

PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PIAS)

Attendance Policy Checklist

The 2022 DfE '[working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance specifies that all schools should have a clear attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils and parents understand.

This checklist will allow school leaders to write and review their school's attendance policy in line with the guidance. Please refer to paragraphs 17 to 21 of the guidance or the DfE Webinar guide to attendance policies for schools [School Attendance Guidance Training Webinar - Setting an effective school attendance policy - YouTube](#)

Section	Content	Covered
Aims and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall purpose of the policy Policy aims 	Yes/No
Roles and responsibilities (see Appendix 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent County Council Governing Board Headteacher/Principal Designated Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school Attendance Officer or staff member with day to day responsibilities for attendance processes Class teachers or form tutors School admin or office staff Parents and carers Pupils 	Yes/No
Attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start and close of the day Register closing times Arrangements for students arriving late to school Leave of absence requests Informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence 	Yes/No
The name and contact details of the Headteacher and senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Email address Telephone number 	Yes/No
Contact details of who parents and pupils should contact regarding attendance support and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day - such as Attendance Officer, Form Tutor or Class Teacher Detailed support - such as Head of Year or member of Pastoral team 	Yes/No
The school's day to day processes for managing attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First day calling Notification procedures for unplanned and planned absence 	Yes/No

and absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes to follow up on unexplained absence and how the school responds e.g. parent/carer to notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent such as sickness and contact the school on a daily basis for any subsequent days absence How the school responds to ongoing punctuality issues The school's approach to term-time absence How the school records attendance The different types of absence, e.g. authorised or unauthorised An explanation of absence and attendance codes from the DfE (see Appendix 2 or paragraphs 203-276 of the Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)) 	
How the school promotes and incentivises good attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awards and rewards Special assemblies 	Yes/No
The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly (6 times per year) patterns of absence including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole school and individual pupil basis Groups e.g. FSM, SEN, PP, CiC, GRT, EAL Compare with national data, you may want to sign up to DfE attendance data collection to access these statistics Share your daily school attendance data - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Share relevant attendance reports with key staff to aid discussions with families Use data to understand the impact of interventions 	Yes/No
The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definitions of persistent and severe absent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions Severe is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school sessions How access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance When the school will formalise support in conjunction with the local authority 	Yes/No
When the school will seek legal intervention for absence e.g. fixed penalty notice (see KCC Code of Conduct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This might be when support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not appropriate for the situation, such as an unauthorised holiday in term time Is not successful Is not engaged with 	Yes/No
Any specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While leaders should apply the school's policy fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance should be considered, along with the schools' obligations under the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 	Yes/No

Appendix 1 - Roles and Responsibilities

Kent County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. ○ Have a School Attendance Support Team (PIAS) that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. ○ Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. ○ Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice. • <i>Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. ○ Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. ○ If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners. • <i>Persistently absent pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: ○ Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. ○ Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. ○ Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort). • <i>Severely absent pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: ○ All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. ○ Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children’s social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans. • <i>Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools. • <i>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education. ● <i>Support for pupils with a social worker (VSK - Virtual School Kent)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. ○ Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. ○ Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.
Academy trustees or governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>All pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. ○ Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. ○ Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. ○ Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>All pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand (this could be linked to your Home School Agreement). ○ Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. ○ Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. ○ Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. ○ Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. ● <i>Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. ○ Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. ○ Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. ○ If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners. ● <i>Persistently absent pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: ○ Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. ○ Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. ○ Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children’s social care. ○ Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings. ● <i>Severely absent pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: ○ Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority. ● <i>Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. ○ Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance. ● <i>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. ○ Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil’s EHCP is accessed. ○ Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. ○ Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities. ● <i>Support for pupils with a social worker</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inform the pupil’s social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
Parents and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>All pupils</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. ○ Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). ○ Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. ○ Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. ○ Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance. ○ Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Appendix 2 – Attendance and Absence Codes

Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
D	Dual registered at another school
B	Off-site educational Activity
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience

Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Code	Definition
<i>Authorised absence</i>	
C	Leave of absence granted by the school
H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
<i>Unauthorised absence</i>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code	Definition
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure