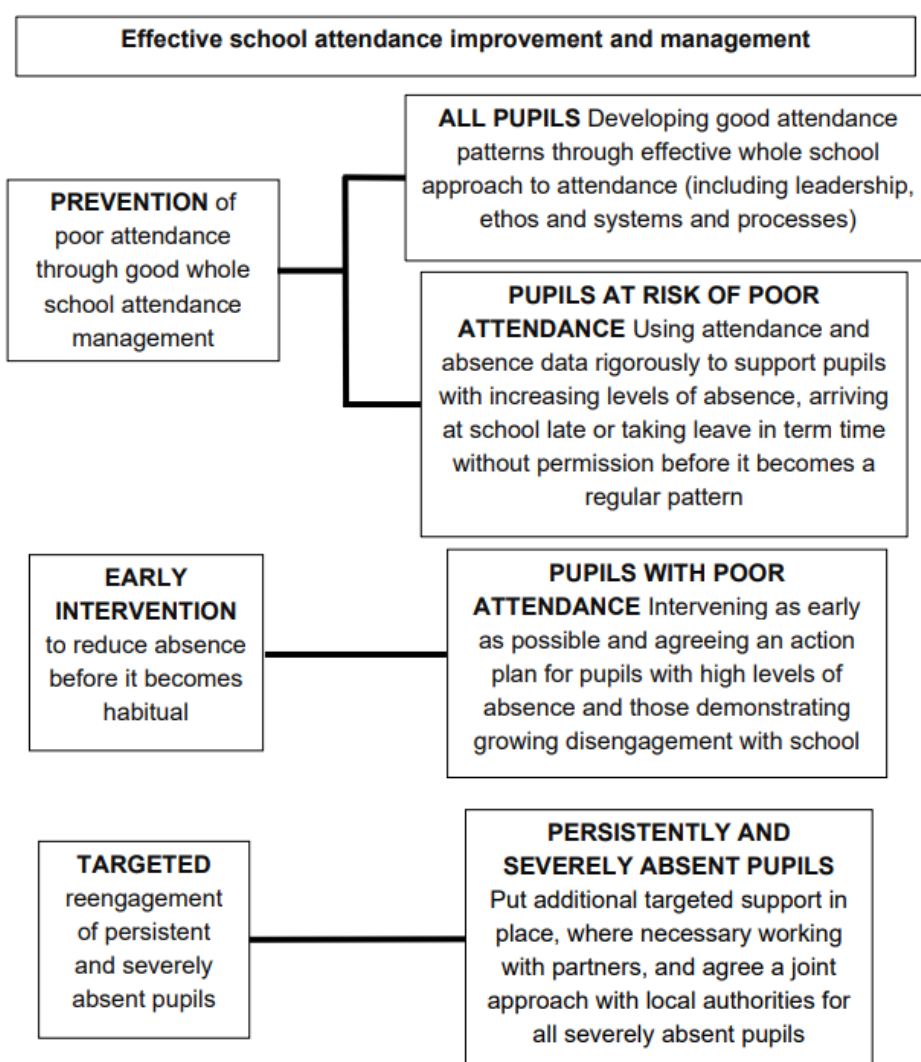
Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher, delegated staff member or Attendance Officer will be notified and they will contact the child's parents, to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

In the event of a truancy the School Behaviour Policy will be used to sanction the student.

### **What will we do when attendance is a concern?**

Even when there are legitimate reasons for absences it is important that school and home work together to improve attendance.

When attendance drops the school will follow the Working Together to improve attendance flowchart stages, see below:

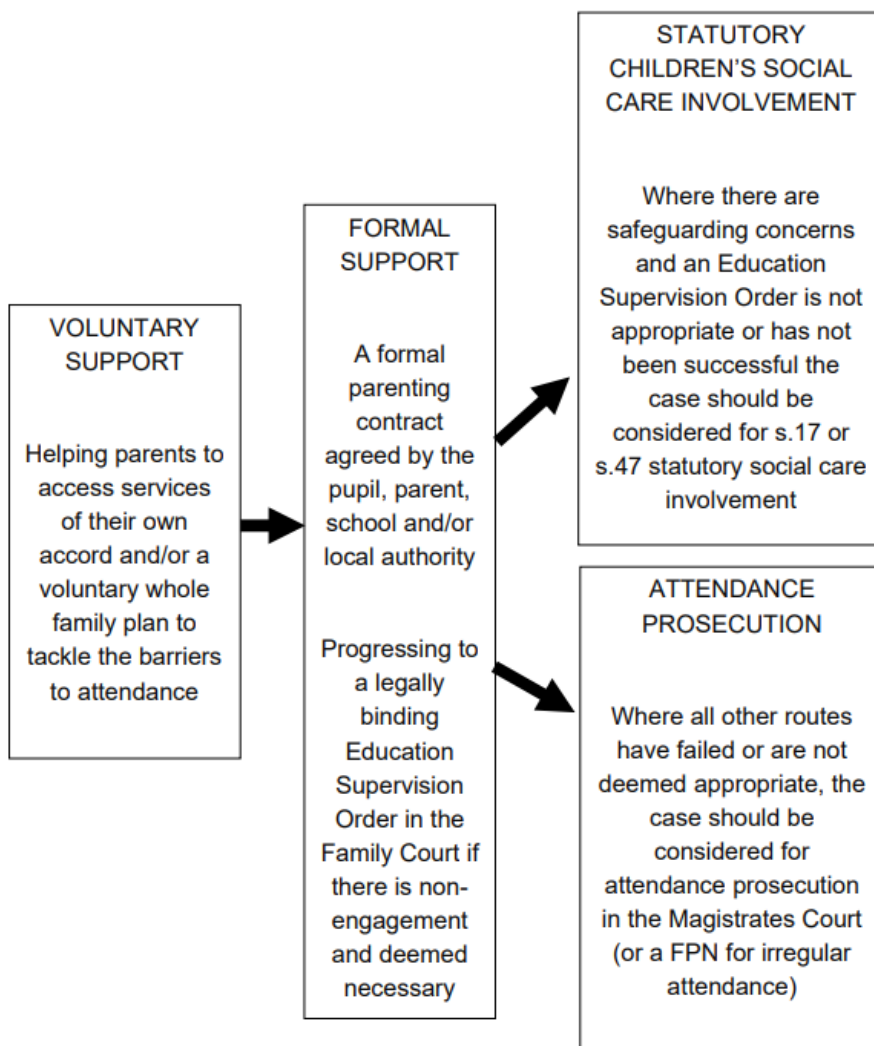


If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, and the voluntary support has moved to formal support with no improvements then legal interventions may be considered, these are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

The flowchart below, from the Working Together to improve attendance guidance, shows the process from voluntary support, through to formal support and then referral or prosecution:





More details on Attendance legal intervention can be reviewed in the Working together to Improve attendance document <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## Recording Attendance

We will record statutory roll call attendance twice daily. The AM roll call attendance will be recorded when the student arrives in school or once the register closes at 9.10. The PM roll call attendance is recorded within the first afternoon lesson from 13.40 onwards. Attendance information is recorded securely on our electronic management information system, SIMS.

Our codes are based on the DfE guidance. In the table below, you can see what each code means, when it should be used, and whether it contributes to your child's attendance figures. For more information on absence codes, take a look at the DfE's School attendance guide, pages 9-14

Below are the most commonly used codes in school and the impact they have on attendance:

Code	Description	Authorised/Unauthorised/ Present	Value
/	Present AM (8.40-10.10)	Present	Present
\	Present PM (currently 13.40 onwards)	Present	Present
L	Late before register closed (after 8.40, but before 9.20)	Authorised	Present
W	Work Experience	Authorised	Present
C	Authorised other circumstances	Authorised	Absent
E	Excluded	Authorised	Absent
I	Illness	Authorised	Absent
M	Medical/Dental Appointment	Authorised	Absent
O	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised	Absent
U	Later after register closed (after 9.10 but before 10.10)	Unauthorised	Absent AM
G	Holiday – Not Agreed	Unauthorised	Absent
V	Educational Visit	Approved Educational Activity	Present
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Present
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Present
X	Non – Compulsory school age absence	Authorised	No Value
Y	Enforced Closure	Authorised	No Value

## Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school or Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.

When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the 'Y' code will be used on the attendance register. The use of the 'Y' code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

## Young Carers

The school understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as throughout their time at the school. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## **Persistent Absence**

In cases of potential persistent absence and persistent absence (deemed as that below 90%) the school will aim to remove barriers the enable to child to improve their attendance. This is done on an individual basis and uses the Working Together to Improve Attendance flowchart stages.

## **Severe Absence**

In cases of potential severe absence and severe absence (deemed as that below 50%) the school will aim to remove barriers to enable to child to improve their attendance. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. and education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

## **Working with Parents and Students**

Our priority is to work in partnership with home to secure good attendance. We will only be successful when school and parents/carers work well together.

We expect the following from all our students:

- That you attend school every day.
- Go to bed on time to ensure a good night's sleep.
- Have a good morning routine that allows you to leave the house on time.
- Arrive on time, in full school uniform, with all your equipment and books for the day.
- Build your resilience, you can attend with a headache, period pains, stomach-ache.
- Speak to school staff if something prevents you from attending regularly.
- Ask for support at the earliest opportunity.
- Let your parent/carer or school staff know if you are feeling anxious about something. Not ask your parent/carer for a day off.
- If you are moving schools, continue to attend your current school until you start at your new school.

We expect the following from parents

- To ensure their children attend school every day on time.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical if their child is unable to attend.
- To provide written evidence explaining any absence.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect your child's performance or attendance at school.

## **Reward Strategies**

The school has worked closely with students, RSLs and parents to plan how we acknowledge outstanding and improved attendance. As a school we use some or all of these during an academic year:

- Annual whole school trip to a theme park
- Certificates
- Letters of congratulations/ post cards home
- Vouchers
- Rewards raffle
- Spirit stamps/points
- School events, such as; afternoon teas, film afternoons etc

## **Children Absent from Education**

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines.

The school aims to identify such abuse and in the case of absent pupils, help prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

## **Children Missing from Education**

We enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which we have agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, we will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register when we and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

We have a safeguarding duty in respect of our students, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

## **Elective Home Education**

Local authority guidance on elective home education is available at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/elective-home-education-ehe>

## **Addition / Deletion from Roll**

A student can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.