



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
SKILLS FOR LIFE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revision History			
Date	Version	Change	Author
October 24	1	Update Attendance Codes	D Ledger
October 25	2	Policy checked and updated	D Ledger
07 August 26	3	Policy updated with clarity on the whole school approach to improving attendance and up to date reference to legislation	T.Ahmed

Statement and Vision

The aim of this attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that promotes, encourages and facilitates the good attendance of all children and young people. Good attendance at school is key to pupil progress, safeguarding and enjoyment of learning and the wider school experience, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as possible.

First Steps Together takes a holistic and co-ordinated approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, other professionals, children and young people, and all staff members to ensure that children and young people are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given appropriate attention and support.

Legislation

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444.
- Education Act 2002.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- Working together to improve school attendance – Department for Education statutory guidance, updated 9 July 2026.
- Children missing education – Department for Education statutory guidance, updated September 2025.
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools.
- Relevant safeguarding, SEND and medical-conditions legislation and guidance.

This policy replaces references in the previous policy to the 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations and the May 2022 attendance guidance. The current statutory framework is based on the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current DfE attendance guidance.

Whole School Approach

The school will promote attendance through a calm, safe, inclusive and supportive environment. Absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances. The school will therefore

seek to understand barriers before escalating to formal enforcement, while acting promptly where attendance is poor or safeguarding concerns arise.

- Set clear and consistently communicated expectations for attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor attendance daily and analyse patterns for individual pupils and cohorts.
- Identify pupils who are persistently absent (missing 10% or more) or severely absent (missing 50% or more), and pupils at risk of reaching those thresholds.
- Listen to and understand the reasons for absence and work with pupils and families to remove barriers.
- Provide or facilitate appropriate support and formalise support where necessary.
- Pay attention to all pupils in our school as they all have EHCP's and SEND and in addition some have health or mental health needs, children are young carers, children at risk of becoming children missing education, or maybe from other groups identified through attendance data.

Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietors and Governors

- Promote the importance of attendance and ensure this policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure the school complies with attendance legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensure appropriate systems are in place for accurate registration, attendance monitoring, intervention and reporting.
- Review attendance data regularly, including trends and variation between pupil groups, and challenge leaders where appropriate.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training.

Headteacher

- Have overall operational responsibility for attendance.
- Ensure the attendance register is accurate and completed at the required times.
- Ensure staff understand the national attendance and absence codes and apply them consistently.
- Lead the school's graduated attendance response: expect, monitor, listen and understand, facilitate support, formalise support and enforce where appropriate.
- Ensure attendance concerns are considered alongside safeguarding, SEND and welfare information.
- Coordinate with external agencies and the local authority where required.

- Ensure records of attendance interventions and outcomes are maintained.
- Staff
- Take registers accurately and at the times directed by the school.
- Use only the appropriate national attendance/absence code.
- Report unexplained absence and safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Support a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages attendance.
- Be alert to changes in attendance and patterns that may indicate wider concerns.

Parents and Carers

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Follow the school's absence reporting procedure and provide the reason for absence and expected return date where known.
- Avoid arranging appointments during school hours where reasonably possible.
- Do not arrange term-time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances and leave has been granted.
- Keep the school informed of circumstances that may affect attendance.
- Work constructively with the school when attendance becomes a concern.

Children and Young People

- Attend school and lessons as required and arrive on time.
- Speak to a trusted adult if difficulties at school or home may affect attendance.
- Follow the school's procedures when arriving late.
- Engage with support intended to improve attendance.

Registration and Punctuality

The school will keep an attendance register electronically and will use the national attendance and absence codes. A register will be taken at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The school will take registers at consistent times for pupils within the relevant session. The morning register will open from 8.45am and in the afternoon will open from 12.00pm.

The morning register will close at 9.15am and the afternoon register will close at 12.30pm. A pupil arriving after the register has opened but before it closes will be recorded using code L. A pupil arriving after the register has closed but before the end of the session will normally be recorded using code U, unless another code applies.

Present / Attending

The following codes are used when a pupil is present at school or engaged in approved educational activity:

- / – Present (morning session)
- \ – Present (afternoon session)
- L – Late arrival before the register closes

Attending off-site (counted as present):

- B – Other approved educational activity
- D – Dual registered at another school
- K – Education provision arranged by the local authority
- P – Participating in a sporting activity
- V – Educational visit or trip
- W – Work experience

Authorised Absence

Absence will be authorised where the school is satisfied with the reason provided:

- C – Leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)
- C1 – Regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 – Part-time timetable
- E – Suspended or permanently excluded (no alternative provision)
- I – Illness (including mental health)
- J1 – Interview for education or employment
- M – Medical or dental appointment
- R – Religious observance
- S – Study leave
- T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised where no valid reason is provided or the reason is not accepted:

- G – Holiday not authorised by the school
- N – Reason for absence not yet established
- O – Unauthorised absence
- U – Arrived after the register has closed

Unable to Attend (Specific Circumstances)

The following codes are used when a pupil is unable to attend due to circumstances beyond their control:

- Q – Lack of access arrangements (local authority responsibility)
- Y1 – Transport normally provided is unavailable
- Y2 – Widespread disruption (e.g. severe weather)
- Y3 – Part of the school premises closed
- Y4 – Whole school site unexpectedly closed
- Y5 – Child in criminal justice detention
- Y6 – Public health guidance or law
- Y7 – Other unavoidable cause

Administrative / Non-Compulsory Codes

- X – non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
- Z – Prospective pupil not yet on admission register
- # – Planned whole school closure

SEND Considerations

- All attendance codes apply equally to pupils with SEND.
- Additional consideration will be given to pupils whose attendance is affected by:
 - medical needs
 - part-time timetables

- access arrangements
- transport or other barriers

Attendance must always be considered alongside the school's safeguarding responsibilities. The school uses the statutory DfE attendance codes to ensure accurate recording of attendance and absence. These codes support effective monitoring, early identification of concerns, and safeguarding of all pupils.

Where a pupil is unable to attend because of illness, including mental health-related illness, the school will normally record code I. Medical evidence will not routinely be required. It may be requested only in a minority of cases where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason for absence or where further information is needed to understand and support a pupil's attendance.

Where evidence is reasonably requested, the school will not insist on a particular form of medical evidence where other credible evidence is available. Examples may include appointment information, prescriptions or records of previous consultations. A lack of written evidence will not, by itself, prevent appropriate support being offered.

The school will consider whether persistent illness indicates an underlying health, SEND or mental health need and will consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate external support.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents/carers should arrange appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should attend school for as much of the session as possible and code M should be used where the absence is for a medical or dental appointment.

Leave of Absence and Holidays

Parents/carers must request leave of absence in advance. Leave will only be granted where the school considers the circumstances to be exceptional and in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE guidance. The school will not operate blanket rules that automatically grant or refuse leave for a category of circumstances where individual consideration is required.

Term-time holidays will not normally meet the threshold for exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised holiday absence will be recorded using code G.

Support and Intervention

1. Expect: Communicate clear expectations and the value of regular attendance.

2. Monitor: Identify patterns, changes and pupils at risk of poor attendance.
3. Listen and understand: Explore the pupil's circumstances and barriers, including SEND, health, mental health, family circumstances and safeguarding concerns.
4. Facilitate support: Provide or coordinate reasonable support and involve relevant services where appropriate.
5. Formalise support: Use an attendance support plan or other formal process where informal support is insufficient.
6. Enforce: Where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate, consider statutory enforcement in line with the law and local arrangements.

Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is attendance below 90% (absence of 10% or more). Severe absence is attendance below 50% (absence of 50% or more). These are not automatic sanctions thresholds. The school will use them as indicators for enhanced monitoring and targeted support, while considering the individual reasons for absence.

SEND, Health, Mental Health and Young Carers

The school maintains high expectations for attendance for pupils with SEND and/or health or mental health needs, while recognising that additional barriers may need to be addressed. The school will consider reasonable adjustments, appropriate support and multi-agency working. Young carers are recognised as a cohort that may experience barriers to attendance and will be identified and supported where relevant.

Remote Education

Remote education is not an equal alternative to attendance at school. It will only be considered as a last resort where the alternative would be no education and where the pupil is, or will be, absent from school. It will not be used routinely to avoid addressing barriers to attendance. Where appropriate, remote education will sit alongside a clear plan to support attendance and reintegration. A pupil receiving remote education while absent remains absent and must be recorded using the appropriate attendance code.

Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained, prolonged or unusual absence will be followed up promptly. The school will make reasonable enquiries and work with the local authority where required to identify children missing education or at risk of becoming missing education.

Names may only be removed from the admission register where a lawful ground under regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met and all associated requirements have been satisfied. The school will not remove pupils from roll simply because they are difficult to engage or because attendance is poor, and will not use off-rolling as an attendance strategy.

Attendance Data and Records

The school will maintain accurate attendance and admission registers, monitor attendance daily and retain records in accordance with applicable requirements. Attendance interventions and relevant communications will be documented. Where applicable, the school will comply with statutory daily attendance data-sharing requirements.

Communication with Families

The school will communicate attendance expectations clearly, positively and proportionately. Communications will explain the impact of absence, understand barriers and identify support. The school may use letters, texts, telephone calls, meetings and other appropriate methods. Communications will be adapted for individual circumstances and will form part of the graduated attendance response.

Reintegration Following Absence

Following short or long periods of absence, the school will support the pupil to return successfully and catch up where appropriate. For longer or complex absences, a reintegration plan will be considered, with clear actions, responsibilities and review arrangements.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation or statutory guidance changes. The school will monitor attendance at pupil, group and whole-school level and use the findings to adjust its attendance strategy.

Further Reading / Related Policies

- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Management of Behaviour Policy
- Reduced Timetables / Alternative Provision arrangements
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures

- DfE: Working together to improve school attendance (updated 9 July 2026)
- DfE: Providing remote education: guidance for schools
- DfE: Children missing education (statutory guidance)