



**Avonbourne Boys' & Girls' Academies**

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

# **Attendance Policy and Procedures**

**October 2025**

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## **Summary – Attendance at a Glance**

### **Attendance Matters**

Here at Avonbourne Academies we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school. This is a successful Academy, and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Avonbourne Academies on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Avonbourne Academies is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Avonbourne Academies without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments. There is no need, except in extreme circumstances, to miss a day's education. If you miss one session in a week (remember, there are two sessions per day) your attendance is 90%.

This means you miss 19 days of education in a year and risk dropping one grade in your GCSEs.

It is vital we work together to teach our pupils the value of attending school each and every day. However, we do appreciate that at times, pupils may not be able to attend school. We ask our parents and carers to follow the processes below. They support our safeguarding procedures.

Should you have a concern about your child's attendance, then we ask that you contact us to discuss this. We believe in strong partnerships across all parts of school life. This includes attending school.

It is also important to us that pupils arrive to school on time, and they must be at school by 8.30am.

### Absence through illness or unforeseen circumstances

If a student is absent, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (by 8.30am) and on the morning of every day of absence.
- Or, you can email via [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- We reserve the right to ask you to provide evidence of absence, and we will always ask for evidence if your child's attendance is below 90%.

If a student is absent, we will:

- Send a text message to parents to advise their child is absent from the Academies and no reason has been received. On receiving that text message, parents are requested to contact the Academies to advise of the reason for absence by emailing [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- If a response to the absence text message has not been received, attempts to telephone the parent/carer on the day of the absence if we have not heard from you will be made (this call will be made between 9:00am-10:00am (where possible) by the Pastoral team. This is a safeguarding procedure. Further attempts may be made to call you throughout the day by either the Pastoral Team, the Attendance Officer or another member of the wider attendance team.
- If no contact has been received by the second day, the Attendance Officer will report absence to all contacts including email addresses.
- If a pupil is absent for 3 school days without a contact being received from parents, or, if the communication raises any queries, a "safe and well" home visit will be requested by the Attendance Officer via MyConcern and made by our Education Social Worker or member of the Pastoral team if appropriate. This is a safeguarding procedure and is an expectation from the Local Authority.

- If absence persists, your son/daughter's Pastoral Lead will make contact with you. If attendance falls below 97% our attendance team will write to you to highlight this.
- Deterioration of attendance will lead to an Initial Assessment completed by the pastoral team and could result in a further letter and phone call inviting parents in for a meeting with your Pastoral Lead and son/daughter where an Initial Assessment or Parenting Contract is complete.
- If after 4 weeks there is still no improvement, a 15 or 20 day monitoring period will commence and this will be communicated, a letter will be sent to parents/carers to explain when the monitoring period will commence and the possible legal proceedings by the Local Authority, if the monitoring period is not successful.
- No improvement and continued unauthorised absence in a selected period of time would lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice or full prosecution.
- For existing poor attenders, who have been through the above attendance improvement route, we may look to undertake BCP's Fast Track method, whereby a meeting with parents and student will be held, to discuss barriers to school and support required to increase attendance, this will be by way of a Fast Track Agreement and will be monitored over a 5 week period, this may be extended to a 10 week period and either will see the required improvement or will result in the parents being either fined or prosecuted. Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised, and both the school and Local Authority have been unable to contact the parents, the Academies may remove the child from the school roll.

### Attending an Appointment

Please schedule dental and non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours. We know this might be tough for hospital visits. If rescheduling fails, your child must bring a medical letter or appointment card. We need it for our records. Pupils must be picked up and returned to school if their appointment ends during the school day.

### Known Absence

Your child may need to miss school for exceptional reasons. If so, parents/carers should request permission to do this; this should be done by contacting us via email, outlining the details of the absence and this will be reviewed by the Principal and a decision will be made whether this is authorised or unauthorised. Where possible, this should be done at least four weeks before the required date. If such a request is made, the school expects it to be short. But even then, they may not be able to approve it.

If the Principal does not authorise it, then any absence is 'unauthorised' and can incur a penalty.

We must follow legal rules. Therefore, **we cannot approve holiday requests during term time.** Additionally, we may issue penalty notices. For more details, please check the Attendance Policy and Procedures.

## Support

We take absence very seriously. We are committed to supporting any child who is finding it difficult to attend school regularly. We will target support for any pupil whose attendance falls below 95%. Further information on support can be found in the full policy.

## Punctuality

The school day starts at 8.30am and we expect your child to be in school, at their line up area at that time. We advise your child to be on school site at the latest by 8.25am. The gate closes at 8.30am and students who arrive after this time will be marked late. Lateness means they miss out on important routines which help get their day off to a positive start. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons during the day for others.

### How we manage lateness to school and lessons

#### Lateness to school

If your child arrives late to school between 8.30 and 8.40am they will be kept in a social time detention on the same day. If they arrive after 8.40am then they will be kept in a one hour detention the following day.

If there is localised traffic, roadworks or circumstances that result in a number of students being late then we will decide if detentions go ahead or not. Please do endeavor to contact the school to let us know if there are any individual reasons why your child may be late and we will consider these reasons.

The school reserves the right to adapt these processes if necessary.

#### Lateness to lessons

Lesson to lesson punctuality is crucial to your child's learning and we have transition times built into the school day to avoid any child being late for a lesson.

After every lesson and break period students are given an 8 minute transition period to get to their next lesson. They need to be in lesson, sat down and ready to learn when the late bell rings.

If students are late to lesson, they will be given a late mark.

Consequences:

1 late in a day = 30 minutes detention the following day

2 lates in a day = 60 minute detention the following day

3 lates or more in a day = inclusion for the following day

The school reserves the right to adapt these processes if necessary.

If a child arrives at school after 9.30am they will receive a 'U' code for unauthorised absence for the morning. This affects their attendance and normal attendance processes will apply to these absences.

The rest of this document outlines our Attendance Policy and Procedures. We encourage all parents to review it. This ensures they understand how we handle attendance. If getting your child to school is hard, please contact the year team email address and the attendance email address as soon as possible.

## **Part A - Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Here at Avonbourne Academies we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school. This is a successful Academy, and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Avonbourne Academies on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment<sup>1</sup>. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Avonbourne Academies is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Avonbourne Academies without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **2. Aims**

Our aim is to create a school environment where children feel they belong and want to come to school. We believe our school is a great place to learn, and that being in school day in, day out, is in the best interests of all our pupils. However, we recognise that there will be times when there may be barriers that prevent children from attending school. In these instances, we will act early to understand the issue, provide support and work with the child and their family to get them back to regular attendance as quickly as possible.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.

- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child’s absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

This policy sets out our school’s position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents<sup>[2]</sup> must follow to report their child’s absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory<sup>[3]</sup> school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”, therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil’s attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents ‘[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015](#)’, ‘[Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013](#)’ and [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – or ask the school for printed copies.

### 2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

### 3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

### 4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Government guidance 2024 [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

### 5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data, including the DfE's View Your Education Data platform, is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

## **6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance**

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period and to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access full-time provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

## **7. Staff Training on Attendance**

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances, the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers the school/trust strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance, the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data, and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

## Part B - What the Law Says and Our Procedures

### 1. Roles and Responsibilities

The name and contact details of the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school are:

- Mr D Gorvin, Associate Vice Principal [david.gorvin@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:david.gorvin@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will fall to Mrs J Parkin, Attendance Officer
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to Mrs J Parkin
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are the Attendance Officer and the Year Teams, please see below:
- [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Year 7 [classof2032@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:classof2032@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Year 8 [classof2031@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:classof2031@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Year 9 [classof2030@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:classof2030@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Year 10 [classof2029@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:classof2029@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- Year 11 [classof2028@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:classof2028@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)
- United Sixth Form - [office@unitedsixthform.org.uk](mailto:office@unitedsixthform.org.uk)
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from your child’s pastoral team

In addition to the roles outlined above, the attendance team also includes an Education Social Worker and a PP Attendance and Safeguarding support officer. Their responsibility is to support vulnerable groups of students and work with families to ensure that they have good attendance to school. They work alongside the Safeguarding and Attendance teams to support students and their families.

