



Lavington Park Federation

Attendance policy

Prepared / Reviewed by	Headteacher/lead governor
Approved by FGB	1 st May 2025
Next Review	Spring 2026

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Roles and responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance.....	5
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	7
6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school	9
7. Attendance monitoring	10
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	11
9. Links with other policies.....	11
Appendix 1: attendance codes	12

1. 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 pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure 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 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations for all school leaders, staff, pupils, and parents/carers.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil statutory duties, including:
- Accurate recording of attendance in the register and sharing information with the DfE and local authority.
- Effective collaboration with local partners to remove attendance barriers and keep them informed where appropriate.
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Ensuring attendance management processes are delivered effectively, prioritising support for pupils who need it most.
- Adapting processes and support to meet pupils' individual needs while maintaining high aspirations for all.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data to focus improvement efforts where most needed.
- Supporting school leaders in setting attendance goals and providing appropriate challenge and support.
- Monitoring whole-school attendance figures and evaluating the effectiveness of processes and improvement strategies.
- Assisting school leaders in developing comprehensive action plans where attendance is a concern.
- Ensuring all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including:
- The importance of good attendance and its impact.
- Understanding that absence is often a symptom of wider issues.
- Legal requirements for maintaining registers.
- School strategies for tracking, following up on, and improving attendance, including external collaboration.
- Providing specific training for staff with attendance-related responsibilities, including attendance data analysis.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for:
- The implementation of this policy across the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to the governing board.
- Supporting staff in monitoring individual pupil attendance.
- Monitoring the impact of attendance strategies and interventions.

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary or authorising the school business professional to do so.
- Supporting parents/carers of pupils with SEND to develop attendance support approaches, including addressing school transport and in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority regarding attendance concerns for pupils with EHC plans.
- Regularly communicating high expectations for attendance and punctuality to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.
- Leading, championing, and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance expectations, processes, and data analysis.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, ensuring all staff adhere to them.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers, and external agencies where necessary.
- Building productive relationships with parents/carers to address attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their families.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data to identify areas for improvement.
- Benchmarking attendance data and providing regular reports to staff.
- Reporting attendance concerns to relevant stakeholders and working with external agencies to address persistent absence.
- The Headteacher is the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the school's attendance officer.

3.3 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office at 8.45am (Graffham)/9.00am (Dunton) and 1.00pm (Graffham and Dunton).

3.4 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

3.5 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45 am (Graffham)/ 9am (Dunton) 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Headteacher at office@graffhaminfant.org.uk or office@duntonjunior.org.uk

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am (Graftonham)/9.00am (Dunton) and ends at 3.15pm (Graftonham)/3.30pm (Dunton).

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am (Graftonham)/9.00am (Dunton) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am (Graftonham)/9.00am (Dunton) and will be kept open until 9.15am (Graftonham)/9.30am (Dunton). The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm each day.

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 8.45am (Graftonham)/9am (Dunton) or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office (see also section 7).

Where we have not received notification of a reason for absence, the office staff will phone home to check for the reason for absence. If we are unable to make contact with the priority contact on our system we will then call other emergency contacts as shared by parents/carers.

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 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 notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We ask that parents provide evidence of these appointments by emailing the school office at office@graffhaminfant.org.uk or office@dunctonjunior.org.uk

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers should put the request in writing using our 'withdrawal from learning' form, available from the school office. This request must detail the dates and times of the requested absence as well as details of the reason for the request.

However, we encourage parents 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 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
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where a child's attendance drops below 90% (persistent absence), or there are other concerns around attendance, the school will contact the family to discuss these concerns and to offer support in increasing their attendance.

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 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 contact the West Sussex integrated front door and/or the police.
- 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 pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: the school will make a referral to Pupil Entitlement and may contact the West Sussex integrated front door.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in an annual school report or sooner if there are causes for concern.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil 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
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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 set out below. These lists are not definitive.

Exceptional Circumstances	Not Exceptional Circumstances
Authorised Absences	Unauthorised Absences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genuine illness of the pupil;• Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil;• Self-isolation, as recommended by Public Health England;• Bereavement;• Visits to prospective new schools;• External exams or educational assessments;• Events related to the Armed Forces such as welcoming returning service personnel (family members) from long postings abroad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family holiday;• Shopping trip;• Day trip;• Visit to a theme park;• A birthday treat;• Oversleeping due to a late night;• Looking after other children/other family member(s);• Appointments for other family members.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks in advance. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 pupil'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 pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil 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 pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil 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

5.2 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 Headteacher, 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 pupil
- 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

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

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 pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a child is not attending due to complex barriers to attendance, the school will arrange a meeting with the family to ascertain the challenges that are being faced and the reasons for these (if known). The school will then engage with external agencies (e.g. Pupil Entitlement, Designated Schools Team or the West Sussex Integrated Front Door) as appropriate to put in place a bespoke program of support for the child in increasing their attendance rate to school.

6.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a child is absent from school due to mental or physical illness, the school will arrange a planning meeting with the family to better understand the current needs of the pupil and the barriers that are preventing the child from attending school. Following this meeting, the school will consult with external agencies as required in devising a bespoke plan to enable the child to increase their rate of attendance in school. This could be support such as a temporary reduced timetable, changes to the structure of the start and end of day for the child, adaptations to the physical environment, a meet and greet session each morning and Emotional Literacy Support. In addition, the school may recommend that parents contact West Sussex Single Point of Access to access mental health support for their child. Where a child is over the age of 11, they may also self-refer to the West Sussex Youth Emotional Support (YES) service.

Where a pupil 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 pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

6.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Children who are returning from school following a lengthy unavoidable period of absence will be supported in the same way as 6.2 with support being put in place that best meets any need at the time of return.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

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

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 7.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the governing board.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. 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 pupils 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 pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

If a child's attendance drops below 90% (persistent absence) and there are no extenuating circumstances, a meeting will be called with the Headteacher to discuss how to support improved attendance. These meetings will continue on a regular basis until the child's attendance has increased to at least 90%.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the 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 and relationships policy

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil 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	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil 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	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil 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	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil 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 pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil'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	Pupil 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	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil 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