



**Weobley  
Primary  
School**

## Attendance Policy

Date of Review:	April 2024
Reviewed by:	Sarah Wallace
Date of Approval:	8/4/24
Approved by:	Stephen Warrell – Head of School
Next Review Date:	April 2025

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and draws 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)

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all pupils, we will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In implementing this policy, we will take into consideration our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This attendance policy is also consistent with other school policies in appendix 3

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy- Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

## Section 1: Statement of Intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We want every child to:

- Attend regularly
- Attend punctually
- Attend ready and prepared to learn including wearing the right uniform and bringing the correct equipment

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.



The table above breaks down the percentages of attendance and how many days / hours are lost in just 1 academic year. Not being at school seriously damages a child’s learning. Attending school is a LEGAL requirement. ‘Our vision in Herefordshire is that no child will be a "persistent absentee". A persistent absentee is a child who is absent from school for 10% or more, the equivalent of missing half a day of school each week, and who will struggle to maintain the same levels of academic progress as a child who attends every lesson. ‘

**Good attendance is important because:**

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

**Responsibilities of 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.

**Responsibilities of the school’s attendance leader**

Sarah Wallace of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them

to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

### **Responsibilities of classroom staff/form tutor/head of house**

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

### **Responsibilities of The Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer**

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data, identify early patterns of absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about individual pupils
- Work with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and punctuality, putting effective strategies in place as a school team
- Advising the headteacher / head of school (authorised by the headteacher) when a referral is made to Herefordshire Council

### **Responsibilities of pupils**

- Attend every day on time unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.
- Engage positively with any offers of support offered
- If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should speak to their Assistant Head of House/Form Tutor/Head of House
- Pupils should be properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day

### **Responsibilities of parents/carers**

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.10am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Request in writing any planned absences at least 6 weeks in advance
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. School request that parents keep school updated with any change of address and contact

numbers (home and work) and names of other family members/friends we may contact if necessary

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. School request that parents support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum and provide evidence to support appointments, failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

### Section 3: Recording Attendance

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.

The school will open at 8.40am. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50 on each school day, ready for Registration.

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

### Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8.50 am and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U*. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M* if proof of an appointment is provided. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentist's appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.**

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a referral may be submitted to Herefordshire council who may initiate legal proceedings.



## Section 4: Reporting Absence

### First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent, you must contact us as soon as possible on the first morning of absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.

If your child is absent, we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the attendance team;
- Where a child is on a child in need plan or looked after contact will be made with the relevant social worker on day 1.

### Third day absence

**Please note:** If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. At this point we may carry out a home visit to ensure the well-being of the child.

### Tenth day absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It would be helpful if you could ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number.

### Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. Any pupil who is persistently absent will be monitored and put on an action plan, if required. A member of the attendance team will meet with pupils, and their families whose attendance cause concern. Where necessary, home visits are made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing: This could include:

- Agreeing an attendance support plan
- Signposting to outside agencies

In situations of persistent truanting, a parent / carer may be referred to Herefordshire Council.

### A welcome back

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

## Section 5: Requesting a Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holidays will not be authorised.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to write to the head teacher 6 weeks in advance and before making any travel arrangements. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. School may request supporting evidence.

Any absences taken prior to the request date and following the request date will be unauthorised unless evidence is received to support the absences. If the Head teacher does not authorise the absence and parents still choose to take their child on holiday, this will be deemed an unauthorised absence. As a result, a referral may be submitted to Herefordshire Council, who may initiate legal proceedings in line with their code of conduct.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

## Section 6: Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.
- This includes: parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday. Parents will be notified in writing.



If the authenticity of an 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 writing.

## Section 7: Supporting Attendance

### Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance on our website
- report to you 3 times a year on how your child is performing in school
- report 3 times a year attendance and punctuality rates and how this relates to their attainments
- share current attendance through our school app
- celebrate good attendance with individuals
- reward good or improving attendance through year groups
- set targets for the school

### My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

### What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

### Does my child NEED to be off school?

There are occasions when a child is not well enough for school and we understand and appreciate that. However, there are also some occasions when children may not feel 100% but could have some pain relief before school as very often this will help them feel better and they don't necessarily need to be off school. The following link is very useful when deciding whether or not your child needs to be off school.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

### **School strategies for supporting attendance**

As a school we encourage good attendance through a range of strategies including:

