

UPHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – Nelson Mandela

ARTICLE 3 *(best interests of the child)*

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

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To be reviewed annually

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1. Aims

At Uphall we believe that for our pupils to achieve a good standard of academic and social success they need to attend school on a regular basis. We also understand that we need to work closely with families and outside support agencies in order that our policy is successful. It is our aim that all children at Uphall achieve at least 96% attendance.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting good punctuality

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance May 2022 [Working together](#) which explains thresholds for off rolling and Penalty Notices and also how school and the LA strive to support families in ensuring better attendance.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.50am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.50am** and will be kept open until **9.00am**. The register for the second session will be kept open **for 10 minutes after the start of the session**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **8.50am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents should call the school on 020 8478 2993 and follow the instructions for reporting an absence. They should continue to call and report a child absence every morning for the duration of their illness.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. In which case the school may ask parents to provide 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. We will ask for supporting evidence for sickness absence of more than 5 days.

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.

If the school believes your child is persistently absent, they may ask families to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence for all ongoing absences after notifying families of this in advance

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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. Attending school before and after appointments when able.

Parents should make the school office aware of any medical or dental appointments that fall within school time. Proof of appointments may be requested at the school's discretion.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (8:50 – 9.00am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (9.00am) will be marked as Present after registration closed, using the appropriate code (U).

Punctuality will be closely monitored by the attendance officer and the appropriate Learning Leader. For children who are continually late for school, a warning letter will be sent to families. If punctuality does not improve, a meeting will be scheduled by the Learning Leader or Attendance Lead to explore reasons for persistent lateness. This may also be followed up by a home visit should the situation not improve.

For children that are registered late (after registration closes) a maximum of 7 times during any Half Term period may be issued a Penalty Notice.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is authorised or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Stage 1: For any unexplained absence, a phone call/text via Parent Hub will be made to the family on the first morning of the absence. If there is no response from the family, a message will be left stating that the parents should contact the school.

Families will also receive an attendance report requesting the reason of absence to be shared at the end of the week if no reason is obtained.

Stage 2: If no contact is made by the parents after several days absence, a home visit may be arranged at the discretion of the school.

Stage 3: Meetings to be arranged at the discretion of the school by Attendance Leaders, EWO and Learning Leaders for families whose child's attendance falls below 90%.

3.6 Reporting to parents

A pupil's attendance will be reported to parents formally as part of the annual report process. The attendance of all pupils is closely monitored throughout the school year and warning letters are issued to families of pupils whose attendance falls between 91-93% to explain that they are close to falling into the category of 'Persistent Absence'.

Letters are also issued at Parent Consultation Meetings to families where a pupil's absence falls below 95% to remind them of the importance of good attendance.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Even in exceptional circumstances, we may only authorize up to 3 days absence. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as bereavements or sudden serious illness involving close family members.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Learning Leader's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. We may authorise 1 day for each religious occasion up to a maximum of 3 days each year.

- Traveller pupils 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

We do not authorise leave of absence for family holidays or visits to relatives.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 per parent within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head Learning Leader, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Punctuality

School can also fine parents for persistent poor punctuality where a registered pupil has been late (after the close of registration) for 12 or more sessions in any six-week period

- Local Authority must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to show the parent has committed an offence under s444(1) or s444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.
- A formal warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued has been served either by the school or the AES, and a penalty notice has not been issued in the past 12 months for the same child

4.3 Persistence Absence

Stage 1 The attendance of all pupils is closely monitored throughout the school year and warning letters are issued to families of pupils whose attendance falls between 91-93% to explain that they are close to falling into the category of 'Persistent Absence'.

Stage 2 Home visit undertaken, at schools' discretion can skip to stage 3.

Stage 3 Families invited to meeting to create attendance IEP reviewed every 6 weeks or to attend a meeting with EWO

Stage 4 EWO can take on cases and escalate with legal action where the LA is satisfied that a parent has committed an offence s444(1) or s444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Uphall, we believe that good attendance is a reward in itself. However, at the end of every term, to celebrate our children's excellent attendance, pupils with 100% attendance for the whole term receive a certificate in assembly, along with a prize such as a Uphall Primary School pen. Teachers can also choose a 'wild card' pupil who will also receive a prize either for improved attendance or for narrowly missing out on 100% attendance for that term.

We also promote good attendance on a weekly basis by celebrating the top 3 class attendance across the school "Gold, Silver, Bronze" via email and within the weekly newsletter. Attendance for each class is also included in our school newsletters.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Data concerning individual pupil's attendance is used to track specific pupils who may be a cause for concern and to look for any patterns or trends in absences e.g. within families.

Class leaders will be requested to work with the attendance officer and team to populate reasons within school systems, as required to support collection of data tracking.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Learning Leader to account for the implementation of this policy.

A link governor works with the school to evaluate the impact of the attendance policy and action plans on overall attendance.

7.2 The Head Learning Leader

The Head Learning Leader is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head Learning Leader also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.2 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Learning Leader
- Works with Learning Leaders and Attendance Lead to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head Learning Leader when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.3 Class Leaders

Class Leaders are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information electronically to the school office within the designated timings.

7.4 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents and listen to messages left about absence and record it on the school system.

Office staff are expected to record reasons for late arrival, after registration closes.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Learning Leader. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

This policy is linked to the Parent Friendly Attendance booklet.

10. COVID-19

10.1 Temporary Changes to the School Day

In line with our school risk assessment to mitigate the risks associated with the spread of Coronavirus, temporary changes have been made to the times of the school day which affect when attendance is recorded.

Children in Year R, 2, 4 and 6 will be registered in the morning at 8.50am. A child in these year groups arriving after this time will be recorded as late.

Children in Year 1, 3 and 5 will be registered in the morning at 9.10am. A child in these year groups arriving after this time will be recorded as late.

Covid regulations subject to change – Website will be updated as required.

10.2 Monitoring Attendance during Remote Learning

During periods of Remote Learning as a result of a class having to isolate or during periods of national lockdown, class leaders will monitor attendance during daily live Google classroom teaching sessions. Attendance will also be monitored in terms of engagement with remote learning via Google classroom as the school is aware that not all children will be able to attend live sessions.

Where there is concern over a child's attendance or engagement with remote learning, class leaders will contact families to remind them of the school's expectations for attendance during periods of remote learning. If there is still concern regarding attendance, a Learning Leader or Attendance Leader may carry out a doorstep visit to the family.

Children who are attending school during these periods either due to being classed as Key Worker children or Vulnerable Learners, will be registered daily and this will be reported to the local authority and the DFE.

10.3 Attendance Codes

During the academic year 2023-2024, if a child is unable to attend school due to 'circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' their attendance will be recorded using **code x or I variant**. This includes children who are self-isolating or are required to quarantine following overseas travel.

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody or child is unable to attend on grounds of safe walking distance - school is more than 2 miles away for a child under 8 and 3 miles above 8.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day