

# Attendance Policy



## Undershaw

The aim of Undershaw's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance at school is key to steady student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

Undershaw takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, students and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

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Reviewed By	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
Approved By	Headteacher
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Signed by	Headteacher April 2023

# Attendance Information

## 1. Legal framework

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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:

- 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, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

At Undershaw pupil attendance is reviewed by the governing body's wellbeing committee every term.

### School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- Nominate or appoint a senior member of staff to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job

- Report to the governing body wellbeing committee each term on attendance records, data and provision
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, in line with DfE expectations by sending termly attendance update letter home (appendix 1)
- Develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- Use the Annual Review and EHCP update process to ensure accuracy of student's coming on to the admission register or when a student's name is to be removed from the admission register.

### **Teachers and support staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue, including the school's Family Liaison Officers
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken twice daily, using AM and PM registers and at the beginning of each teaching period
- Contribute to strategy meetings and co-ordinate interventions where they are needed
- Work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### **Parents and carers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance

- Have a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher (**see section 4 and appendix 2**)
- Inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren) along with the name of the parent with whom the child will live
- Sign the home–school agreement.

### **Students**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that students:

- Be aware of the school’s attendance rules, and when they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable, including any transition or reintegration plans
- Speak to their form Tutor, Teaching Assistant or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.7**). Students are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors
- Sign the home–school agreement.

### **3. Strategies for promoting attendance**

At Undershaw Education we recognise that good attendance looks different for every pupil and therefore offer a range of support systems & inclusive awards for attendance including:

- Bespoke attendance support through Tutor Teams
- A Pastoral Team dedicated to supporting student wellbeing and developing individualised attendance initiatives
- Postcards home to celebrate improved attendance
- Most improved attendance certificates at termly celebration assemblies.

### **4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences**

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student’s absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Admin staff will make it clear on the school register whether a child’s absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences, they should follow the school’s safeguarding procedures. (For attendance codes see appendix 3.)

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect their child to return. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

#### **4.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first and subsequent days of absence. For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request, it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

#### **4.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible. (See form – appendix 2)

#### **4.3 Authorised absences**

There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

#### **4.4 Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. Form tutors will arrange for work to be sent home.

#### **4.5 Family holidays and extended leave**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. (Appendix 2) Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the headteacher 2 weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered, and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved, and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time. If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised.

#### **4.6 Religious Observance**

Undershaw recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance (see form appendix 2).

#### **4.7 Late Arrival**

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. In the morning **registration begins at 08:45. Students** who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The morning registration period ends at 09:15.**

Students who arrive after the registration period will be greeted at the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is

vital that students sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all students are accounted for.

**In the afternoon registration begins at 13:25.** Students who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The afternoon registration period ends at 13:45.**

A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office.

**5. School action: following up absences**

Class registers are saved to the school’s Management Information System (SIMS) by the end of the registration period by Tutor Teams. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence.

If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Family Liaison Officer or Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The Safeguarding Team will also be notified.

Parents/carers will be contacted if a student gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and further clarification is needed.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

The school will inform the local authority that holds the educational, health and care plan (EHCP) of any concerns over attendance.

The school may take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be persistently truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

The school may take further action against the parents, including the issuing of fixed penalty notices and/or referral to the local authority. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Please see the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

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<b>Statutory: Y</b>	<b>Online: Y</b>	<b>Parago: N</b>		
<b>Review Frequency: Yearly</b>	<b>Committee Review:</b>	<b>C</b>		
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Staff Member responsible	Head Teacher	SHG	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)	
Nature of changes made	Initial Draft	Yearly review	Yearly review	
Date reviewed by Committee	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2020	October 2021		
Date next review is due	August 2021	October 2022		
<b>File Version</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	

## Appendix 1 – Termly Attendance Letters

### GREEN

Dear Parent / Carer

The regular attendance of students is a priority at Undershaw. We use a 'Traffic Light' system to track and monitor students' attendance on a regular basis.

- Green: above 95% attendance
- Amber: between 90% and 95% attendance
- Red: below 90% attendance

Currently, [student name] has an overall attendance of [%] which places them in the **Green** category for attendance. Thank you for continuing to support their excellent attendance.

We understand that there are many genuine and necessary reasons for students to miss school occasionally. We would encourage you to continue to work with us and ensure that we are notified at the start of every absence, and to ask us for help if you need any support in improving your child's attendance during the coming term.

If your child/young person is to have the best chance of success, it is essential that they maintain a school attendance of at least 95% wherever possible. It is our goal to get as many of our students as possible to achieve this, and therefore have the best start to life that they can.

If there are any issues that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely,

**AMBER**

Dear Parent / Carer,

The regular attendance of students is a priority at Undershaw. We use a 'Traffic Light' system to track and monitor students' attendance on a regular basis.

- **Green:** above 95% attendance
- **Amber:** between 90% and 95% attendance
- **Red:** below 90% attendance

Currently, [student name] has an overall attendance of [%] which places them in the **Amber** category for attendance. This means that it is below our target of 95% but it is not a serious concern at the moment, so please do not worry.

We understand that there are many genuine and necessary reasons for students to miss school occasionally. We would encourage you to continue to work with us and ensure that we are notified at the start of every absence, and to ask us for help if you need any support in improving your child's attendance during the coming term.

If your child/young person is to have the best chance of success, it is essential that they maintain a school attendance of at least 95% wherever possible. It is our goal to get as many of our students as possible to achieve this, and therefore have the best start to life that they can.

If there are any issues that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely,



**RED**

Dear Parent / Carer,

The regular attendance of students is a priority at Undershaw. We use a 'Traffic Light' system to track and monitor students' attendance on a regular basis.

- **Green:** above 95% attendance
- **Amber:** between 90% and 95% attendance
- **Red:** below 90% attendance

Currently, [student name] has an overall attendance of [%] which places them in the **Red** category for attendance.

This is a concern for us, and I may contact you to discuss attendance and offer our support. We understand that there are many genuine and necessary reasons for students to miss school occasionally. We would encourage you to continue to work with us and ensure that we are notified at the start of every absence, and to ask us for help if you need any support in improving your child's attendance during the coming term.

If your child/young person is to have the best chance of success, it is essential that they maintain a school attendance of at least 95% wherever possible. It is our goal to get as many of our students as possible to achieve this, and therefore have the best start to life that they can.

If there are any issues that you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely,

## Appendix 2

### REQUEST FORM TIME OFF IN TERM TIME FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

**Before requesting time off, please think about:**

- The lessons your child will miss
- The difficulty they will have catching up
- The effect it will have on how well they do at school
- The school can refuse permission for you to take your child out of school during term time

**For your information:**

- You do not legally have the right to take your child out of school during term time without the permission of the Headteacher
- The school will consider the following before authorising time off during term time or not:
  - Your child’s attendance record
  - The time of the academic year in which the requested time off falls
- The school cannot legally approve more than 10 days off school in an academic year unless the Headteacher agrees there are exceptional circumstances
- Requests for time off during examinations and national tests will not normally be granted
- If you remove your child without permission, the Headteacher may have to ask the Local Authority Inclusion Team to issue a penalty notice which carries a fine of £60 to £120 per parent per child

Name of child ..... Form .....

Dates requested .....

Dates of time taken off school this academic year .....

Please provide a detailed reason why you MUST take your child out of school in term time

.....  
 .....  
 .....

It is important that you submit all information on this form. It is the policy of the school to consider requests for leave of absence only once and it will not be possible to present additional information later.

Signed.....(Parent/Carer) Date .....

**FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY**

Permission has given granted for the above dates: YES / NO

Child’s current % attendance .....

Signed.....(Headteacher)

Date .....

Reason if refused:

.....

**Appendix 3**

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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Children are required to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%

# ATTENDANCE

## Why is it important?

Attendance	Days Absent	Weeks Absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

