

North Marston C of E School Attendance Policy



Policy written/ adapted by:	Sarah Brew (headteacher)
Adopted by Governors on:	
Last review date:	October 2025
Next Review date:	October 2026
Signed by headteacher:	Sarah Brew
Signed by Chair of Governors:	Katherine Du Plessis

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1. Aims and objectives

At North Marston C of E School, our Vision is 'Shining our Light to be our Best Selves' which starts with great attendance. We believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that the foundation for securing good attendance is based on providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment, where children want to be, so they are keen and ready to learn.

We aim to remove any barriers to school attendance by building strong and trusting relationships, and working together with staff, parents and carers, children, Buckinghamshire Council and other relevant local partners to put the right support in place at the right time.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children and we expect children to be in school for every session of the school day on every day that the school is open for children. In striving to be the best version of themselves, we encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning which means attending school daily.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and, by acting early to address patterns of absence, we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an effective, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of parents to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Make sure your child attends school on time every day, arriving before 8:50am
- Only keep your child off school if they are too ill to attend. We don't want poorly children in school but if they are a little under the weather or have a sore throat, for example, they can still come to school where the adults will keep a watchful eye on them to make sure they remain well enough to be here
- Contact the school to report your child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence, advising when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for your child in case they become unwell during the day
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for your child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered, informally or formally, to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Children are expected to:

- Attend school on time every day
- As appropriate to age and capacity, engage in support offered to overcome barriers to attendance

The Governing Body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual children or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher is responsible for:

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Creating an inclusive kind, respectful, inclusive culture within the school so that it is somewhere children want to be
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Senior Attendance Champion (*Sarah Brew*) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to children and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer (*Katie Mealey*) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office as soon as the register is completed at 8:55am

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the electronic MIS system (Arbor) and informing classroom staff
- Respectfully and gently challenging parents and carers to consider if their child needs to be kept at home or whether they could be monitored in school
- Transferring calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents on CPomms as appropriate

4. School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all children onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session and each afternoon session.

It will mark whether every child is:

- Present
- Absent

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry is made.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

5. Unplanned Absence

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

The child's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day of the absence by 8:30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school (01296 670286), or emailing the office (office@northmarston.bucks.sch.uk).

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 child's parent or 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 or carers will be notified of this.

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9:10am) will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed (9:10am) will be marked as absent (Code U)

If a child is identified as having an ongoing issue with punctuality, the headteacher will contact the parents or carers to find out if there are any barriers to the child being punctual. The headteacher will work with the family to identify any support that the school can offer to support with punctuality.

6. Planned absence

While we appreciate that it can be difficult, we encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours whenever possible, recognising the disruption caused when a child misses any part of their learning and has to subsequently be supported to catch up. When this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be recorded as authorised as long as the child's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides a copy of the appointment letter or text/ email confirmation.

The headteacher will only grant a 'leave of absence' to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' (defined as rare, significant, unavoidable and short). A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the circumstances and relevant context behind the request. However, some examples of what might be authorised as 'exceptional circumstances' are those circumstances which are out of your control and require an emergency response such as a family bereavement or funeral or when travel arrangements have been changed beyond your control.

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

Any request should be submitted on a leave of absence form, which is available from the school office and on the school website. Forms should be completed as soon as the absence is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Child participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1). Please provide a letter, on headed paper, from the company or team manager and attach it to the leave of absence form.
- Child attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M). Please provide a copy of the confirmation letter/ email/ text.
- Child attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1). Please email the office with details.
- Child studying for a public examination (Code S). Please email the office with details.
- Non-compulsory school age child not required to attend school (Code X). We would encourage our Reception children to attend every day for the full day to build stamina, resilience and form good habits of school attendance.
- Compulsory school age child subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2). This would only apply in exceptional circumstances when agreed by parents and the headteacher.
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C). Please come in and speak to the headteacher, or email details to the office so we can support you in the best way.
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The child is a mobile child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business, and the child is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T). Please contact the school office in plenty of time to discuss dates of absence and to allow us to provide work to support your child throughout their absence.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R). One day absence will be authorised for each observance.
- Illness (Code I). Please consider whether your child needs to be at home, or whether they could be supported to be in school.

7. Procedures following unexplained absence

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

- If a child is marked absent on the register and no reason for the absence has been received from the parent or carer, the office staff will call the child's parent or carer, followed by any other contacts, in an attempt to establish the reason for their absence.
- If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, we may carry out a welfare check to the child's home address to establish that they are safe and the reason for their absence. If contact cannot be made then we will consider contacting the police on 101 to request a welfare check as the whereabouts of the child is unknown.
- School staff will continue to try all methods to contact the child's emergency contacts in order to establish that the child is safe and why they are not in school.
- If the absence continues, school staff will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, including discussions with Local Authority Partners.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Most parents and carers of children at North Marston C of E School ensure their children have good attendance and punctuality because they value the education the school provides for their child and appreciate the disruption caused by a child's absence. Those children who attend regularly, benefit from being part of established routines and have opportunities to develop their friendships through daily contact. We will celebrate class attendance through a communal display in the hall, a mention in the fortnightly Newsletter, and a weekly certificate for the class with the best overall attendance. Individual children will be rewarded each term for attendance above the 97% threshold with a certificate in assembly.

9. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels at parents' evenings and on their annual school report.
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly across the school and at an individual child level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Child-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
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL Attendance Policy

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with children 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

10. Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of children 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
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Buckinghamshire Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

11. Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Buckinghamshire Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice (note: there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice).

The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce the fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

NORTH MARSTON C of E SCHOOL
Attendance Policy

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child

Any person who has care of a child i.e. lives with and looks after the child

12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Sarah Brew, headteacher. At every review, the policy will be signed off by governors and shared with parents and carers on the school website.