

Attendance Policy

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Effective	August 2026
Approved by	Governing Body
Review	August 2027 or sooner if required

Daffodil standard

Every Daffodil document is written to be understood, applied, evidenced and reviewed.

- Know the non-negotiable requirements, the responsible lead and the point for escalation.
- Put pupils' welfare, dignity, equality and access at the centre of each decision.
- Act promptly where safety or safeguarding may be at risk; do not wait for certainty.
- Make reasonable adjustments and listen to the pupil's voice in an accessible way.
- Keep factual, dated and secure records; review whether action made the intended difference.

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Policy summary

Related policies: Safeguarding and Safer Working Policy; Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy; Inclusion, Equality, SEND and Wellbeing Policy; Parents Complaints Policy; Data Protection and Information Governance Policy.

This operating table converts the policy into minimum actions and evidence. It supports implementation but does not replace the detailed modules.

Decision point	Minimum action	Required evidence	Review point
Absence	Record the correct mark, establish reason and follow up unexplained absence promptly.	Register and contact log	Same session/day
Pattern	Analyse frequency, days, lessons and contextual barriers rather than attendance percentage alone.	Attendance analysis	Weekly/termly by risk
Safeguarding	Escalate unexplained, repeated or welfare-linked absence to the DSL.	Safeguarding chronology	Immediately when threshold met
Support	Agree actions with pupil and parents and review whether barriers reduce.	Support plan	Dated review

1. Attendance expectations and daily procedures

This policy is available to all parents and carers:

- On the school website:
- In printed form upon request from the school office

Introduction

Importance of Attendance and Behaviour

Daffodil Preparatory School recognises that:

- Positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raising standards of pupil attainment.
- Consistent attendance provides every child with the best possible educational experience.

Legal Entitlement to Education

Every child of compulsory school age is legally entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their:

- Age
- Aptitude
- Any special educational needs they may have

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure their child receives this education, either:

- By attendance at a school, or

- By education otherwise than at a school.

Parental Duty for School Attendance

Where parents choose to register their child at a school, they have an additional duty to ensure their child attends **regularly**.

This means their child must attend every day that the school is open.

The only exceptions are a small number of allowable circumstances, such as:

- Illness preventing attendance
- Permission for absence granted in advance by the school

National Guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance for:

- Maintained schools
- Academies
- Independent schools
- Local authorities

This guidance is set out in: Working together to improve school attendance

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of this guidance.

Alignment with School Ethos

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school
- Promote high expectations for every pupil
- Support families in maintaining good attendance
- It has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents and carers.
- It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters.
- It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the impact of children who are missing or absent from education.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the headteacher not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Daffodil Preparatory School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day-to-day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which inevitably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- absences which have never been properly explained

- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session
- shopping trips
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and cooperation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as 'severely absent'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

Absence Procedures

We monitor all absences, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.20 am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff

Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.20 am

Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Lateness

- Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence.
- Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.
- Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.
- The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Daffodil Preparatory School are: Gates open: 8:00am Registration closes: 8:25am End of the school day: 3:30pm

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.30am when children can begin to come into school
- Registers are taken at 8.25am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time
- Children arriving after 8.25am are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded
- At 9am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness
- From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school
- Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings.
- If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.
- We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child.

- If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

- We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s.
- Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve.
- An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.
- Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers.
- These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced.
- We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

School Attendance and the Law

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

- Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings.
- This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison.
- If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

If a parent has previously received a Penalty Notice for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance or been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance, there may not be an opportunity to pay a further Penalty Notice; the case may proceed directly to court.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school"

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013.
- All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed.
- The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two calendar weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

- At Daffodil Preparatory School, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher).
- The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short".
- By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.

during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.

when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Deletion from Roll

- For any pupil leaving Daffodil Preparatory School, other than at the end of year 6 parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office.
- This provides the school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school.
- This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency. Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible

August 2026 operational update

Registration and first-day response

- Take the admission and attendance registers accurately using current statutory codes and preserve amendment history.
- Follow up unexplained absence promptly on the first day using all available contacts; escalate according to vulnerability and risk.
- Treat repeated, prolonged or unexplained absence, missing lessons and unexplained withdrawal as possible safeguarding indicators.

Support and escalation

- Work early with pupils and parents to identify barriers, including SEND, mental health, bullying, transport, faith observance and family difficulty.
- Use attendance contracts, support plans and local authority services proportionately; enforcement is a last resort after support where appropriate.
- Make required local-authority returns when pupils are added to or removed from the admission register outside standard transition points.

Equality, SEND and accessibility

The school applies the Equality Act 2010, anticipates reasonable adjustments and avoids blanket decisions. Staff distinguish deliberate misconduct from behaviour or difficulty arising from disability, SEND, communication need, trauma or medical condition. Information and processes are made accessible, and the pupil's voice is sought in a way they can understand.

Records, confidentiality and information sharing

Records are factual, dated, attributable, access-controlled and retained under the Data Protection and Information Governance Policy (retention section). Information is shared on a need-to-know basis when lawful and necessary. Safeguarding information is shared promptly to protect a child; data protection law is not used as a reason to withhold necessary safeguarding information.

2. Attendance leadership, support and escalation

The Headteacher appoints a named Attendance Officer and a trained deputy. The Attendance Officer is the school's operational lead for accurate registers, early identification, family support, intervention plans, referrals and attendance assurance. The Headteacher remains accountable and the DSL retains responsibility for safeguarding decisions.

Appointment, authority and role requirements

- Have sufficient time, authority, system access and direct access to the Headteacher, DSL, SENCo and relevant pastoral staff.
- Understand the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, attendance codes, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, children missing education duties, KCSIE and Tower Hamlets referral routes.
- Complete role induction and annual update training covering registers, safeguarding, SEND and medical barriers, family engagement, data protection, lawful information sharing, report writing and escalation.
- Analyse individual, group and whole-school attendance and punctuality without treating a percentage alone as proof of parental fault.
- Chair or coordinate attendance meetings, set support plans, assign actions, monitor delivery and escalate missed actions or continuing risk.
- Maintain professional curiosity, accurate chronology and respectful communication; offer interpretation or reasonable adjustments where required.

- The deputy provides continuity during absence and must know urgent first-day, CME and safeguarding processes.

Daily, weekly and termly duties

- Daily: confirm morning and afternoon registers are complete, resolve missing or incorrect marks, lead first-day response and escalate pupils whose absence creates immediate welfare concern.
- Daily: monitor late arrival, ensure the correct late code and arrival time are recorded, identify pupils arriving after register closure and arrange immediate follow-up where patterns or vulnerability require it.
- Weekly: review absence, unauthorised sessions, lateness, pupils approaching persistent or severe absence, vulnerable groups, support-plan actions and cases without successful family contact.
- Fortnightly: meet the Headteacher/DSL/SENCo or attendance team to review priority cases, barriers, safeguarding, SEND/medical adjustments, Early Help and Tower Hamlets consultation or referral.
- Half-termly: evaluate cohort trends, punctuality, day/session patterns, repeat illness, leave, reduced timetables, interventions and the impact of strategies.
- Termly: provide governors with anonymised analysis, targets, progress, referrals, legal-intervention considerations, vulnerable-group impact and overdue actions.

School thresholds and minimum response

The thresholds below are operational triggers for review and support. They do not remove professional judgement: staff act earlier where a pupil is vulnerable, contact fails, absence is unexplained or a pattern suggests safeguarding, SEND, medical or family need.

Trigger	Minimum school action	Timing	External or safeguarding escalation
Any unexplained absence	Check mark; contact every available parent/carer route; consider siblings, known risks and expected appointments.	Begin promptly after register closure; repeat and escalate the same day.	Immediate DSL review where risk indicators exist; call 999 if in immediate danger.
Repeated lateness: 3 late arrivals in 10 school days or 5 in a half-term	Discuss pattern; identify transport, routines, caring, SEND or medical barriers; agree punctuality action.	Contact within 2 school days; review within 2 weeks.	Consult Early Help or Attendance and Welfare where barriers persist or welfare is affected.
Attendance below 96% or a clear deteriorating pattern	Early conversation; check coding and context; agree a short support target and monitor weekly.	Contact within 3 school days of identification.	Seek advice earlier for vulnerable pupils or complex barriers.
Attendance at or below 93%, repeated unauthorised absence, or no improvement	Hold a formal school attendance meeting; complete barrier assessment and written Attendance Support Plan.	Meeting normally within 5 school days; first review within 2 weeks.	Discuss with Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service where school support is insufficient.

Trigger	Minimum school action	Timing	External or safeguarding escalation
after early contact			
Persistent absence: 10% or more sessions missed, normally below 90%	Targeted multi-agency plan with pupil and family; weekly monitoring; review SEND, medical, safeguarding and curriculum access.	Do not wait for term end; review at least fortnightly.	Refer/consult Tower Hamlets in line with current criteria; consider Early Help/MAST and legal options only through support-first decision-making.
Severe absence: 50% or more sessions missed	Headteacher/DSL-led urgent plan; assign lead professional; coordinate education, welfare, health and safeguarding action.	Same-day leadership review; multi-agency contact without delay.	Priority Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare and MAST/children's social care involvement according to need and risk.
10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10 school weeks	Check codes and evidence; review support offered, engagement and whether a Notice to Improve or penalty-notice request is appropriate.	Consider as soon as the threshold is identified.	Consult/follow Tower Hamlets code and process. A penalty notice is not automatic and must be considered case by case.
No successful contact, whereabouts unknown, 10 consecutive absent school days, failure to return, or possible child missing education	Verify all contacts and known information; involve DSL; preserve chronology; do not remove from roll without lawful grounds.	Same-day escalation when whereabouts or safety is uncertain.	Contact Tower Hamlets CME/Education Safeguarding and make safeguarding/police referral according to risk.

Attendance meetings and escalation when concerns persist

A meeting is a support and decision point, not a substitute for action. The Attendance Officer prepares the attendance certificate, codes, punctuality record, chronology, previous support, pupil voice and relevant SEND/medical/safeguarding information.

- Invite parents in writing and offer an accessible time, interpretation, remote attendance or other reasonable adjustment where appropriate.
- Hear the pupil's perspective in an age-appropriate way and identify barriers at home, in school and in the journey to school.
- Agree a written Attendance Support Plan stating the baseline, intended improvement, actions, owner, start date, evidence and review date.
- Give the family a copy and explain what the school will do, what parents are expected to do, who to contact and what may happen if absence remains unauthorised.
- If a parent does not attend, make further contact, offer another reasonable opportunity and assess whether non-engagement itself increases welfare risk; do not simply close the case.
- Record the meeting, decisions, offers of support, accepted or declined actions and the rationale for referral or non-referral.

Point in case	Attendance Officer action	Expected evidence	Next step if unresolved
Concern identified	Contact family and pupil; check coding, risk and known barriers.	Contact log and initial assessment.	Arrange meeting if threshold/pattern persists or risk requires it.
Formal school meeting	Agree Attendance Support Plan with measurable actions.	Meeting record, pupil voice, plan and review date.	Review within 2 weeks; involve SENCo/DSL/medical lead as needed.
First review — insufficient progress	Test whether actions occurred and remain suitable; intensify support and consult Tower Hamlets.	Updated barrier analysis and completed-action evidence.	Formal referral/Early Help or multi-agency meeting; consider Notice to Improve where lawful and appropriate.
Four to six weeks — absence or lateness persists despite delivered support	Refer to Attendance and Welfare Service using current criteria; submit chronology and evidence; continue school support.	Register extract, plan, contacts, meeting outcomes, SEND/medical/safeguarding considerations.	Joint plan, attendance contract/Notice to Improve or other LA legal intervention where support has failed or is not engaged with.
Deterioration or new risk at any point	Escalate immediately; do not wait for the next scheduled review.	Risk decision and referral record.	DSL, MAST/children's social care, police or emergency service according to urgency.

Targets and success measures

- Whole-school ambition: attendance of at least 96%, while recognising that lawful individual absence and protected needs require contextual review.
- No unexplained absence remains unresolved because of school inaction; first-day actions and decisions are recorded on the day.
- Persistent and severe absence reduce over time, with priority pupils showing sustained improvement rather than short-lived gains before a review.
- Punctuality targets state a concrete behaviour, such as arrival before the published gate time on every agreed day, and are reviewed weekly.
- Individual targets use the pupil's baseline and barriers—for example, no unauthorised sessions over the next two weeks, completion of agreed medical/SEND adjustments, or an agreed increase in attended sessions.
- Success includes removal of barriers, family engagement, pupil safety, completed support actions and curriculum reintegration—not percentage improvement alone.
- Attendance rewards do not penalise pupils for disability, medical treatment, religious observance or other authorised absence and do not encourage attendance when medically unsafe.

Support and improvement strategies

- Named morning welcome, check-in adult, mentoring or safe arrival routine.

- Breakfast, uniform, equipment, transport, housing, benefits or family-support signposting.
- SEND, sensory, communication, mental-health, bullying, medical or allergy adjustments developed with the relevant lead.
- Curriculum catch-up and reintegration planning that avoids making return feel unmanageable.
- Home-school communication plan with one named contact and agreed frequency.
- Early Help Assessment or Team Around the Family where needs cross services.
- Joint work with Tower Hamlets Attendance and Welfare Service, including advice, mediation, specialist referral and coordinated planning.
- A part-time timetable only in exceptional circumstances, with parent agreement, risk assessment, time limit, review and a clear return to full-time education; it must not be used to manage behaviour informally.

Tower Hamlets contacts and when to use them

The Attendance Officer checks the council website and current referral form before sending information because contacts and criteria may change. Only necessary information is shared securely, with the lawful basis and rationale recorded.

Service	Contact	When the school should contact
Attendance and Welfare Service / Behaviour and Attendance Support	Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ; 020 7364 3450; LBTHAttendance&WelfareServiceAdmin@towerhamlets.gov.uk	Advice or referral where direct school contact, meetings and delivered support have not secured improvement; persistent/severe absence; recurring unauthorised absence or lateness; legal-intervention consultation.
Children Missing Education / Education Safeguarding	020 7364 3426	Whereabouts unknown, failure to return, possible child without education, or required notification concerning admission-register changes.
Early Help / MAST	020 7364 5006, option 2 or 3; MAST@towerhamlets.gov.uk	Family needs exceed school support, multiple agencies are required, or poor attendance is linked to wider needs. Professionals use the current MAST request-for-support route.
Child Protection Advice Line	020 7364 3444, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm	Concern that a child's welfare may be at risk. Follow DSL procedures; do not wait for attendance processes.
Emergency	999	Immediate danger, urgent medical emergency or immediate risk of serious harm.

Legal guidance and obligations

- Parents must secure regular attendance for a registered child of compulsory school age under section 444 of the Education Act 1996; the school and local authority should use support-first practice and consider individual circumstances before legal intervention.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 govern admission and attendance registers and national codes.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, updated 9 July 2026, applies to independent schools and sets expectations for support, persistent/severe absence and partnership with local authorities.

- Independent schools are not required to submit daily attendance data to the Department for Education, but must keep compliant registers, make required returns and share information lawfully with the local authority and safeguarding partners.
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance requires prompt school/local-authority cooperation and prescribed notifications when pupils are added to or removed from the admission register outside normal transition points.
- KCSIE 2026 requires immediate safeguarding action where attendance, behaviour or absence indicates abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm.
- Equality Act 2010, SEND duties and medical guidance require reasonable adjustments and prohibit discriminatory attendance responses.
- The national penalty-notice threshold is 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10 school weeks. Reaching it triggers consideration, not automatic punishment; the current Tower Hamlets process and code must be followed.