#### **The Local Governing Body**

The Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **The Principal**

The Headteacher/Principal 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 Headteacher/Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **Any other pastoral roles such as Head of Year or Pastoral Lead**

If your child is absent from school and you have not contacted the school, then the Pastoral Lead, Head of Year or member of the Attendance team will make a wellbeing call home to see how your child is. If you have contacted the school to inform us of your child's absence, then the Pastoral Lead or Head of Year may still contact home to see if your child can attend school in the afternoon, and to find out if they will be coming in the next day.

### **Class Teachers/Form Tutors**

On occasions a class teacher, or form tutor may contact home to discuss any barriers to a child's attendance or raise concerns if they have missed a lot of lessons.

## **2. Contents of the Admissions Register**

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, it is a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

## **3. Contents of Attendance Register**

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken, the appropriate attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to **Working Together To Improve School Attendance** for the code descriptors and also **Appendix 2** of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending, or
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported using our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

## **4. Attending the School (and Lateness)**

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:30am on each school day.

Our afternoon register is taken at 13.35pm for all year groups.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed (at 9.30am) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code “Late after registers close” (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark.

However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## **5. Attending a place other than the school**

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session.

These codes include:

Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code W: Attending work experience

Code B: Attending any other approved education activity

Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Our school should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school or Pupil Referral Unit for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity).

The school expects the alternative provision (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a frequent basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provision (AP).

## 6. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as ‘authorised absence’ which means the pupil’s absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

### 6.1. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

**The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school’s discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should contact the school as early as possible, outlining the request and length of time that your child is expected to be off school for.

The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

## **6.2 Medical/Dental Appointments**

Parents should try to make appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site to attend a medical appointment during the school day without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

## **6.3 Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable**

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

## **7. Absent – other authorised reasons**

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'.

These codes include:

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code R: Religious observance

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

### 7.1. Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

### 7.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends.

In accordance with the law, the school will authorise **one day's absence** for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### 7.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)' 2024<sup>[4]</sup> which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavor to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

If a student has attendance lower than 90% then we will ask for medical or other evidence in order to authorise the absence.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence will not be authorised.

If a student is absent, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (by 8.30am) and on the morning of every day of absence.

Or, you can email via [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)

We may ask you to provide evidence of absence.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or year team for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

### **Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, no pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

If a child is feeling unwell but has not been physically sick, nor has a high temperature, then we will not authorise them to go home.

#### 7.4. Suspensions (Exclusions)

In this policy, the word 'suspension' is used to refer to what legislation calls an exclusion for a fixed period. Suspensions and permanent exclusions are both types of exclusion, and where this policy uses the word 'exclusion' this includes both suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) and permanent exclusions.

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

#### 8. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

#### 9. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Inability of parents or carers to provide evidence for an absence
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

## 10. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

## 11. First Day of Absence Response

If a student is absent, we will:

Send a text message to parents to advise their child is absent from the Academies and no reason has been received. On receiving that text message, parents are requested to contact the Academies to advise of the reason for absence by emailing [attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk](mailto:attendance@avonbourneacademy.org.uk)

If a response to the absence text message has not been received, attempts to telephone the parent/carer on the day of the absence if we have not heard from you will be made (this call will be made between 9:00am-10:00am (where possible) by the Pastoral team. This is a safeguarding procedure. Further attempts may be made to call you throughout the day by either the Pastoral Team or the Attendance Officer.

