



Coxheath

Primary School

Working together to improve school attendance

Implementation Document

Approved: Term 1 2024

Next Review: Term 6 2026

Facts about poor attendance

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require all maintained schools to educate their pupils for at least 190 days (380 sessions) in each school year. Table 1 shows how missed days affects your child's percentage of attendance.



Table 1

Number of days absence	Equals attendance one school year
9.5 days	95%
19 days	90%
28.5 days	85%
38 days	80%
47.5 days	75%
57 days	70%
66.5 days	65%

Table 2 shows the impact of absence on school attendance over a six-week period.

Table 2

Number of days absence	Attendance over past six weeks
2 days	93%
3 days	90%
5 days	83%
8 days	73%
10 days	67%
15 days	50%

School day attendance

8:35- Gates/classroom doors open

8:40 – Register opens

8:45 – Gates close. After this time, children will need to enter the school via the main office where they will be registered as late. **All pupils** that arrive late must report, with their parent/carer, to the school reception where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed using Code 'L'.

9:00 - Register closes. If your child arrives after this time, their mark will be recorded as a U, which is an unauthorised mark.

3:05 – Gates open

3:10 – End of the school for KS1 and EYFS

3:15 – End of day for KS2

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff



- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Bev Evenden and can be contacted via email office@coxheath.kent.sch.uk

The attendance officer

Alongside the senior leadership team, the school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with School Liaison officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer, Samantha Head, can be contacted via 01622 745553 or email attendance@coxheath.kent.sch.uk

Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence either before or on the day of the absence

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting our attendance officer (see above)

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via 01622 745553 using option 1 or attendance@coxheath.kent.sch.uk. If the telephone isn't answered, please leave a message.



We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. To request a planned absence, please email the school attendance officer attendance@coxheath.kent.sch.uk

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.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible. Go to page 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed at 9am will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code (U)
- Lateness and punctuality will be monitored through regular reporting from the attendance officer. It will be followed up and parents will be notified via a letter or where appropriate a meeting with the designated senior leader for attendance

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Send a text in the first instance to ascertain the reason for absence
- If no response, a call will be made to the pupil's parent to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, a voicemail will be left asking the parent to contact the school
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is given
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school may involve a school liaison officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school will issue a Notice to Improve letter.



Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

Stage 1: Attendance concern letter to formally notify parents that their child's attendance is concerning.

Stage 2: A second letter will be sent to request a meeting to discuss attendance issues further and collaboratively develop solutions

Stage 3: A Notice to Improve letter will be issued to formally notify parents that they have 4 weeks to improve their child's attendance

Stage 4: A Penalty Notice letter will be issued to formally notify parents of potential financial penalties if attendance does not improve.

The first penalty notice issued to the parent for a child will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between days 22 and 28.

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first offence, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. There is no reduced sum available in this instance.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice.

Stage 5: Escalation to Local Education Authority involvement (including Attendance Contract) and the potential for legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#) These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include but not limited to a parent/carer wedding, the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 1 week before the absence via a letter or email to the attendance officer. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity, visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Working with parents to support attendance is our aim. However, it may be necessary to apply sanctions to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual case-by-case basis. Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including penalty notices.

Strategies to improve attendance

- Bespoke Attendance Contracts - the contracts are agreed between pupil/parents/school staff to agree actions and set targets
- Free nurture breakfast for children who find self-regulation in the morning challenging
- Nurture support from our child and family support officer (CAFSO)
- Whole school incentives to support improved attendance, e.g. termly raffle draw
- Parental involvement: Keep parents informed and engaged with their children's progress and attendance.
- Support Systems: Provide counselling and support for students facing personal challenges that may affect attendance.
- Prompt referral to external agencies



Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- Pupil support plan
- Phased return
- Online teaching to support reintegration when needed
- Part time timetable
- Multi agency meeting to identify and reduce barriers to attendance

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care plan (EHCP) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence .

- Schedule one-on-one meetings to welcome them back, discuss their feelings, and understand their needs.
- Pair them with a classmate who can help them navigate the school environment and reconnect socially.
- Allow a gradual return to full-time attendance, starting with part-time or half days
- Provide options for attending specific classes or activities that interest them
- Emotional support – Purple card/emotional wellbeing practitioners/time with child and family support officer (CAFSSO)
- Academic support – individualised learning plans to help them catch up on missed work and set realistic academic goals.
- Parents regularly informed about their child's progress and any support services available.
- Designate areas where students can go if they feel overwhelmed or need a break.
- Clear outline of daily routines and expectations to help them feel secure.
- Provide training for teachers and staff on particular medical needs and how to support returning students

By combining these strategies, schools can create a nurturing and supportive environment that helps pupils transition back successfully, both academically and socially

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE. The school has granted the Department for Education (DfE) access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas for improvement.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils and their families it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners, where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and to re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Implement sanctions, where necessary



This policy links to the Coppice Primary Partnership Safeguarding Policy and Coxheath Primary School Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy.