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# Attendance Policy

| Version Control | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Date Implemented** | Summer 2026 | **Next review date** | Summer 2029 |
| **Supersedes** | Summer 2024 | **Policy Owner** | Governing Board |

**Summary of policy changes:**

**Version: July 2026**

The following updates have been applied:

- Throughout – Policy comprehensively updated to reflect the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024), the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Redbridge Local Authority procedures.
- Section 3 – New Safeguarding and Inclusion Statement added, strengthening the links between attendance, safeguarding, SEND, EBSA and early help.
- Sections 5 and 6 – Attendance promotion strategies, attendance benchmarks and a graduated four-stage response to attendance introduced to strengthen early intervention and support.
- Section 7 – Roles and responsibilities updated to reflect the role of the Head of School (Senior Attendance Champion) and revised responsibilities for staff in line with current statutory guidance.
- Section 8 – Attendance procedures updated to clarify registration times, absence reporting, medical evidence, appointments and lateness procedures.
- Sections 9–11 – Guidance on unauthorised absence, persistent absence and leave during term time updated in line with current DfE guidance and Redbridge Local Authority procedures.
- Section 12 – Legal Action and Penalty Notices updated to reflect the national penalty notice framework introduced in August 2024, including revised thresholds, fines and Children Missing Education procedures.
- Sections 13 and 14 – Monitoring arrangements and links with other policies strengthened to reflect current statutory guidance and school practice.
- Throughout – Policy restructured and expanded to improve clarity, consistency and the school's support-first approach to improving attendance.

# Aspire Education Partnership
# Attendance Policy

**Equality objective**

As an Aspire Education Partnership school, we promote the Equality Act 2010, to ensure equal access for all pupils to all aspects of school life. This means that pupils, staff, governors and other stakeholders will promote the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

**Introduction**

Attendance matters because we believe that regular attendance at school is essential if all of our children are to benefit fully from the education we provide and develop the social responsibility needed for adult life.

As a school, we aim to maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of **96%**.

Good attendance is a shared responsibility between school, parents/carers, and pupils.

This policy is written in line with:

- DfE statutory guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
- Education Act 1996 (Section 444)
- LBR PN Code of Conduct

**2. Aims of this Policy**

This policy aims to:

- Explain why good attendance is important
- Set out strategies used to promote attendance and punctuality
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Establish clear procedures for managing attendance
- Ensure consistent practice across the school
- Meet statutory requirements from the DfE (2024 guidance) and Local Authority
- Ensure a support-first approach to improving attendance by identifying and addressing barriers before considering formal enforcement action.

**3. Safeguarding and Inclusion Statement**

Goodmayes Primary School recognises that poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

Attendance is closely monitored for vulnerable pupils, including:

- Pupils with SEND (ASD, SEMH, SLCN)
- Pupils with medical needs
- Pupils experiencing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

- Pupils known to Early Help or Children's Social Care

Where concerns arise, the school may refer to:

- Education Welfare Service (EWS)
- Early Help Services
- Children's Social Care

Attendance concerns will be considered alongside safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion information. Where appropriate, the school will work with families and external agencies to identify and remove barriers preventing regular attendance.

**4. Why Good Attendance is Important**

- There is a direct link between poor attendance and underachievement
- Children with attendance above 96% make better progress academically and socially
- Regular attendance reduces gaps in learning
- Being on time ensures pupils benefit from early learning sessions
- Small amounts of absence significantly impact progress over time

**5. Promoting Attendance and Punctuality**

The school promotes attendance through:

- Welcoming children back after absence and supporting catch-up
- Assemblies reinforcing good attendance and consequences of absence
- Early intervention meetings with families (EWO / Head of School / AHT)
- Displays and posters promoting attendance
- Regular communication through newsletters, parent evenings, and school events

**School Attendance Benchmarks:**

- 97% – Outstanding
- 96% – Good
- 95% – Satisfactory
- 94% and below – Inadequate

**6. Graduated Response to Attendance**

The school follows a staged approach:

**Stage 1 – Universal Monitoring**

- Daily attendance tracking
- First day absence contact
- Monitoring attendance patterns

**Stage 2 – Early Intervention**

- Parent meetings
- Identification of barriers to attendance
- School-based support

**Stage 3 – Targeted Support**

- Attendance support plans
- SEND/SEMH/pastoral interventions
- Multi-agency involvement if required

**Stage 4 – Formal Intervention**

- Referral to EWO
- Consideration of penalty notices
- Legal action if required

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

**Governors**

- Monitor attendance data
- Evaluate effectiveness of the policy

**Head of School (Senior Attendance Champion)**

- Provide strategic oversight of attendance across the school
- Ensure attendance remains a whole-school priority
- Ensure effective systems are in place for attendance monitoring, intervention and support
- Provide attendance reports to governors
- Meet parents regarding attendance concerns or leave requests
- Work with external agencies
- Ensure barriers to attendance are identified and addressed through appropriate support
- Report attendance in school reports

**School Attendance Officer**

- Maintain accurate registers and attendance codes
- Take registers at 8:45am
- Ensure registers close at 9:15am
- Record reasons for absence using DfE codes
- Contact parents on first day of absence
- Monitor patterns and lateness
- Maintain attendance records securely
- Maintain attendance information through the school's designated management information system.

**Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

- Enforces attendance law
- Conducts home visits
- Supports intervention and legal processes

**Teaching Staff and Learning Support Assistants**

- Promote good attendance
- Take accurate registers
- Report concerns to leadership

- Support reintegration after absence

**Parents and Carers**
Parents/carers must:

- Ensure children arrive before 8:45am
- Contact school on first day of absence
- Provide reasons for absence
- Provide medical evidence where requested by the school in line with DfE attendance guidance
- Avoid routine appointments in school time
- Ensure regular attendance (legal duty under Education Act 1996)

**8. Attendance Procedures**

**Registration**

- Morning register: 8:45am (soft start 8.35am)
- Registers remain open for 30 minutes
- Afternoon register taken daily

**Lateness Procedure**

- Arrival before 9:15am = Late (L code)
- Arrival after 9:15am = Unauthorised (U code)
- All late pupils must sign in at reception
- Persistent lateness is monitored and escalated

**Absence Reporting**

- Parents must contact school on first day of absence
- Provide reason and expected return date
- Written note may be required on return
- Unexplained absence will be unauthorised

**Illness and Medical Evidence**
The school recognises that children may be absent due to genuine illness. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily.

Where there are concerns regarding the reason for absence, where absence is ongoing, or where further information is required to support accurate attendance coding, the school may request medical evidence.

Evidence may include a medical appointment confirmation, prescription, medical letter or other appropriate documentation.

Where appropriate evidence is not provided, the school may record the absence as unauthorised in line with DfE attendance coding guidance.

**Appointments**

- Parents/carers should make medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible.

- Where appointments cannot be avoided during the school day, parents/carers should provide appointment evidence where requested by the school.
- Pupils should attend before and/or after appointments where possible.
- Where insufficient information is provided, the school may record the absence as unauthorised in line with DfE attendance coding guidance.

**9. Unauthorised Absence**

The following are unauthorised:

- Term-time holidays
- Unexplained absence/parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy or refusal to attend school
- Late arrival after register closes
- Shopping, birthdays, or leisure activities
- Appointments where insufficient information or evidence has been provided when requested
- Weddings
- Pilgrimages

**10. Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes persistently absent when attendance falls below **90%**.

The school will also monitor pupils who are severely absent and will provide targeted support and appropriate multi-agency involvement where attendance falls to a level that significantly limits a pupil's access to education.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance closely
- Contact parents/carers
- Hold attendance meetings
- Implement support plans
- Refer to EWO if no improvement

**11. Leave in Term Time**

Leave will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances** and must be requested in advance.

Exceptional circumstances include:

- Funeral or bereavement of a close relative abroad up to 3 days may be authorised
- Funeral or bereavement of a close relative in the UK up to 2 days may be authorised
- Sudden loss of housing up to 3 days may be authorised
- Religious observance up to 3 days may be authorised
- Time off relating to child entertainment performances subject to a licence being issued by Redbridge Education Welfare Service
- Entrance examinations e.g. 11+

## 12. Legal Action and Penalty Notices

Goodmayes Primary School follows Redbridge Local Authority procedures. The school will follow a graduated response, working with families to identify and address barriers to attendance before formal legal intervention is considered, unless immediate action is required due to the circumstances of the absence.

Penalty notices may be considered for:

- 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, including term-time holidays.
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed.

Fines:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of the date of issue.
- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the date of issue.

If a parent receives a second penalty notice for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the penalty notice will be issued at £160 per parent, per child, with no option to pay the lower rate.

A third offence for the same child within the same rolling three-year period is not normally eligible for a penalty notice and may instead be referred to the Magistrates' Court for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Where a pupil has an extended period of unauthorised absence and the school is unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts despite making the required enquiries, the school may follow the statutory Children Missing Education procedures and, where appropriate, remove the pupil from roll in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where this occurs, parents/carers may need to apply for a school place through Redbridge School Admissions.

Legal action may be taken under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 where appropriate.

## 13. Monitoring and Review

- Attendance is monitored daily, weekly and termly to identify trends, patterns and pupils requiring additional support.
- Attendance data is analysed to identify vulnerable groups and pupils who may require targeted intervention or additional support.
- Governors receive regular attendance reports and monitor the effectiveness of attendance strategies and the implementation of this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if statutory guidance, Local Authority procedures or school practice changes.

## 14. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following school policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance

## 15. Summary

Goodmayes Primary School is committed to ensuring all pupils attend regularly, arrive on time, and are supported to overcome barriers to attendance. We work in partnership with families to secure the best outcomes for every child.