If no contact has been received by the second day, the Attendance Officer will report absence to all contacts including email addresses.

If a pupil is absent for 3 school days without a contact being received from parents, a “safe and well” home visit will be requested by the Attendance Officer via MyConcern and made by our Education Social Worker or member of the Pastoral team if appropriate. This is a safeguarding procedure and is an expectation from the Local Authority.

If a pupil is absent for 3 school days and we do receive contact from parents, the school may still wish to carry out a “safe and well” home visit. This is a supportive mechanism to ensure that the student is well prepared to return to school as soon as possible.

If absence persists, your son/daughter’s Pastoral Lead will make contact with you. If attendance falls below 97% our attendance team will write to you to highlight this.

Deterioration of attendance will lead to an Initial Assessment completed by the pastoral team and could result in a further letter and phone call inviting parents in for a meeting with your Pastoral Lead and son/daughter where an Initial Assessment or Parenting Contract is complete.

If after 4 weeks there is still no improvement, a 15 or 20 day monitoring period will commence and this will be communicated, a letter will be sent to parents/carers to explain when the monitoring period will commence and the possible legal proceedings by the Local Authority, if the monitoring period is not successful.

No improvement and continued unauthorised absence in a selected period of time would lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice or full prosecution.

For existing poor attenders, who have been through the above attendance improvement route, we may look to undertake BCP’s Fast Track method, whereby a meeting with parents and student will be held, to discuss barriers to school and support required to increase attendance, this will be by way of a Fast Track Agreement and will be monitored over a 5 week period, this may be extended to a 10 week period and either will see the required improvement or will result in the parents being either fined or prosecuted.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised, and both the school and Local Authority have been unable to contact the parents, the Academies may remove the child from the school roll.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may undertake our own ‘safe and well’ checks and/or request a Welfare Check from the police.

## **12. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance**

We recognise students who have excellent attendance through a series of rewards. These include and are not limited to: REACH points, praise in assemblies, attendance badges, recognition from tutors and year teams and other rewards events.

### **13. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)**

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the year team to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances, our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

### **14. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions**

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.

Prosecution. Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools.

We will work together with local authority and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution and will work closely with the local authority to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are: Parenting contracts, Education supervision orders, Attendance prosecution, Parenting orders, Fixed penalty notices.

## **15. Children Missing Education (CME)**

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the local authority representative responsible for children missing education if unsure about any individual cases.

## **16. Following up Unexplained Absences**

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the

absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within the school day, we will make the absence unauthorised, using the 'O' code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

### 17. Reporting to Parents

Where a child's attendance drops below our expected level, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

### 18. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence


All absences are recorded on Arbor. The relevant person in school will record this absence; this could be a member of the attendance team, year team or where applicable, the safeguarding team. They will use the appropriate code for the absence.

### 19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior attendance lead or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

### 20. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Date of this review	Autumn 2025	Review period	1 Year
Date of next review	Autumn 2026	Author	D Gorvin
Type of policy	Statutory		
Approval M Dyer		Date	9.10.2025

**Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):**

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)  
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

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

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs  
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2024)

[insert link when available](#)

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census guidance and regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

## Appendix A – 5 Foundations of Effective Practice

**Foundation 1:** *The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.*

**Foundation 2:** *The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance.*

**Foundation 3:** *The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.*

**Foundation 4:** *Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.*

**Foundation 5:** *Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success*

## Appendix B – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative Codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

<sup>[1]</sup> *The definition of a parent can be found in the Education Act 1996, and this applies to all the legislation to which this guidance relates. In addition to the child's birth parents, references to parents in this guidance include any person who has parental responsibility (which includes the local authority where it has a care order in respect of the child) and any person (for example, a foster carer) who has care of the child. To reflect this, this guidance uses 'parent' to refer to both parents and carers.*

<sup>[2]</sup> Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

<sup>[3]</sup> A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

<sup>[4]</sup> Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required.