



Attendance policy

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1. Aims

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
- Ensuring pupils, parents/carers and staff know what is expected and what their responsibilities are in relation to attendance
- Ensuring attendance of all pupils is accurately monitored
- Ensuring after registration, teachers know where all pupils should be at all times during school hours
- Ensuring parents know where pupils are when they should be in school
- Ensuring pupil's education is not interrupted by unnecessarily missing school
- Ensuring pupils who are persistently absent, or are reluctant to go to school, are supported to ensure improved attendance patterns

We 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.

Steiner main lesson subjects are taught in blocks, which usually build one upon the other. The rhythm of daily, weekly and seasonal cycles also forms an important part of the life of the school. For these reasons, experiences missed through absence cannot easily be made up at a later time, especially at the beginnings and ends of terms. Therefore the school takes attendance at school very seriously.

Parents and carers have a legal obligation to ensure children attend school. For further information please consult the Devon County Council website:

(<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-attendance>.)

A clear message about the importance of attendance and the disruptive effect on a child's education of missing school is explained in the parents' handbook (<http://www.steineracademyexeter.org.uk>) and at parent evenings

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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

- [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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 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

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

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.

General attendance principles

The safety of pupils at school depends upon good supervision and communication, and staff are expected to know where pupils are at all times. A suspected case of a missing child (nonappearance at a lesson, or non-return from an out of classroom activity/trip) will be reported immediately to Reception and action will be taken according to our Missing Child Policy to ensure that suitable action can be taken to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

Lateness is monitored and taken seriously by the school.

Kindergarten children are expected to be in school by 9am and are late if they arrive after 9.20am

Class 1 - 7 children are expected to be in school by 9am and are late if they arrive after 9.15am

Class 8 - 10 children are expected to be in school by 8.55am and are late if they arrive after 9.00am

Attendance will be reported regularly to the Principal and in turn to the SLT and Governors meetings by the Attendance Lead. The Attendance Lead works closely with the Governor responsible for attendance.

Attendance details will be included in the End of Year Report for all pupils.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child arrives on time at school.
- If late, ensure their child signs in at reception.
- 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 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).
- Inform the school by 9am via phone or email of any unforeseeable absences, the reason for the absence and when their child is expected to return to school.
- Fully explain the reason for the absence.
- If unsure of the length of absence parents/carers must continue to keep the school informed via phone or email every day for the duration of the absence. Failure to provide a satisfactory explanation will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- Make sure that the school always has up to date emergency contact details.
- Ask permission for a planned absence in advance (including any medical appointments) by completing the Request for Absence Form (L5), which will be considered by the Principal.
- Ensure the school is notified of all absences. Absence must be reported to reception or the absence email absence@steineracademyexeter.org.uk (not directly by the parent to the class teacher).
- Sign the pupil out in Reception if their child must leave before the end of the school day
- Discuss with the class teacher, and/or SENDCO, as soon as possible if a child becomes unwilling to attend school or if you require further support in helping your child attend school.

Teachers have a duty to ensure that:

- Registers are taken accurately at the correct time at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions (and at the beginning of any subject lesson as appropriate) using the school's MIS system.
- Where children do not arrive at a lesson or go missing from a lesson teachers must inform Reception immediately
- Where teachers have information relating to the absence of a pupil this must be communicated on the registers via the MIS or directly to reception.
- Where a child arrives late for a lesson teachers must ensure the child has been to reception to sign in and can produce a yellow card.
- Any concerns about a pupil are raised with the appropriate staff at SAE
- They are available to discuss parental concerns as appropriate
- Any foreign exchange or visiting pupils should be signed in at Reception and are visibly wearing their visitor badges

Administration staff have a duty to ensure that:

- Where an absence is known a note is placed on the register to inform teaching staff
- Absence Request Forms (L5 forms) are processed speedily and that parents are informed of the outcome within 7 school days or sooner via email.
- Parents/carers are kept informed by email text or letter of any accrued unexplained absences from school for children in their care

- The 'Missing Child' procedure is implemented when necessary
- In the case of sickness arising during the day the school will contact parents to arrange the most suitable care possible for the child. This will include the parent collecting the child whenever possible; in this case the afternoon register will be marked as an authorised absence with an 'I' code
- Parents are kept informed where a pupil does not meet the expected attendance levels, and inform parents of support available
- Class teachers / guardians are alerted where a pupil's attendance falls to below 90% or where there are other attendance concerns e.g. Lateness
- **Pupils should ensure that they;**
- Arrive in the classroom at their register time and suitably equipped for each day and each lesson
- Report to reception if late collecting a yellow card from the receptionist to give to the teacher
- Sign out at Reception on leaving, if authorised to leave before the end of the school day

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.

Truancy / Missing lessons

If a child either is absent from school without the parents knowledge, or leaves the school during the day without permission, then this will be investigated as a possible case of truancy. If it is decided that a child has played truant, then a meeting will be arranged with the parent within one week with the class teacher/guardian. A meeting will also be arranged between the pupil and the SENDCO to discuss the matter and ascertain the facts of the case.

If a pupil has played truant their attendance will be carefully monitored on a daily basis by all staff working with the pupil.

3.3 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.

Any medical appointment made during school hours will not be authorised unless accompanied by a medical or dental appointment letter.

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.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

Arriving late for school is disruptive for the whole class and means that pupils miss vital parts of the school day. Arriving late after registers close is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness after registers close is monitored half termly and is recorded as unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness will result in a meeting with the class teacher (parents and child as necessary) letters being sent to parents, and then a meeting with the Attendance Lead. Following these steps, if there is no improvement, the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will potentially become involved.

3.5 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. The term 'reasonable enquiries' grants schools and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in a given case will vary. The term 'reasonable' also makes clear that there is a limit to what the school and local authority is expected to do. In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords - private or social housing providers - and other local stakeholders who are involved. The school keeps records on completion of these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

Attendance Letters currently used

Please note these letters may not be necessary be sent in the order listed below. Depending on the child's attendance and the reason for any absences the school can use their discretion as to which letter is deemed to be most appropriate.

Information Letter - If a child's attendance at school falls below 90% this will result in an automatic letter being sent from the school, whatever the reason for the absence, even if this is due to genuine illness. Letters will also be sent out to parents where a pupil's absences take the pupil below the attendance target set by the school towards the end of each half term. This is to keep parents informed of the any attendance issues that may be arising.

Assistance letter - Should a pupil's attendance not improve significantly, or continues to decline, by the following half term then a second letter will be automatically sent, offering early help to work with parents to improve a child's attendance and highlighting the possibility of intervention by the EWO if the situation does not improve.

Warning Letter - If the pupil's attendance does not improve, and no contact has been made by the parents to give adequate explanation for a pupil's poor attendance by the 3rd half termly review, then a further letter will be sent by the school and/or EWO, highlighting the serious nature of a child continuing to not attend school promptly on a regular basis and the possibility of legal action.

Letter from EWO - Notification of Legal Action - If a child's attendance gives serious cause for concern, and if despite previous attempts to work with parents to improve a pupils attendance there is no improvement, it may be necessary to call a legal meeting to discuss legal sanctions and to formally warn parents of the consequences of nonattendance.

Late Letter - If a child is late then a text and/ or letter will be sent to highlight that a pupil arrived late for registers.

Persistent Late Letter - If a pattern of lateness emerges then a letter will be sent at the end of each half term highlighting the issue and offering a meeting with parents to discuss how the situation could be resolved.

Positive Start Letter - If a pupil has had a poor record of attendance the previous year a Positive Start Letter will be sent out to highlight that the pupil will continue to be closely monitored and encourage a fresh start for the new academic year.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are kept informed where a pupil does not meet the expected attendance levels, and inform parents of support available.

Attendance details will be included in the End of Year Report for all pupils.

4. Child Missing Education (referring to DfE Statutory Guidance 2016)

Schools' responsibilities

- Steiner Academy Exeter will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- Steiner Academy Exeter will monitor pupils' attendance through the daily register. The school will work with the Education Welfare Officer and notify the local authority details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission.
- Steiner Academy Exeter will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- Steiner Academy Exeter will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England statutory guidance.
- Steiner Academy Exeter has a safeguarding duty in respect of the pupils and as part of this we take reasonable steps to investigate any unexplained absences. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- The school's admission register is accurate and kept up to date
- Steiner Academy Exeter regularly encourages parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through using existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This assists both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education
- Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register: a. the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live; b. the new address; and c. the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address
- Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record a. the name of the new school;

and b. the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school in the admission register

- If there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different local authority area, contact will be made with the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods.
- When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:
 - a. make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
 - b. check local databases within the local authority
 - c. check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems
 - d. follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC
 - e. check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force
 - f. check with agencies known to be involved with family
 - g. check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known
 - h. check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved
 - i. check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is
 - j. in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)
 - k. home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

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 sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Exceptional part time schooling arrangements on authorisation of an Annex R

5.2 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 £60 within 21 days or £120 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 Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The majority of children arrive at school on time and have good attendance levels. The school recognises that sometimes children will be absent for perfectly legitimate reasons, such as illness and unavoidable medical appointments, however if a child is not at school, or registered as home schooled, then the parents are failing in their legal duty to ensure that that child is provided with an adequate education. The school is also failing in its duty to provide education if it does not report regularly to parents where attendance falls below the agreed targets.

Steiner Academy Exeter aims to provide an environment where children receive a balanced education. Children that often struggle with school elsewhere often flourish here. We work closely and cooperatively with parents to ensure that each and every child receives the best educational experience and that children actively want to learn and attend school. If parents have any concerns about their child's experience at school or their child is struggling with any aspect of school, then make contact with your Class Teacher.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Lead monitors pupil absence on at least a weekly 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 call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 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 our 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.

Attendance data is stored by the school and may be used for internal purposes - for example, to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The attendance lead reports to the Principal on a weekly basis.

The Principal supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The Attendance lead

The Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and 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

8.4 Class teachers

Class teachers/ subject teachers / form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school reception office.

8.5 Office/reception staff

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

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies and guidance

This policy is linked to our missing child, child protection and safeguarding policies.

This policy is linked to the awareness of DfE Child Missing in Education guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
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