- Listening to parents and pupils, building positive relationships
- Ensuring that good attendance is high profile in school through sharing daily/weekly data
- Letters to parents to stress the importance of good attendance
- Encourage positive engagement with support services
- Ensuring that good attendance is high profile in school through sharing daily/weekly data
- Reward school trips for 96%+ attendance by term
- Celebration assemblies
- Class attendance celebration
- Individual attendance tracker

When attendance falls below expected levels for the school the following early interventions will take place:

1. Attendance is examined daily for daily absence
2. Weekly attendance analysis by SLT
3. Attendance meetings with Parents / Carers
4. Work with at risk pupils
5. Work in partnership with parents by developing tailored attendance plans
6. Telephone call from the Education Welfare Officer
7. Visit from the Education Welfare Officer
8. Meeting with Education Welfare Officer / School and Parents / Carers

### **Section 8: Legal Measures for Tackling Poor Attendance**

#### **Referrals to Herefordshire Council**

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

#### **Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

We will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. the child or family has failed to engage with help and support and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and the decisions are made by Herefordshire Council in accordance with their code of conduct:

- Parenting contracts
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

The decision on whether to refer to Herefordshire Council ultimately rests with the Headteacher. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

### Section 9: Use of Data

Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with Herefordshire Council and other agencies if a pupils' attendance is a cause for concern in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. On a regular basis the Senior Leader responsibility for attendance, in conjunction with the attendance team, heads of house and pastoral team.

<b>Data</b>	<b>Regularity</b>	<b>Provided to</b>
Daily registers	Daily	Class Teachers, Head of School, SENDCo & Admin
Weekly registers	Weekly	Class Teachers & Head of School
Individual learner % attendance data	Weekly	Class Teachers & Head of school
3+ day absence	Weekly	Admin, SENDCo & Head of School
Less than 95% attendance lists	Weekly	Class Teachers, Head of School, SENDCo & Admin

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups. Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

### Section 10: Internal Truancy

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be reported to the school office. If a pupil leaves the school premises the parents will be contacted and it is their parental responsibility to return their child to school.

## Section 11: Children Missing Education

When pupils leave school and no information regarding their new school/placement has been received by school and/or parents/carers cannot be contacted the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority to advise of this situation. This means the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate, this will include liaising with social care, police and other agencies to track and locate the pupil. Parents who give the new school details of the pupil's new school and location avoid unnecessary investigations and concern.

## Section 12: Contact Information

School contact details for reporting absence

- Stephen Warrell is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school and can be contacted via [admin@weobleyprimary.co.uk](mailto:admin@weobleyprimary.co.uk)
- The first point of call is the attendance officer who can be contacted by telephoning 01544-318273
- For attendance queries and information please see school contacts below:

Email: [admin@weobleyprimary.co.uk](mailto:admin@weobleyprimary.co.uk)

## Appendix 1: DFE Attendance codes

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix 2: Attendance thresholds and every school day counts

We will use the following thresholds in reporting to parents:

98% and above	Excellent
96.5-97.9%	Good
95-96.4%	Satisfactory
90-94.9%	Cause for Concern
Below 90%	Unacceptable

Please see the chart below which shows how absence impacts attendance:

<b>Every School Day Counts</b>		
<b>Attendance During School Year</b>	<b>Equates to days absent</b>	<b>Which is approximately</b>
97%	6 days	1 week
94%	10 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
75%	48 days	10 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks

## **Appendix 3: Education Participation Age, Child Employment and links to other policies**

### **Education Participation Age**

At Weobley Primary School we want to support all our students to be successful and leave with future learning and career prospects. The information that school provides regarding a young person's reliability and punctuality are the most important part of any reference as far as prospective colleges and employers are concerned.

It may well affect a student's ability to secure future employment, education, or training. The education participation age has now been raised to 18 years. This does not mean young people must stay in school. They will get to choose from:

- Full time education (e.g. at a school or college)
- An apprenticeship or traineeship
- Part time education or training combined with one of the following:
- Employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
- Volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

### **Child Employment**

Businesses intending to employ children are required to apply for a child employment permit. The Local Authority may turn down a request for a permit if a child has a poor attendance record at school. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/childemployment/minimum-ages-children-can-work>.

### **Links with other Policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy- Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities