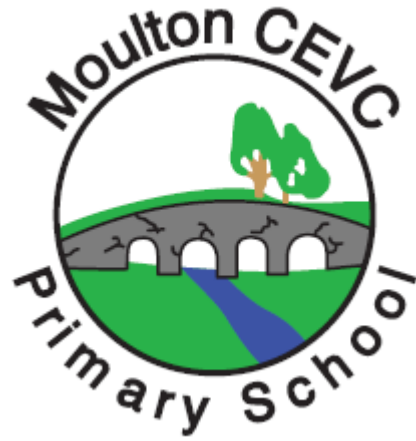


Attendance policy



Chair of Governors
Mr Joe Reynolds

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Joe Reynolds', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 11.03.25
Previously reviewed on:	11.03.24	
Next review due by:	March 2026	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The 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.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. If a teacher does not know the code (reason for absence), they will mark '-' in the register, and the office or teacher will update when they know the reason for absence.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 8:55am. The register for the second session will be taken at the following times:

EYFS – 12:55pm
Year 1 – 1pm
Year 2 – 1:05pm
Year 3/4 1:10pm
KS2 – 1:15pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

They can phone the office, leave a message, or email the office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the 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 advance. This might be classed as a safeguarding concern.

We have liquid paracetamol in school. If a child is feeling slightly under the weather, but feels okay with regular paracetamol, we can administer it with parental consent, to support them being in school.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (8:46 – 8:55) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (8:56 onwards) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Arriving late to school disrupts the learning environment for both the child and their peers, who are already engaged in their activities. It can also be distressing for the child arriving late, as they may feel awkward or self-conscious entering a settled classroom. This can impact their confidence and focus, potentially leaving them unsettled for the rest of the day. Over time, repeated lateness may contribute to increased anxiety about attending school and adhering to routines.

4.5 Following up absence

If a child who is expected to attend school does not attend or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, in the morning of the first absence.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

We will report attendance and punctuality to parents in the summer term in a child's report, and in interim reports in other terms. At other times of the year, attendance and punctuality concerns will be discussed with parents.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs"
- To attend the wedding or funeral of a close relative, provided the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional. Leave will only be authorised if there is a compelling reason for the wedding to take place during term time. Parents must provide clear evidence to demonstrate that the absence constitutes an exceptional circumstance. Absences will not be authorised for family weddings held abroad when combined with a holiday.
- In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The Headteacher and the Attendance Officer meet regularly to review the attendance of individual pupils and pupil groups. If concerns arise regarding a child's attendance, an initial letter will be sent to parents, and the child's attendance will be closely monitored. Should there be no improvement, a second letter will be issued, and a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer may be considered.

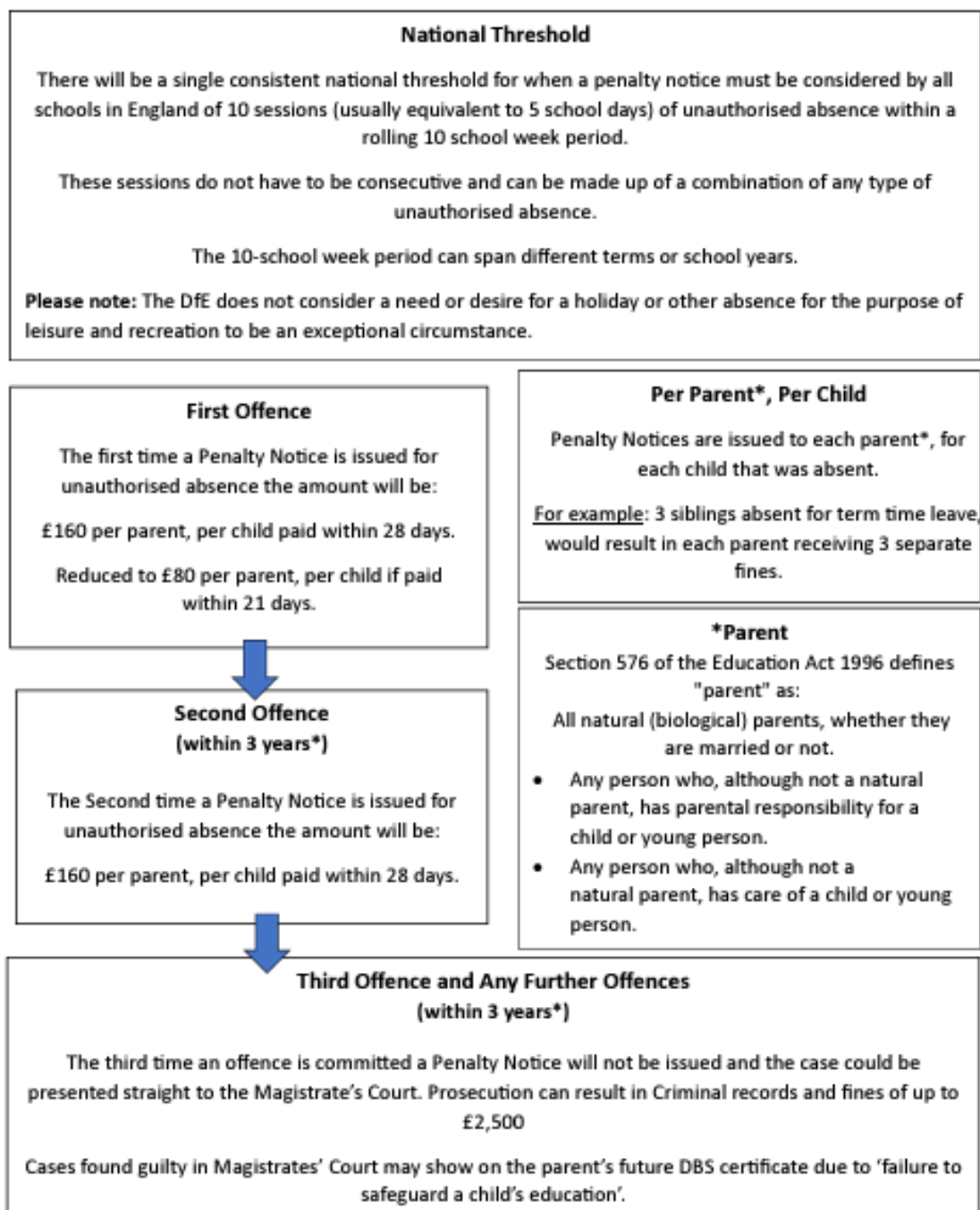
When communicating with parents about attendance, we strive to approach the situation with empathy and understanding, particularly when there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for low attendance. At the same time, we aim to provide parents with clear attendance data to ensure they are fully informed of the situation.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Further information can be found [here](#).

Penalty Notices for School Attendance from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes came into force for School Penalty Notices issued in Suffolk after 19th August 2024.



*based on a rolling 3 year period from the date of issue of first penalty notice

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

1. We offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
2. We make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
3. We expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
4. We convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
5. We recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. We make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
7. We make sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
8. We ensure that governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Parents should call the school for every day of absence, unless they have an illness that is expected to last for more than a day, i.e. sickness and diarrhoea, which has a 48-hour rule.

If a pupil's absence rate continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Officer

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-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.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Colour	Description
	Present
	Authorised Absence
	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
	Unauthorised Absence
	Not Counted in Attendance Calculations

Attendance codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance)
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances

Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause