# Rise Multi Academy Trust: Attendance Policy 2026




# Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School

**Introduction**

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school. At Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School, we believe that it is in the best interest of every child, for their intellectual, social, physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual development, to attend school every day. However, we also recognise that there are sometimes circumstances in which attendance may not be possible. In these cases, we would apply an individualised approach.

Learning is a complex process in which knowledge, skills and understanding are developed and built on systematically. Interruptions to this process can lead to gaps in a child's knowledge and understanding, missed stages in the acquisition of a new skill and lost opportunities to share in and grow from new experiences. For this reason, and to ensure the safety of all our pupils, we aspire to a 100% attendance record for every child, and we will request an explanation for every absence.

**Aims and Objectives**

- That there are recognised systems in place to address issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that the systems in place are sufficient to address the issues surrounding attendance and punctuality.
- That the principles and practice of this policy are clearly reported to parents and carers.
- That there are good links between the school and other dedicated services, particularly the Local Authority's Attendance Team.

**Procedures for Monitoring Attendance**

To promote excellent attendance and support every pupil in achieving their full potential, the school has implemented the following attendance monitoring procedures:

- Parents and carers are expected to inform the school of their child's absence as early as possible, preferably in advance or before the start of the school day.
- Where no reason for absence has been received, the school will make every effort to contact parents or carers on the first day of absence. This may be through text message, telephone calls, or email.
- Frequent absences, or patterns of absence that may have a negative impact on a pupil's learning and progress, will be closely monitored, regardless of whether the absences are authorised.
- Where attendance becomes a cause for concern, the school will contact families and invite parents or carers to meet with the School Attendance Champion to discuss the issues and identify appropriate support.
- The school works closely with the Local Authority. Where attendance continues to be a concern despite meetings, correspondence, and support being offered, a referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team. Parents and carers will be informed of any such action, and the school will continue to work collaboratively with families to improve attendance.
- Information relating to both authorised and unauthorised absences will be included in pupils' annual reports. Attendance is calculated on the basis of two registration sessions per day, equating to ten sessions per week.
- Explanations for absence will only be accepted from a parent, carer, or other adult with legal responsibility for the child. Explanations provided by the pupil or a sibling will not be accepted.
- Attendance newsletters will be shared with parents and carers each term to reinforce the school's attendance expectations, and a summary of the attendance policy will be included in the school prospectus.

**Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**
When new parents or carers visit or are introduced to the school, good attendance and punctuality is raised and parents and carers are made aware of how the school will work to address issues. Parents, carers and pupils are asked to keep absence to a minimum.
We ask all parents and carers to inform the school of any absences by a telephone call (01455 212294), Arbor message or email message on the first day of absence so that the school is immediately aware of the reason for the child's absence. This can be done on office@higham.risemat.co.uk.

As a school, we highlight the impact good attendance can have on a child and the DfE guidelines are explained; it is made clear that it is the school that has the responsibility of authorising absence, not the parent or carer. Reminders of this are shared regularly on school newsletters and on an annual basis in our parent and carer 'Introduction to the Year' meetings.

Every week, our school celebrates attendance in our whole school worship. If a class achieves 100% attendance, they are rewarded with an extra 10 minute playtime / activity of the teacher's choice.

At the end of the autumn, spring and summer terms, children who have 100% attendance are celebrated and receive a certificate. At the end of the school year, additional certificates and rewards are given to children who have 100% attendance for the academic year.

**Monitoring and Improving Attendance**
Teachers are encouraged to monitor attendance as it is often they who first pick up signs of poor attendance or absence patterns. When this is the case, they should share their concerns with the School Attendance Champion (Alex Elspass).
The office staff monitors the registers regularly during the week and will identify any pupils who are absent with no letter, phone call or email message to explain the reason for that absence. An attempt will then be made to contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence. If no contact can be made, a safeguarding home visit will be made to check that all is well with the family. If no-one is home or no contact is made after 2 days of absence, a referral will be made to the appropriate agencies such as Social Care, Local Authority Pupil Missing Education Team or if necessary the Police.

The following methods may be used to monitor and improve attendance:

- Teacher to have an informal discussion with parents/carers as soon as pupil's attendance reaches 95%.
- Discussion at parents' and carers' evenings regarding the child's attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality reminders in newsletters.
- A series of standard letters if attendance or punctuality become erratic or low.
- Solution-focused discussions with children, parents and carers about issues causing low attendance.
- Attendance targets incorporated into end of year school reports.
- Regular meetings with the Rise Attendance Lead. (More/additional meetings will be scheduled if required.)
- Annual meeting with the Rise Attendance Lead to evaluate progress and draw up targets for the following year.

**Absence Due to Illness**
While many absences are the result of minor illnesses, the school carefully monitors attendance to ensure that pupils do not miss significant amounts of learning time.
Where absences due to illness become frequent, regular, or persistent, the school will contact parents or carers to discuss concerns regarding the number of days missed. In such circumstances, parents or carers may be asked to provide appropriate medical evidence to support future absences. Where the Headteacher is not satisfied that an absence is due to genuine illness, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.
Parents and carers should be aware that a Penalty Notice may be considered where a pupil accumulates 10 or more unauthorised sessions within a 10-school-week period, as this may constitute irregular attendance.

Where a pupil is absent due to illness for an extended period, the school may arrange a home visit to ensure the child's welfare and safety. These visits are carried out by members of the school staff and may, where appropriate, be supported by the Rise Attendance Lead.
If a pupil is experiencing a severe or prolonged illness, the school will work with the family to provide appropriate support. This may include sending work home where the child is well enough to engage with learning.
For pupils with genuine long-term medical conditions that prevent regular school attendance, the school may make a referral to the Children's Hospital School or other suitable educational provision. In addition, referrals may be made to the School Nursing Service, which can provide health advice and support to both children and their families.

**Appointments**
Routine appointments, e.g. to the dentist or opticians, should take place where possible outside of school hours. If these appointments do fall in school time, you will be required to provide evidence of the appointment.

**Unauthorised Absences**
Penalty Notices will be issued to each parent or carer for each child who is absent. The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent or carer, per child when paid within 28 days. This may be reduced to £80 per parent or carer, per child if paid within 21 days. If there is occasion to issue a second Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence within a rolling 3-year period, it will be issued at the higher rate of £160 per parent or carer, per child, with no opportunity to pay at the lower level. A Penalty Notice cannot be issued if there is a third occasion of unauthorised leave of absence in the rolling 3-year period and it is highly likely that the local authority will take direct prosecution action in the Magistrates' Court, which can result in you receiving a criminal conviction. Please also be aware that any cases of extended periods of unauthorised absence (20 or more days), linked to holidays or trips away, are highly likely to result in prosecution action by the local authority. No holidays will be authorised unless the Headteacher and the Governing Body consider the request to be an exceptional circumstance. Please be aware that a Penalty Notice will be issued if the school obtains evidence that an unauthorised holiday has taken place.

**Lateness – On arrival**
Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and they do not spend time with their teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child and this in itself can also encourage absence. If a pupil arrives after their external door has closed, they must report to the school office and sign in on the screen. Registers are marked by 8:35am and your child will receive a late mark (L) if they arrive after this time. If your child arrives after 9:00 without a valid reason and evidence for their lateness, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence (U). Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (U) due to lateness in a 10-week period. Where pupils are persistently late, a letter will be sent to parents or carers to remind them of the importance of punctuality. The school office and School Attendance Champion will monitor lateness and discuss with parents and carers the reasons for their child's continued lateness. The School Attendance Champion will offer support to families who may be struggling to arrive on time.

| Year Group | Start & Collection time |
|---|---|
| Reception | Gate opens at 8:15 for an 8:30 start.<br><br>School ends at 15:00 |
| Year 1 | |
| Year 2 | |
| Year 3 | |
| Year 4 | |
| Year 5 | |
| Year 6 | |

**Lateness being collected from school**
Children may finish school at various times (if at club) and should be collected promptly. Children who are persistently picked up late can sometimes become distressed. If you are having difficulties picking your child up on time, you should register them with the After School Club. School will consider administering charges for pupils who have not registered at an after school provision who regularly pick up late.

**Parental Responsibilities**
Parents and those with parental responsibilities are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. They are also responsible for informing the school, stating the reason for the absence and wherever possible indicating when the child is expected to return. Details of legislation, including the issue of Penalty Notices for non/poor attendance, can be found here School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

**Responsibilities and Roles**
At Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School we have an appointed School Attendance Champion: Alex Elspass.

School Administrators are responsible for:
- Ensuring all registers are complete and marked correctly.
- First day calls home for unexplained absences.
- Recording absences with valid reasons.
- Reporting absence patterns and concerns to the School Attendance Champion

The School Attendance Champion is responsible for:
- Monitoring and improving attendance across the school.
- Supporting families to improve attendance rates.
- Conduct safeguarding home visits as appropriate.
- Liaise with relevant agencies, such as Local Authority Attendance Teams.
- Liaise and gain the support of the Trust Attendance Lead.
- Ensures the Trust and Governing body has an accurate and detailed picture of current attendance rates in the school.
- Support the school office staff in their role.
- Overseeing and ensuring that attendance is considered in all areas of school.
- Setting out a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Having a strong grasp of attendance data to focus the collective efforts of the school. Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

**Registration**
Pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Morning registration will close 30 minutes after the register has been taken and afternoon registration at 1.30pm. Pupils arriving after registration has closed will be marked 'U' on the register; this mark counts as an absence for the purposes of calculating overall attendance. Coding is decided by the school attendance staff. The 'U' code will only be used at the discretion of the attendance staff. (Appendix B) The Rise Attendance Lead may also be consulted. When children arrive late, before the register has closed, an "L" will be used to indicate they are late. The School Attendance Champion along with the Office Staff monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness in school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Children who are regularly late for school with no valid reason will not be eligible to achieve 100% attendance. Absences are registered authorised or unauthorised according to agreed LA/DFE criteria.

Registers are kept accurately as they may be used as evidence in cases where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences.

**Categorising absence**
Parents can be prosecuted for failing to ensure that their children attend school with the following exceptions:

- The pupil was absent with permission from an authorised person within the school.
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the family belongs.
- The school is not within walking distance of the home and no suitable arrangements have been made for transport to school, boarding accommodation or enabling the child to be registered at a school nearer home
- Medical and dental appointments – such absences will be authorised providing the school is satisfied that such appointments are genuine. However, we would ask all parents, wherever possible to make non-emergency appointments outside of school hours
- Family holiday and extended trips overseas: Only in exceptional circumstances will authorisation be granted for an absence. Parents will be discouraged from taking children out of school at particularly crucial points in the school year, for example, during the annual statutory assessments at Year 6.
- Leave of absence may be authorised for a child to take part in a public performance at the school's discretion.
- Leave of absence may be authorised for off-site activities whether school directed e.g., educational visits, or individual e.g., music examinations.
- Where a pupil has been temporarily excluded but remains on the school roll their absence will be registered as authorised.
- There may be occasions when pupils are absent due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, for example, family bereavement. We will endeavour to deal sensitively with requests for absence in such instances.
- Additional exceptions may be made for children from a traveller heritage, details of which may be obtained from the LA (Local Authority).

**Leave of absence**
The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- In line with the updated statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance,' which came into force on 19th August 2024, fixed penalty notices may

be issued by the school for unauthorised absences as outlined in appendix A of this policy.

- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the period set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Local Authorities Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996. Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

Extended Leave of Absence Due to Holidays, Family or Personal Reasons Legislation with regards to children taking holidays in term time came into effect on 1st September 2013. The reference in law to Headteachers being able to (at their discretion) agree up to 10 days of leave of absence was removed. Instead, the legal reference was amended to state that schools should not authorise leave of absence unless the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Penalty Notices may be issued from Leicestershire County Council for parents and carers who take their children on holiday in term time.

Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time, but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

**Notification of levels of attendance/absence**

We have a legal duty to provide information on levels of attendance, and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence. This information is required by the LA and the DFE. We set target attendance levels, and these will be set by the governing body/ Trust in line with statutory requirements. The Head Teacher reports on attendance and levels of authorised and unauthorised absence to the local governing body at each meeting.

Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School *is required to make a sickness return to the Local Authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the I code (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have missed 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

***(Working together to improve school attendance Aug 2024)***

**The Rise Attendance Lead**

Parents and carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together, which we have found to be highly successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer poor levels of attendance to the Rise Attendance Lead from the Rise Academy Trust. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement with parents and carers. However, if attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court may be enforced.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the Attendance Lead themselves to ask for help or information. Their contact information is available from the school office.

**Children missing from Education**

A Child Missing from Education forms part of the wider Safeguarding Children Partnership

Board's procedures for children who go missing from school, home, care or education and includes families who go missing. A pupil missing from education on a number of occasions is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Should a pupil go missing from Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School our Office staff or School Attendance Champion will make enquiries directly with the family concerned. Should these enquiries not reach a satisfactory conclusion, then contact will be made with the Trust Attendance Lead and the Local Authority Missing Pupils team. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will consider further actions and/or support should it be required and to ensure they help identify the any risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.
At Higham-on-the-Hill C of E Primary School if a child is no longer coming to our school where the parent or carer has removed them, we will ensure that appropriate steps are taken and measures are in place i.e. we will follow our school guidelines in monitoring those parents or carers home tutoring, follow procedures where a child is taken out of school to go on holiday or where a child is removed from school as the family are moving away. We will notify all relevant partner agencies/services including Trust Attendance Lead and Local Authority Attendance Teams correct forms will be completed, information will be recorded and child folders/information will be passed on to the appropriate person (where applicable).

**Policy Links**
This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following other policies and documents:

- Collection Protocol
- Home Visits Protocol
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Appendix A Understanding Attendance

### Attendance

If you are a parent of, or are responsible for, a child who is registered at school (between ages 5-16) you will need to ensure they attend school regularly.

### The law and attendance

- Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.
- Prosecution could result in a fine of up to £2,500, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence.
- Alternatively, Education Welfare Officers, Police Officers and Headteacher's have the authority to issue penalty notices to parents of between £80 and £160. Failure to pay a properly issued penalty notice will result in prosecution as set out above.
- Parenting contract - where parents need support to prevent their child from truanting, schools and local authorities (LAs) may offer to enter into a parenting contract. This is a voluntary two sided agreement between the parent and school or LA under which the parent agrees to comply with certain requirements and the school or LA agrees to provide them with the support that they need.

### The role of the LA in attendance

Local authorities (LAs) are responsible, by law, for making sure parents fulfil their responsibility of ensuring that their child receives an education either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise. Most LAs employ attendance support officers, to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibilities. They will work closely with schools and when required and conduct regular targeted support meetings. If you do not do everything you can to cooperate with the Local Authority and school, the LA may consider imposing an education supervision order through the court. This means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to you and your child. The LA can also prosecute you in a magistrates court. This could result in you and your partner being fined up to a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to three months for each child who is not going to school.

## Appendix B

### Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence are changing

With the introduction of the new National Framework for penalty notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice fines issued for unauthorised absence that occurs after 19th August 2024.

### Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time learning leave will result in **each** parent receiving 3 **separate** fines

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a Magistrates' Court can show on the parents future DBS certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

### 5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Learning Leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time learning leave of 5 or more consecutive days and for fewer days where this has happened before.

### 10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of **absence in a 10-week period**

Sessions equal to AM & PM

### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Learning Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

**There is NO option to pay at £80 level**

### Court Prosecutions

Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the Local Authority considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

**BY LAW, ALL PENALTY NOTICE PAYMENTS GO TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND NOT TO SCHOOLS**

Further guidance is available on the Gov.uk website.

Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)

## Appendix C The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|---|---|---|
| **/** | Present (AM) | Present |
| **** | Present (PM) | Present |
| **B** | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| **C** | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| **C1** | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad (includes leave supported by a LA licence) | Authorised Absence |
| **C2** | Leave of absence for a compulsory pupil subject to a part-time timetable | Authorised absence |
| **D** | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | *Not counted in possible attendances* |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| **F** | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **G** | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| **H** | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **I** | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| **J1** | Interview | Authorised absence |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **K** | Attending education Provision arranged by the LA | Approved Education Activity |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| **P** | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| **Q** | Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **R** | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| **U*** | Late (after registers closed no longer than 30 Minutes) | Unauthorised absence |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| **X** | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y** | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y1** | Unable to attend due to provided transport not being available | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y2** | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y3** | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y4** | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y5** | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y6** | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y7** | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Z** | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **#** | school closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

***Coding is decided by the school attendance staff. The 'U' code will only be used at the discretion of the attendance staff. The Rise Attendance Lead may also be consulted. If you would like a copy of your child's attendance record at any point, please ask at the school office.**

# Appendix D

## Children from Traveller Communities

Traveller children of compulsory school age are expected by law* to attend at least 200 sessions out of the possible 380 sessions per school academic year. The use of the Traveller code (T) for more than 180 sessions could indicate that the pupil has failed to meet this requirement. Please note that absence for travelling purposes should only be coded "T" when the parent is engaged in trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. If this is not the case, the child is required to be in school as usual.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

It is important that there is consistency between schools in relation to the approach to the absence of Traveller children and this school therefore adopts this policy.

The attendance of children from travelling families is treated with equity and fairness taking into account the cultural needs of our Traveller community; the culture of travelling families can require travel for genuine work purposes and is recognised nationally.

However, it has also been recognised that Traveller children's attendance tends to be very low and can result in significant problems with achievement, attainment and whole school attendance performance management.

Of particular importance is:

a) The coding of the absence of Traveller pupils in schools
b) Movement among Traveller families; children may leave and return at the parents' will and at very short notice, with no indication of the whereabouts of a child and/or his/her welfare
c) This in turn makes it difficult for the school to exercise the duty of care to children and to provide a good education to each and every one of our pupils. It is important that the school is able to monitor, assess and review children's development and to ensure that children are progressing.

Whilst respecting the need for traveller families to conduct their day to day businesses, it is important for everyone to work together to maximise the opportunity for all children to achieve and attain through improving attendance and punctuality in school. Traveller families are therefore subject to the same limitations and constraints in regulation as all other families albeit with discretion where travel is for business purposes.

Traveller families will be requested to complete a Traveller Request Form before a child's period of absence from school commences where travel is for business purposes and/or the child will be accessing education in another location. Requests for absence of any other nature should be made using the schools leave of absence request form.

***Information is available from the school office*.**

## Please note the following:

Absence linked to travel for the reasons listed below will not constitute travel for work purposes. The school must conform with regulations to provide equality for all pupils and set the foundations for a fair Attendance Policy for the whole school population:

1. Bereavement
2. Weddings
3. Visiting Relatives
4. Absence the family feel is religious observance where this is in excess of 1 day exclusively set apart by the religious body
5. Pre-wedding preparations and weddings
6. Birthdays

**Where a family does not inform the school or seek permission for absence before departure, the**

**absence will not be authorised.**

## Traveller Pupil Tracking Form - Guidance

The purpose of the form is to record the proposed leave of pupils from the travelling communities, recording details of their local residence and their current contact numbers. The purpose of the form is also to record information about intended travel dates and the expected date of return. If the family is staying on a Local Authority site in another area of the country, the details can be recorded and confirmed.
If the student is dual registered with a school outside of the local authority, this information should be confirmed and the dual registration procedures undertaken accordingly.

The purpose of this process is to support good practice, to encourage traveller families to share their proposed arrangements prior to leaving and to ensure that effective contact is maintained. The Traveller Pupil Tracking Form should assist in reducing cases of children deemed to be missing in these circumstances and therefore strengthen the safeguarding procedures in place, as well as ensuring that children's school attendance is maximised.

Together, we anticipate a continued improvement in attendance at school by working jointly with parent(s)/carer(s), specialist support from the Traveller Education Service and the Education Welfare Service to achieve better educational outcomes for our Traveller Children and Young People.

**TRAVELLER PUPIL TRACKING FORM**

In the interest of pupil welfare, the school and parent/s will complete the following information together ***before pupil(s) travel:***

| **Child's Name**: | Child's dob: |
|---|---|
| Base 1: Address with post code: | |

| **Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/ Carer(s) Name(s)**: |
|---|
| Base 2: Address with post code (other residence): |
| Reason for travel: |
| Landline telephone number: |
| Mobile telephone number: |
| Email address: |

**TRAVEL DATES**

| Travel Date | HT1 | HT2 | HT3 | HT4 | HT5 | HT6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| Expected Return date | HT1 | HT2 | HT3 | HT4 | HT5 | HT6 |
| | | | | | | |

**School details where child is dual registered:**

| |
|---|
| |

Education Packs provided Y / N

**Please note:**

Traveller children whose whereabouts are unknown can be deleted from the school roll in the same way as other (non-traveller) pupils after thorough investigations have been undertaken and the pupil has not been located. In all cases, the school complies with the LA and Maintained Schools Protocol on the Management of Children Missing from Education.

