

Attendance policy

Slimbridge Primary School



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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance - our aim is for every child to have 100% attendance at school.
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- › We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 We will

- › Contact parents on the first day of absence, if, we have not been notified as to why a child is absent from school. This means we will contact you regarding all your children if they are absent at the same time.
 - › Follow up any unexplained absences.
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- › Keep and mark the registers which are a legal document accurately within the guidance of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 1996, with the appropriate attendance code for both a.m and p.m registration.
- › Be consistent in our attendance practices.
- › Give high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- › Promote good attendance at every opportunity – Induction, Parents evenings, Newsletters, Assemblies, on Notice boards, and also on our web site.
- › Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance.
- › Keep parents/carers informed of their child’s attendance.
- › Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis
- › Work within a multi-agency approach in order to improve attendance and support pupils and families.

3.2 The headteacher will:

- › Implement this policy at the school
- › Create a school ethos that every pupil will want to be part of.
- › Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- › Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourages all pupils to attend and to achieve, that all staff in their school treat attendance as a priority, and are aware of the attendance policy
- › Facilitate a process of reintegration back into school for a child who has been absent due to genuine reason for a long period of time.
- › Provide adequately for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

3.3 The governing board will:

- › Promote the importance of school attendance across the school’s policies and ethos
- › Monitor and evaluate attendance data
- › Ensure that the policy is implemented
- › Expect all children to attend school 100% of the time that the school is open to them
- › Ensure attendance data is reported as required to either the Local Authority or DfE as requested in a timely manner.

3.4 Parents/carers will:

- › Ensure their child attends school daily and on time, appropriately dressed, equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- › Let the school know if they are having difficulties with their child’s attendance, so that any available help or support can be offered before the situation gets out of hand.
- › Inform school on the first day of any absence with an expected date of their child’s return. (This means each and every school aged child in the family that is absent)
- › Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from school for whatever reason, and confirm this in writing.
- › Instill the value of education and regular daily school attendance within the home environment.
- › Support their child to recognise their successes and achievements.

- › Support their child's school at every opportunity. Get involved in their education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- › Aim to keep medical and dental appointments to a time outside of school hours. Six monthly regular dental appointments can be made to coincide with school holidays.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

As required by legislation, we will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- › Absent
- › Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. Children arriving after 9:00am will be marked as 'Late before the register closes'. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school (see also section 7).

Parents must inform the school office by speaking to the school admin in person or calling the school on 01453 809216.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should contact the school office as soon as they know the date of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- › If punctuality issues are persistent, in the first instance this will be addressed by the class teacher informally speaking with parents/carers. If punctuality does not improve, the parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other relatives named on the contact sheet. If concerns for the child's/family's welfare are raised we may call the Police for assistance.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- › Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via school reports twice a year and at parents' evenings if there is a concern.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Legitimate reasons for absence, including the following, may be authorised by Headteachers at all schools.

- › Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
The Headteacher may authorise a child's absence for illness, but may question too many absence days if your child or children are frequently absent for illness. If your child or children are absent for the reoccurrence of the same illness then school would want to work with you as a family to see if

further support and advice can be offered through the School Nurse to enable the ongoing illness to be supported within school. Medical or dental appointments (where ever possible these should be arranged outside of school hours).

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, absence related to self-isolation periods will be coded as X and not counted in attendance statistics.

The following absences **will not be authorised** by the School:

- Looking after the house
- Looking after brothers and sisters or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Translating
- Waiting in for the delivery of goods
- Family Holidays or days out

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children, whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holiday's e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however, need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer as to why the family can only take a holiday during said dates term time).
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least six weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Part-time Attendance and Flexi-schooling:

All children are entitled to fulltime schooling, however we recognise that in certain circumstances this may not be the best approach for the child. We will work with parents, carers and any supporting agencies to find the right approach for individual children where there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a child's SEN or Additional Needs are such that they would benefit from a part-time timetable or flexischooling, this is discussed and agreed with the parents, carers, Inclusion and any supporting agencies. The Headteacher will complete the appropriate paperwork and submit it to the local authority as set out on the GCC website and will conduct informal reviews on a daily and weekly basis and formal reviews after four weeks. Part-time or flexi-schooling is not meant to be a long-term solution and will always be used where other alternatives have failed to meet the child's needs.

If a child's SEN or Additional Needs are such that they would benefit from provision off-site, we will always commission a place at a GCC provider ie GFAPS, SCAPS or CAPS or a nurture group based at another GCC mainstream or special school.

Dual Registration:

If a child's circumstances are such that they need to live in another part of the country for a short time, we will keep them on roll in order to protect their place here at Slimbridge and they will be dual-registered with a school in the area where they are temporarily resident. We will follow GCC procedures for dual-registration.

Children Missing from Education:

If a child is absent from school for ten days and we are unable to contact parents/carers or the alternative contacts for a child, we will follow the GCC/DfE requirements as detailed on the GCC website and report the child as missing from education.

Elective Home Education:

If a child's parent decides to home educate, they must follow the current guidance as detailed on the GCC website. The headteacher will engage in a conversation to ascertain whether there are any unresolved issues that can be addressed to avoid the child being removed from school. If the parent's decision remains the same then the school will de-register the child and notify the local authority as soon as possible using the form found on the GCC website.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

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

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Procedures for Promoting Attendance at Slimbridge

Classteacher to monitor punctuality and attendance daily



If attendance drops from the expected 100% to 97%

Teacher to check with the Office team when child is absent. The office will ring parents/carers by 10am on the day of the absence, if they have not already been notified of the reason for the absence.



Teacher and admin monitors attendance for 2-3 weeks.



If the office hasn't been able to make telephone or face-to-face contact with parents/carers, office to alert Headteacher and letter to be sent to parents.



If attendance continues to drop

Headteacher to send letter, notifying parents of need to improve and that attendance is being formally monitored



If no improvement

Headteacher to invite parents/carers into school for a meeting



If attendance drops below 90%

Headteacher to refer student to EWO and EWO to send a letter to parents/carers informing them that their child's attendance will be monitored for 3 weeks.



If no improvement, the EWO will complete a home visit. If parents/carers fail to engage or if this is the second referral within a two month period it may go straight to a Warning Letter and an

Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) will be held.

An Attendance Improvement Meeting

An Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) is set up to allow parents/carers and students an opportunity to show an improvement in their attendance percentage over a set number of weeks.

Initial meeting set up with EWO/member of SLT /student/parents/carers and any other relevant agency.

During the meeting a target of 100% will be set for the student's attendance and the number of weeks it will be monitored over (usually 4 – 6 weeks)

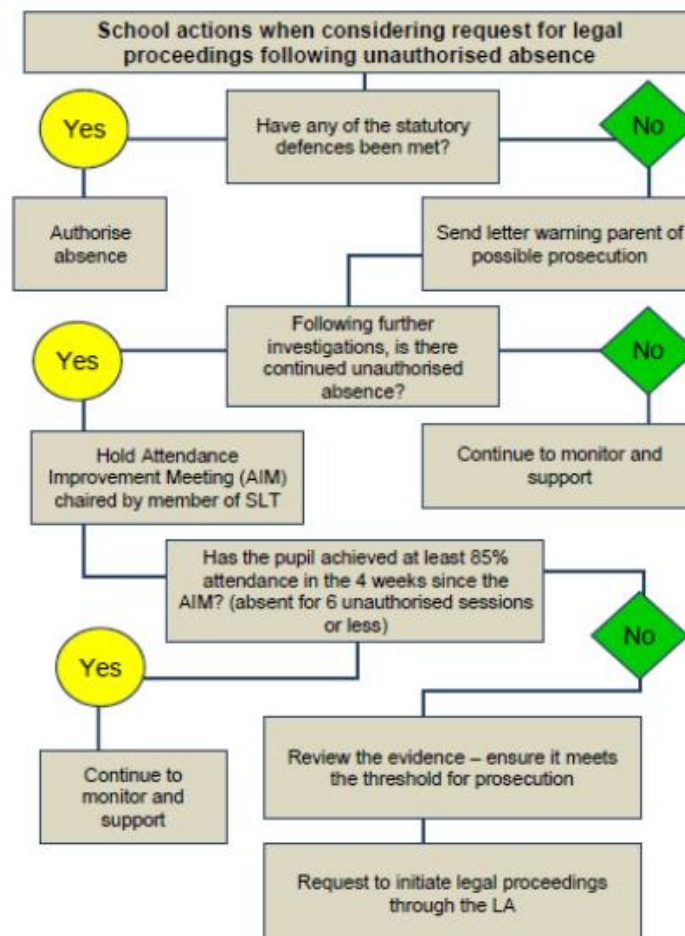
↓
Review meeting
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(Possible extension if close to target and a second review date for meeting set)

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Targets met case closed

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Targets not met plan Failed
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Case referred to the Education Performance and Inclusion Team who determine how to proceed.



7. Attendance mo

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day