Records, quality assurance and handover

- Maintain a case chronology of registers, contacts, pupil voice, meetings, support, adjustments, referrals, decisions, legal considerations and outcomes.
 - Check attendance codes and register amendments through an audit trail; do not retrospectively alter a mark merely to improve data.
 - Store referral evidence securely and record what was shared, with whom, why and the outcome.
 - Audit a sample of cases termly for timeliness, quality of support, SEND/equality, safeguarding decisions, LA liaison and sustained impact.
 - Handover open cases to the deputy or successor with priority, next action, deadline, risk and external contacts clearly identified.
1. 3. Whole-policy governance, assurance and review
 2. 4. Integrated operational and assurance standards

3. Monitoring, accountability and review

Equality, SEND and accessibility

Decisions must be fair, evidence-based and free from unlawful discrimination. Staff identify and record reasonable adjustments, accessible communication and support required by disability, SEND, medical need, language, religion or belief and other protected characteristics.

Safeguarding priority

Any concern that may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, peer-on-peer harm, self-harm, significant vulnerability or risk of serious harm is referred immediately to the DSL. Policy processes must not delay emergency or safeguarding action.

Records and confidentiality

The responsible lead records the decision, evidence, action, communication, support, adjustment, owner and review date in the appropriate secure system. Information is shared on a lawful, necessary and proportionate basis and retained under the school's information-governance requirements.

Training and implementation

The policy owner identifies role-specific induction, refresher training, drills or competency checks. Leaders sample implementation and records, address inconsistency promptly and report material themes and risks to governors.

Review and continuous improvement

The policy is reviewed at least annually, and sooner after a serious incident, complaint, audit finding, statutory or guidance change, recurring pattern or evidence that controls are ineffective. Pupil, parent and staff voice is considered where relevant.

Attendance Policy, version 3.0, effective August 2026. This document supersedes the corresponding earlier policy drafts included within it. Previous files remain version-history records and must not be used as concurrent instructions.

4. Putting the attendance policy into practice

Daily attendance operating standard

- Take the admission register at the start of each morning and afternoon session, use the correct national code and amend entries only through an authorised, traceable process.
- Follow up every unexplained absence on the first day, prioritising pupils with known safeguarding vulnerability and escalating promptly when contact cannot be made.
- Treat attendance information as safeguarding information: record contacts, explanations, welfare checks, decisions and referrals in a chronology that can be reviewed.
- Independent schools are not required to submit daily attendance data to the Department for Education, but must maintain compliant registers and provide information lawfully when required.

Support, escalation and children missing education

- Identify emerging patterns early; persistent absence means missing 10% or more sessions and severe absence means missing 50% or more, but support must begin before either threshold where risk is evident.
- Use a support-first plan with the pupil and family, clear barriers, actions, owners and review dates; involve the local authority attendance service and other agencies when school-level support is insufficient.
- A part-time timetable is exceptional, time-limited, agreed with parents, supported by a written plan and risk assessment, and reviewed frequently with a clear route back to full-time education.

- Make required local-authority returns when a pupil is added to or removed from the admission register outside normal transition points and act immediately where a child may be missing education.

Assurance and 2026 sources

- The attendance lead reviews vulnerable-pupil and cohort data at least weekly; leaders test whether actions are timely, equitable and improving attendance rather than merely generating contacts.
- Governors receive termly analysis of absence, persistent and severe absence, punctuality, reduced timetables, CME referrals and the impact of support, disaggregated where lawful and meaningful.
- Principal framework: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026), Children Missing Education statutory guidance (September 2025), KCSIE 2026 and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

References and statutory guidance

Linked titles open the current published source. Check the source page for later updates when this policy is reviewed.

1. [**Independent School Standards guidance**](#) - Department for Education, April 2026.
2. [**Keeping children safe in education 2026**](#) - Department for Education; in force from 1 September 2026.
3. [**Working together to safeguard children 2026**](#) - HM Government, updated March 2026.
4. [**Education inspection toolkits and supporting evidence**](#) - Ofsted; September 2026 inspection materials.