



Mareham Le Fen CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date policy last reviewed: January 2026

Introduction

Having care of a child means an adult with whom the child lives and who looks after the child on a day to day basis. Any reference to a “parent” in this Policy is a reference to anyone having care of a child as set out above.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child’s regular attendance at school, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

Mareham Le Fen Church of England Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils within a distinctively Christian context. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance.

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access and education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils/parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

AIMS AND TARGETS

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
- 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.

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:

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

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

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

2. Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Please either email enquiries@mareham.lincs.sch.uk or telephone 01507 568304 and leave a message. Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3. Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

5. Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Reporting to parents

The school will report to each parent at the end of the school year on their child's attendance for that year. School will monitor attendance each term and any issues will be reported to parents termly.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

1. Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Although it is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to ascertain whether individual applications for holiday meet the criteria of "exceptional circumstances". The onus is on the parent to state the exceptional circumstances at the time of requesting such leave. There may be instances where a proportion of the leave requested may be authorised with the remainder being unauthorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in section 3
- 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

2. Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of 10 unauthorised absences occurring within a 10-week period through a rolling academic year
- 10 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

There will be 3 categories: First, Second and Third offence.

The first offence is issued for term time leave or unauthorised absences the amount will be £160 per parent, per child. It reduces to £80 if paid within 21 days.

The second offence is issued for term time leave or unauthorised absences the amount will be £160 per parent, per child. No reduced rate will be offered.

The third offence and any further offences (within 3 years) are issued for the above reasons, a penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented to the Magistrates court. The magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a parent's future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

Children will be rewarded for good attendance through termly 100% attendance certificates.

Children with annual attendance of 100% will receive a gift and certificate during the leavers service each year.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to keep school informed of how long they expect their child to be off for.

If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an independent education welfare 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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school uses a computerised attendance register (Scholapack) to store attendance data and create attendance reports. This data is used to monitor pupil attendance across the whole school and report to governors, parents, headteacher and Department for Education through the school census. The school is registered as a data user under the Data Protection Act 1984.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body

The governing board 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.

The headteacher

- Oversees and demonstrates ownership of the Policy.
- Oversees the work of the Senior Administrator.
- Regularly reports progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- Sets challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- Liaises with colleagues from the Local Authority as necessary.

Senior Administrator

- Oversees the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- Analyses attendance data, at least termly.
- Maintains an absence book in the school office.
- Maintains a late record.
- Produces the attendance profile for the whole school.
- Reports to the Headteacher on attendance issues.

Class Teacher

- Completes registers accurately and on time.
- Follows up immediately any unexplained absence by informing the school office.
- Challenges suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- Records all reasons for absence in the register.
- Informs the Headteacher of concerns in a timely manner.

Office staff

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

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Finance & Personnel Committee. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed