



Attendance Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible	Children, Families and Community Committee
Status	Non-statutory
Review Cycle	Three yearly
Date written/last review	October 2025
Date of next review	October 2028

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Introduction

We expect all children to attend every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for their child's attendance we do all we can to encourage the children to attend school. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will ensure best endeavours are made to provide learning for children who are absent for a significant period of time in line with statutory guidance.

Poor attendance and punctuality at school may potentially be an indicator of underlying adverse circumstances. Effective communication with school to explain any absences is essential (see our Safeguarding Policy for more information about Children Missing Education – CME).

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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Please also see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

The Headteacher provides the Governing Board with information about attendance data and punctuality in reports presented to FGB meetings. The Governing Board's role is to support and challenge, holding the school to account with regards to attendance. The school register is taken twice daily in line with Local Authority procedures.

Aims and Objectives

This Attendance Policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this Policy we aim to:

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- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Foster awareness for parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service.
- Establish a robust structure of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Supporting children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Ensuring effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received prior notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child is unwell, the parent/carers communicates, each day of the absence, with an explanation about the illness and reason for the absence.
- Only the school can authorise absence, parents/carers are not responsible for classifying the absence as authorised. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- When a child is absent from school without the permission of the school.
- When a child is absent from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

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See Appendix 1 for Attendance codes information.

If a child is absent

- Parents/Carers should contact the school office by 9.00am on each day of the child's absence. This can be done in person by coming to the office, by calling the dedicated absence line on 0208 332 6219 and then using option 1 to record a message or by sending an email to absence@marshgate.richmond.sch.uk. If a child is not in class when the class teacher takes the register the teacher will record the absence with an N. The correct absence code is then marked by the school office following receipt of absence notification from the parent/carer. In line with our safeguarding children responsibility, the school office staff will always contact the first and / or second parent/carer if a message or reason for absence has not been received. If there is no response to these initial calls the next emergency contacts will be called. Parents and carers are required to ensure the school office has correct contact information.
- In the case that a child has an allocated Social Worker then the school will inform the Social Worker of absences.
- If a child has a medical appointment, where possible, a copy of the appointment card, letter or email should be provided to the school at least twenty-four hours in advance of the appointment. The school encourages parents/carers to make appointments outside of school hours but if not, the child should return to school as soon as possible to complete the school day. If children need to be collected during the school day parents/carers will need to specify if they are staying or returning for lunch. In addition, if a child has an appointment during the school day parents/carers should arrange to collect their child either before or after, but not during lunchtime.
- All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. It is important that the school receives accurate information, either by note or telephone notification, to determine the correct category. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- If a child is unwell on the day before or immediately after a school holiday then proof of illness is required, either a doctor's note or appointment card, otherwise the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Requests for Leave of Absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents/carers to complete a Leave of Absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. This form is available from the school office and the Marshgate website. Please email the school office on absence@marshgate.richmond.sch.uk marking your email for the attention of the Headteacher.

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The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

Parents/Carers do not have a right to take their child out of school for holidays. The Headteacher does not have authority to approve absence for general family holidays. Any unauthorised holiday absences of five days or longer may after consideration and consultation with the Headteacher be referred to the Education Welfare Service and this may result in a fixed penalty notice (FPN).

1. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Educational Healthcare plans (EHC plans) or Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health concerns, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the Local Authority if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the Local Authority with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs through communications via Parent Mail and the website calendar.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

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The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

2. Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- Direct a Learning Support Practitioner to immediately alert SLT and other staff
- If Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / SENCO not on-site, alert office team.
- SLT / Office team will direct all support staff to begin search of classrooms and area immediately outside classroom. They will direct available staff to search playgrounds
- Office team to put front door onto lockdown mode

The following areas will be systematically searched:

- All classrooms
- All areas immediately outside classrooms
- All toilets
- Cloakrooms
- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after five minutes, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified.

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- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Positive Relationships Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Repeated absences

- Absence data is closely monitored by the school.
- The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence requesting details.
- If a child has a repeated number of absences, the parents/carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss any barriers to pupil attendance.
- The EWO (Education Welfare Officer) visits the school on a regular basis and will review all cases where attendance has fallen below 90%.
- When pupil attendance is below 90% proof of absence will be required, for example in the case of illness a letter or appointment card will be required or permission to speak to the doctor's surgery.
- If attendance does not improve, the school will make a referral to the EWS (Education Welfare Service) and if this meets their threshold the EWO may arrange a visit with the parents/carers at school or home and seek to determine the barriers to good attendance.
- The school and EWO will work with the family to support an improvement in attendance so that the case can be closed.

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- If these interventions do not achieve an improvement further action by the EWO may include a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution of the parents/carers.

School arrival time and lateness

- The school gates open at 8.30am to allow our families and children to enter the playground areas.
- For KS1 and KS2, classroom doors open at 8.45am; this is so the children can enter their classroom and start to settle, ready for the day's learning.
- The gates remain open until 8.55am, after which they are promptly locked. Class Teachers then complete the registers.
- For Reception, classroom doors open at 8.55am to allow families to drop off Reception children after older siblings or other children in the school have been dropped off.
- Children arriving after 8.55am should enter school via the school office, where they will be registered as a late arrival. Children who are persistently late miss significant learning opportunities; the start of the day is a particularly important time to share information for the day. Children arriving after 9.30am will be registered as unauthorised lateness for the morning session. If the school has received advance notice of a medical appointment or other permitted activity, then this will be registered as authorised.
- Late entries will be monitored regularly and lateness figures will be reported in pupils' end of year school reports.
- The school will write to the parent/carer of any child who is repeatedly late for school. The parents/carers may be asked to visit the school and discuss the issue. If the situation does not improve, the school may involve the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will arrange a visit at school or at home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation. Together the school and EWO service will identify strategies with the parent or carer to resolve the lateness issues.
- If a child has been to an appointment during the school day, he or she must be signed in to the school office by an accompanying adult when returning to school.

Monitoring and review

- The school sets an annual target for pupil attendance which is reviewed by Governors.
- At teacher/parent meetings, teachers discuss up to date attendance and punctuality for all children, particularly those children who have attendance concerns.
- An attendance summary is provided alongside the summer term end of year report to parents/carers.
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- The school's Office Manager and Headteacher are responsible for monitoring lateness and attendance throughout the school. Any concerns about a child's absence will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and agreed procedures put into place.

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Appendix 1

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental)
- J1 = Interview (employment or educational admission)
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on roll

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.