**This policy will be reviewed in 2028**

Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

## Appendix E - Application for leave of absence

# EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE FROM LEARNING REQUEST FORM

In line with Government legislation all pupils should attend school during the whole of term time in order to maximise their learning. We therefore ask parents **NOT** to take children out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Exceptional circumstances may include:**

- Religious reasons (this may need to be confirmed by a religious leader)
- Family bereavement
- To take exams (common entrance, ballet, music etc.)
- To participate in recognised sporting/cultural activities
- Service personnel with restricted holidays

**Please attach any documentation in support of your request to the form**

| | |
|---|---|
| **NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN:** | |
| **YEAR GROUP/S:** | |
| **DATES OF ABSENCE:** | **From:** **To:** |
| **DATE OF RETURN TO SCHOOL:** | |
| **NO OF SCHOOL DAYS REQUESTED:** | |
| **DESTINATION:** | |
| **Please give full details of the exceptional reasons for this leave of absence:** | |

***We advise parents not to plan for children to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement. Unauthorised absence may be recorded and could result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice of £160 per parent per child or Magistrates Court.***

**Signed:……...PrintName:……Date: ……**

Please return this form to the school office as soon as possible - but at least two weeks' prior the start date of leave requested, unless the exceptional circumstances are as a result of emergency or bereavement.

**For office use only**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Authorised: | ☐ Unauthorised: | Signed: …….. |
| Attendance: ……..% | ☐ Code:<br>☐ Number of days: | Position: ……..<br>Date: …….. |

## Appendix F

In line with Government guidance we are unable to authorise any leave of absence, unless our view is that there are exceptional circumstances. Please find below examples give by the Trust Board and Governing Bodies.

| REASON | JUSTIFICATION | DECISION |
|---|---|---|
| Holidays are cheaper during term time. | This is **NOT** an exceptional circumstance. | Absence will NOT be authorised. |
| Parent/carer employer allocated holidays fall in term time | This is NOT an exceptional circumstance. It is an issue that needs to be resolved between parents and their employer. | Absence will NOT be authorised. |
| Parent/carer wedding abroad or in the UK. | The wedding party must consider school term times when planning their wedding day and absence can be avoided. | One or two days authorised absence. |
| Parent/carer is in the armed forces. | Short/limited period of leave before returning to official duties. | Absence can be authorised.<br><br>Evidence of leave required. |
| Parent/carer undergone or undergoing extensive medical treatment. | Request for leave has been made to coincide with a treatment schedule. | Absence can be authorised.<br><br>Medical evidence needed. |
| Parent/carer in the fire service. | The fire service prescribes holidays depending on their watch. | Absence can be authorised.<br>Evidence of watch pattern required. |
| Pupil's ongoing health/medical needs or the need for specialist accommodation. | Considered as an exceptional circumstance because holidays may not be able to happen out of term time. | Absence can be authorised.<br><br>Medical evidence needed |
| Immediate family member wedding abroad or in the UK. | The wedding party might not consider school term dates when planning their wedding day. | One day authorised absence for wedding and one day authorised absence for travel if required.<br><br>Evidence of wedding booking required. |
| Child visiting a sick immediate relative abroad or in the UK. | Unforeseen illness may fall in term time. | Depending on destination, a maximum of five days can be authorised.<br><br>Medical evidence required. |
| Child attending a funeral in the UK or abroad. | Funeral date may fall in term time. | Maximum of three days authorised.<br>Evidence of funeral required. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Child attending a religious festival. | Religious festivals often fall during term time. | One day authorised. |
| Child visiting a parent/carer in custody. | Visiting times may not fall in school holidays. | One day authorised. Evidence of visit required. |
| Child attending modelling/performing arts or approved sporting activity. | These events may fall in term time. | Absence authorised depending on request and impact on education.<br><br>Evidence of event required. |