



Attendance Policy

2023/2024


Policy Issues and Updates

<i>Pages</i>	<i>Issue No.</i>	<i>Date</i>
Whole Document - new format and template used.	1	January 2016
Cover Page - logo	2	February 2016
Whole document - checked and revised where necessary	3	August 2016
Whole document - annual review and revision where necessary.	4	September 2017
Whole document - annual review	5	August 2018
Whole document - annual review	6	August 2019
COVID-19 and pandemic updates	7	June 2020
Whole document - annual review	8	August 2020
Whole document - annual review	9	August 2021
Whole document - annual review	10	August 2022
Whole document - rebranding	11	February 2023
Whole document - annual review	12	August 2023

The following policy has been approved by the Managing Director and Senior Leadership Team.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis unless circumstances arise requiring the policy to be reviewed earlier.

Approved by Managing Director: August 2023

Board signatory: 

Planned Review: August 2024

1. Policy overview

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children and young people are to achieve their full potential. Progress Schools believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Progress Schools encourage students and parents/carers to aspire for 100% attendance although attendance below 85% or patterns of absences will initiate an early and formal intervention work to prevent further absence and going CME.
- 1.2 We acknowledge that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and curriculum.

2. Legal obligations

- 2.1 The Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 2.2 A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Raising of the participation age (RPA) does not affect the compulsory school age. However, its effect is that a person who ceased to be of compulsory school age but has not yet reached the age of 18 (or attained a level 3 qualification), is under a duty to participate in education or training.
- 2.3 Under the Education Act, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

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- 2.4 The Education Regulations require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 2.5 The register must record the details for each student to identify whether they are;
- Present.
 - Attending an approved educational activity.
 - Absent; or,
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

3. Categorising attendance

- 3.1 All students will be categorised using one of the codes below.

Present at School

/ \ Present (/ = am, \ = pm)
L Late arrival before the register has closed

Present at and Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

B Off-site educational activity
D Dual Registered – at another educational establishment
J At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V Educational visit or trip
W Work Experience

Authorised Absence from School

C Leave of absence authorised by school
E Excluded but no alternative provision made
H Holiday authorised by the school

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head of School
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent from school without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative Codes

X	Not required to be in school
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
Z	Pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure (Bank holidays, Inset days)

COVID-19 update - All attendance data will be recorded normally as the government reinstated mandatory attendance for all children in school. Where local lockdowns, self-isolation etc. occur, attendance will be coded based on current government guidance.

- 3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.
- 3.3 Parents/carers should advise school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide us with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.
- 3.4 Absences will be defined as follows.

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- 3.4.1 Illness - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing Progress Schools that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- 3.4.2 Medical/Dental Appointments – Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school. These can be requested at the time of appointment if not given when the appointment was booked.
- 3.4.3 Other Authorised Circumstances - This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.
- 3.4.4 Excluded (No alternative provision made) - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The student's teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- 3.4.5 Family Holidays and Extended Leave – Parents/carers are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days, they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. However, up to 5 school days leave in any one school year **may** be granted at the discretion of the Head of School and only in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4.5(i) Parents/carers wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must send a written request to the Head of School before holiday arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:
- Length of the proposed leave
 - Age of the student
 - The student's general absence/attendance record
 - Proximity of any examinations/moderations
 - Student's ability to catch up the work missed

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- Student's educational needs
 - General welfare of the student
 - Circumstances of the request
 - Purpose of the leave
 - Previous term time holidays taken
 - When the request was made
 - The referring school's opinion where applicable

3.4.5(ii) All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents/carers must contact school should any delays occur
- That the student's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

3.4.6 If a student fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the referring school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.4.7 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the referring school/local authority may issue a penalty notice.

3.4.8 Only in exceptional circumstances will absence of more than 5 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances, such as minority ethnic children returning to their country of origin. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents/carers will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

3.5 Religious Observance – we acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends, and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

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- 3.5.1 It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend Progress Schools on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.
- 3.5.2 Parents are requested to give advance notice to us if they intend their child to be absent.
- 3.5.3 However, in the interests of fulfilling academic requirements and limiting the authorised absence rate of us and any referring school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.
- 3.6 Study Leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. The referring school will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels. We do not offer study leave. Students will only leave early at the request of the referring school.
- 3.7 Traveller Absence - The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend Progress Schools as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- 3.7.1 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for nonattendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending Progress Schools as regularly as that trade permits.
- 3.7.2 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 3.7.3 When in or around the school's locality, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see 3.7.4) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 3.7.4 We will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the

student's school place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.7.5 We can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

3.7.6 We will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.7.7 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

3.7.8 Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

3.8 Arrival registration begins at 09.00am although school is open for breakfast club from 8:30am. Students who arrive after 9:15am will be marked as present but arrived late while register is still open. The register will close at 9.30am. Students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as unauthorised (arrived in school after register closed in the AM registration timeslot).

3.8.1 On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the Head of School to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

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- 3.8.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment with proof.
- 3.8.3 The absence will remain recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their clothes to dry.
- 3.9 Unauthorised absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by Progress Schools.
- 3.9.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:
- A student's/family member's birthday
 - Shopping
 - Having their hair cut
 - Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
 - "Couldn't get up"
 - Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school ▪
Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Deletions from the register

- 4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:
- The referring school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
 - The school attendance order is revoked by the local authority
 - The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
 - Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed
 - Death of a student
 - Transfer between schools
 - Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
 - Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

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- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
 - In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
 - 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
 - Left the referring school but not known where he/she has gone after both the referring school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
 - The referring school no longer funds a placement at Progress Schools

4.2 Progress Schools will follow the local authority's Children Missing from Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the referring school staff, referring school governors, referring agency, parents/carers, students, and the wider school community. As such, the Progress Schools SLT will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers
- Annually review the Progress Schools Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree Progress Schools attendance targets and submit these to the referring school/agency within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership and Heads of School within Progress Schools
- Monitor the school attendance and related issues through termly reporting at senior management meetings
- Ensure that the head of school leads on attendance
- Ensure that the centre has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence

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- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of early interventions to prevent continued absence.

5.2 The Head of School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students, parents/carers whilst listening to and understanding barriers to attendance, working with families to remove them.
- Ensure that there is a whole centre approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Progress Schools Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually by the Board.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Progress Schools Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Return Progress Schools attendance data to the referring school / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as required and on time
- Report Progress Schools attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- 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. Where a child is at risk of CME we will follow the local authorities procedure for reporting.

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- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
 - Ensure all attendance data is inputted on to our Arbor management system.

5.3 Staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers, whilst listening to and understanding barriers to attendance, working with families to remove them.
- Contribute to a whole company approach which reinforces good attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Actively complete admission and comply with the Registration Regulations, England, and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Contribute to the evaluation of attendance strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.4 We request that parents/carers:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular attendance within the home environment ▪ Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations

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- Contact Progress Schools if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
 - Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
 - Ask school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
 - Inform school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
 - Support school by taking every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school staff and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
 - Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, home work, preparing work bag and clothing the evening before
 - Not keep their child off from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
 - Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head of School in advance of booking the holiday

6. Using attendance data

- 6.1 Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies/referring school if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.
- 6.2 Every half term (minimally), the Head of School will provide all staff with attendance data for the previous half term for each student during their review. Staff can regularly view this on Arbor.
- 6.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.
- 6.4 We will share attendance data with the referring school/agency and the local authority as required.
- 6.5 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR 2018.

7. Support to improve attendance

- 7.1 We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.
- 7.2 We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with BESD, special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.
- 7.3 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include, but are not restricted to:
- Attendance leaflets for parents/carers
 - Attendance trips
 - Certificates & prizes
 - Lesson plans & work booklets
 - First day response – telephone contact from the moment the student is classed as late
 - Early intervention – contact of students prior to register closing to ensure they are on their way to school
 - Home visits
 - Student end of term reviews
 - Displays around the school
 - Breakfast club
- 7.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students during review time.
- 7.5 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will consider the use of legal sanctions in conjunction with the referring school/agency where applicable.

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- 7.6 We have introduced engagement, attendance, and welfare officers within our structure. These staff will support students and their families in their allocated regions to improve attendance by using a series of interventions relevant to supporting the student in question. This will assist in breaking down barriers that prevent the student from having good attendance.

8. Legal sanctions

- 8.1 Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The referring school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.
- 8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- 8.1.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined and/or imprisoned.
- 8.1.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.
- 8.1.3(i) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.
- 8.1.3(ii) The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.1.3(iii) The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.1.3(iv) Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with local Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

8.2 Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by us
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

8.2.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a fine is paid within 28 days or more if paid within 42 days of the date the notice was issued.

8.2.2 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.3.3 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with local Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

Progress Schools Non-Attendance Procedure

