

Attendance Policy

1 Purpose and Scope

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy covers the expectations and protocol for pupil attendance at school and the recording of data in the registers held on the school management information system (MIS).

Registers are an important record to be used in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building as well as being a legal requirement. It is essential that records are accurate in order that returns can be made by the school to the Department for Education (DfE) when required.

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](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3 Who is involved in the process

- Class teacher
- HLTAs
- Parent/carers
- Head of School
- Deputy Head
- Assistant Heads
- School Office

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

- Data Manager
- Family Support Team
- Governors

Under the 1996 Education Act, parent/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and punctually. And staff members are required to ensure that the procedures are always followed.

That said, all our pupils have EHCPs and have a main diagnosis of autism. We know that on some days it can be extremely challenging for parent/carers to support their child into school, and we will actively work with parent/carers to ensure that barriers to attending school are reduced. Issuing fixed penalty notices would not be our first step in managing attendance.

We are also aware that transport can be a significant issue for parent/carers and again will support families in securing the best transport possible from Local Authorities.

Parent/carers are to notify school of a pupil's absence and the reasons for this by 10.00am when the registers close. The Class teacher/HLTA or, if directed, the School Office will follow the absence up if no notification has been received by this time.

The Class teacher/HLTA /School Office administrator will contact the parent/carers by telephone and/or by email

If the school is unable to obtain satisfactory information relating to the absence, then the school may inform other outside agencies, such as Social Care or the child's Local Authority if this was felt necessary.

Each class has An electronic attendance register held on Arbor (TreeHouse School MIS), which is marked in compliance with statutory and school requirements.

3.1 Recording attendance

Registers are marked daily via Arbor at the start of each session of school, i.e. both morning and afternoon, using DfE codes/symbols for pupil absence.

In the event of an emergency evacuation the school office will print off paper registers and this will be used by the Fire Marshals and the Incident Controller to identify if all occupants have exited the building.

The attendance data is reported to:

- The Department for Education via the Statutory Census returns;
- Local Authorities via annual review meetings or when information is requested by the Local Authority or when a continued unauthorised absence occurs where a satisfactory explanation cannot be obtained.

Where absence levels fall below 90% additional protocols will be initiated see sections 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.

School start time is 09.00 and registers close at 10.00. Pupils arriving after this time are 'late' and will be marked so in the register on Arbor accordingly. Issues relating to journeys to and from school are followed up promptly and families will not be penalised if the issue lies with transport.

The register should be marked as follows.

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

- A pupil present at the time of registration is marked in with ‘/’ for the morning session and ‘\’ for the afternoon;
- A pupil who is attending an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school, will be marked with a “V” in the register. An Outside Educational Visit (OEV) risk assessment form will be completed for the whole group and its staff before departure using Evolve, our online tool for planning and managing educational visits and other off-site activities;
- On the rare occasion when pupils attend another school for integration, or as a transition arrangement arranged by and with TreeHouse School staff, they will be marked in the register. This is because they are registered on the roll of this school and thus are our responsibility. ‘An OEV form’ must be completed;
- If a pupil attends another school with their parent / carers as a part of a transition process, the correct codes should be entered for an authorised absence (see 3.4 below).

3.3 Absence (authorised and unauthorised)

3.3.1 Authorised absence

Parent/carers may not authorise absence, only schools can do this.

An **authorised absence** is one which has been authorised by the Head of School or other authorised representative of the school.

Parent/carers are to provide a written request for an absence to be authorised providing information about the reason for the request for absence. The request should be provided at least 2 academic weeks in advance of the date of absence.

Parent/carers should then wait for the absence to be authorised by the Head of School and to be advised in writing. The Head of School will usually reply within 5 academic days of the request being received.

A record will be kept of the request and reply electronically

Granting leaves of absence

The latest Government guidance can be read here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> and states the following:

28. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

29. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

30. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

3.3.2 Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without leave from the Head of School or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences including family holidays.

All absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until the school is provided with and agree on a satisfactory explanation.

3.4 Absence recording and codes

The code for the reason for **authorised or unauthorised absence** using the key below if the class leader has been able to ascertain the reason for absence.

B	Educated off site (not Dual registration)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (but no alternative provision)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
J	At Job interview or at another educational establishment
I	Illness (not medical or dental etc appointments)
L	Late (before registers close - morning session at 10.00 and afternoon session at 13.30)
N	Reason Not provided yet
M	Medical/dental appointments
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed) not used at TreeHouse School
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school-age pupils not required at school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances eg Transport issues
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

See Appendix B for more information on each code.

3.5 Absence Levels below 90%

Attendance levels are monitored by the School Leadership Team and the School Data Manager. The Arbor Home page shows current Attendance and PA figures and automatic weekly reports are sent to Phase Leads/SLT to monitor attendance.

If a pupils attendance falls below 92% (**GREEN STAGE**)

- Phase Leads/SLT will identify whether contact is to be made with parent/carers raising concern about the child's attendance (
- The Class teacher / HLTA will speak to the parent/carer on their return to school and the pupil where possible and appropriate.

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

- The pupil's percentage attendance will be monitored.

3.6 Absence Levels below 90%

If a pupils attendance falls below 90% **(AMBER STAGE)**

- Phase Leads/SLT will identify if parent/carers are to be invited to meet their child's Class teacher / HLTA (on-line or face to face) to discuss their child's attendance.
- Where appropriate the Local Authority will be informed of the level of attendance;
- Strategies will be discussed to improve the attendance, including support from our Transdisciplinary Team (TDT) in school of appropriate. These will be confirmed in writing and agreed by Parent/Carers, School and Pupil (again if appropriate).
- Attendance will again be monitored.
- Where appropriate the school will warn the parent/carers that the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice.

3.7 Absence Levels below 88%

If a pupils attendance falls below 88% **(RED STAGE)**

- Phase Leads/SLT will identify if parent/carers are to be invited to a school meeting regarding their child's attendance The Class teacher / HLTA and/or Deputy/Assistant Head of School and/or Head of School may attend the meeting as appropriate. Where appropriate the Local Authority will also be informed
- A plan will be set up with support from the child's TDT and these will be confirmed in writing and agreed by Parent/Carer, School and Pupil (if appropriate).
- A penalty notice may be discussed as directed by the Local Authority;
- Our family team and outside agencies may be involved;
- Attendance will continue to be monitored;
- Further absences will only be authorised if evidence is provided.

Should the attendance level not improve then direction will be sought from the Local Authority as to how to proceed further.

The School will organise a TDT meeting and reserves the right to request an Emergency Annual Review to determine what further support can put in place for pupils with persistently low levels of attendance, relevant professionals, such as the School Nurse, will attend these meetings ,

The absence levels will be reported to Governors in the attendance report.

3.8 Absence from School (Medical)

Staff have a vital role to play in ensuring that pupils who are absent from school on medical grounds have the educational support they need. Therefore, when pupils are absent from school staff make every effort to ensure that pupils are able to keep up with their school work, as far as their medical condition allows.

We endeavour to:

- Link parent/carers with a named person responsible for dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school on medical grounds (this will usually be the pupil's class teacher);
- Notify the LA if a pupil is, or is likely to be, away from school on medical grounds for more than 15 working days, to ensure good liaison of all agencies working with the pupil;

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

- Where relevant, supply the appropriate education provider (for example hospital school staff) with information about a pupil's capabilities, educational progress, and programmes of work;
- Liaise with home and hospital services to enable them to draw up a personal education plan to cover the complete education for a pupil likely to be at home for more than 15 working days, and for pupils with chronic illnesses who regularly miss school. TreeHouse staff will work with appropriate health service staff;
- Monitor progress and reintegration into school, liaising with other agencies as necessary;
- Ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school on medical grounds and their families are kept informed about school social events and are able to participate in relevant activities;
- Encourage and facilitate liaison with peers and / or staff, for example, through visits and videos;
- Provide work packs in advance for pupils who are admitted to hospital on a regular basis.

School roll

- TreeHouse School will not remove a pupil who is unable to attend school on medical grounds from the school register without parental consent, even during a long period of illness.
- All changes to the 'named school' will be through the Annual Review process.

Successful reintegration into school

- Staff take a positive and proactive stance when welcoming the pupil back into school.
- Key Staff, including the class teacher/HLTA will meet with the pupil and parent/carers to discuss medical issues; the timing and pace of the return and any other areas of concern raised by the parents and/pupil.
- Extra support will be provided when it is clear what has been missed;

Partnership with parent/carers and pupils

- Parent/carers hold key information and knowledge about their child and therefore have a crucial part to play. TreeHouse will always work in collaboration with parent/carers to support children who have absence because of medical needs.
- Wherever possible pupils will also be involved in making decisions and exercising choice.

4 Guidelines for managers / individuals

An OEV Risk Assessment form must be completed via Evolve every time a pupil leaves the premises, whatever the reason. This also applies to pupils integrating for part of the day in another school.

Pupils who are unwell should not be sent to school and teachers will consult with the Senior Leadership Team member to make a decision about phoning home and asking a parent/carer to collect a pupil if they are ill. This should only be if the pupil cannot join in the activities or benefit from the curriculum.

Class teacher / HLTAs or the School Office on their direction will follow up pupils who have not arrived and whose absence is unexplained (and therefore unauthorised). It may be appropriate for the first line of enquiry to be the transport company, to find out if the pupil was collected that day. We must try to find out why the child is absent from the parent/carer on the day. If this is not possible and absence continues, further enquiries are made daily and after 3 days we contact the Local Authority to see if they can make enquiries.

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0

The Deputy Head of School and relevant Assistant Headteacher should monitor the levels of absence on a regular basis to ensure that the Class teachers and HLTAs are taking action where the levels of absence fall below 92%, 90% and 88%.

Arbor provides a number of screens to help monitor absence e.g. Absentees by Date, Continuous Absence, Persistent Absentees which are always available. In addition, automatic reports are sent weekly to the Deputy Head of school, relevant Assistant Headteachers and Phase leads.

The School Office and Data Manager will regularly monitor the register marks and highlight to the Class Teacher / HLTA/Assistant Head of School/Deputy Head of School as appropriate should there be missing or unauthorised marks in the register.

5 Linked Policies

- [THS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [THS Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy](#)

6 Sample letters / emails

Use templates here for written communication with parent/carers

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181225/Annex A - example letters and messages to parents and carers.odt](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181225/Annex_A_-_example_letters_and_messages_to_parents_and_carers.odt)

7 Absence and Attendance Codes

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working together to improve school attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)). (See page 55 to 61)

Policy Owner	Head of School	Review Date:	December 2024
Policy No.	103b	Version No.	2.0