



POLICY FOR	ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER (ATTENDANCE)
REVIEW DATE	September 2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE	September 2026
APPROVED BY	HEADTEACHER
APPROVAL DATE	October 2024

Attendance Policy

If your child is unwell and cannot attend school, please telephone or email our Attendance Officer, on the day of the absence before **8.45 am**.

Tel: 01732 529155

TEL: 01732 840995 OPTION 3

EMAIL: ATTENDANCE@THEMALLINGSCHOOL.KENT.SCH.UK

Attendance

In order for all pupils to achieve well at school, good attendance and punctuality are a vital link towards gaining success. Although parents/carers are primarily responsible for ensuring their children attend and stay at school, we see that our responsibility is to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. By creating an inclusive culture in the school, we seek to support all our pupils so that they experience school as a place where they want to be.

All students at The Malling School are expected to aim for **100%** attendance if they are to fulfil their learning potential. Of course, there are times when attendance is not possible through illness or medical needs.

90% attendance sounds quite positive until it is viewed like this. We want to make every lesson count, please help us to do just that by aiming for a 100% percentage attendance

Each year, for every 2 days a pupil is absent reduces their attendance by 1%. There is a direct correlation between high attendance and high academic attainment. Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell is not acceptable and will be questioned.

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%. For pupils and parents this can be translated into the following missed learning time.

Attendance for 1 academic school year	Absent days	School weeks absent	Number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	145 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	190 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	240 lessons

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Any medical appointments should be made for out of school hours. If this is not possible, please ensure your child attends school directly after/before the appointment. Whole days off for medical appointments will not be authorised without prior consultation with the Attendance Officer and will require proof of appointment

PUNCTUALITY

All students need to be in school and in lessons on time. Students who constantly arrive late for school and lessons disrupt their own learning along with their peers. Persistent lateness will result in sanctions being put in place. Students should arrive in school for lessons to start at 8:45am.

FEELING UNWELL

Should a student feel unwell at school the first point of contact will be their Guidance Manager, who will determine after a discussion with the student if they are unable to continue with the school day. Parental contact will always need to be made before any student leaves site, therefore please ensure we always have your correct home numbers.

HOLIDAYS

Parents should not arrange holidays during term times as these are NOT permitted at The Malling School. They will incur a Fixed Penalty Notice fine of £160.00 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. In exceptional circumstances should you require a leave of absence this must be submitted in advance in writing to the Headteacher for consideration.

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

3.3 The Attendance Team

The school Attendance team:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership Team
- Works with the School Liaison Officer (SLO) to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Leadership Team on weekly attendance reviews

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors

- Responsible for recording daily attendance marks to lessons on a daily basis
- Responsible for recording am tutor marks on a daily basis
- Speaking to pupils regarding attendance

3.5 Pastoral Leaders and Guidance Managers

- Directs actions for attendance concerns in conjunction with the school policy
- Monitors attendance data across the year group and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Senior Leadership Team
- Works the attendance team and SLO to tackle persistent absence
- Communicate with the attendance officer to organise calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.6 Parents

- Ensures regular attendance to school
- All absences are communicated to the school
 - Attendance at any meetings that are requested by the school or local authority

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of every period during the day and the register 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 of the DfE attendance codes.

Attendance Lead AHT will perform a random amendment audit once a half-term.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students should arrive between 8.30 am and 8.45 am which is a flexible drop off for all year groups. Our morning homework club is open and accessible in the school library to support families with the earlier drop offs from 08:30am.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.50am and 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.00 am. Any student arriving after register closing and 9.00 am will be marked as L (Late). Any student arriving after 9.20 am will be marked as U (Late arrival after close of register).

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45 am or as soon as possible (see also section 7).

If a student is not in school they must have a justified reason given by an adult (one with parental responsibility) that represents them. We ask parents to arrange medical appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent from school our dedicated absence lines should be called by 8.45 am with a message left clearly stating the reason for the absence. An email will also be sufficient.

Absence should continue to be reported on a daily basis unless a medical note is supplied stating the period of absence which can then be approved by the school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or where attendance is a significant concern.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified.

4.3 Planned absence.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

If an out of school hours appointment is not possible, an appointment should be arranged either first thing in the morning or later in the afternoon. We will only authorise a half day absence for a medical appointment on production of a medical appointment card and any absences without this evidence will remain on the students records as unauthorised.

We would expect students to be absent for the time of the appointment only and not the whole day. The school will decide if the absence will be authorised after the reason has been given.

If a student needs to leave during the school day, they must have a written parental note with them or an email must be received at school in order for them to sign out. If we do not have written permission from parents, they will not be allowed to leave the school site.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised absence, using the U code (Unauthorised absence)

Late arrival to lessons will receive an L code on the register. These codes will be monitored, and sanctions issued when trigger points are hit.

- 3 late codes – Supportive meeting held with parents/carers and the Pastoral Leader.
- 5 late codes – Supportive meeting held with parents/carers and a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 10 late codes – Supportive meeting held with parents/carers and a Deputy Headteacher.

Failure to improve – Off-Site reflections at our partner schools, Possible IYFA referral for Off-Site direction or MMAP placement. Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion.

Students that are significantly late to a lesson will be issued an L code along with an SLT Reflection. Truancy from a lesson will result in an SLT Reflection and a phone call home to arrange a meeting between parents/carers and a member of SLT.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. All parents will receive a text message or phone call regarding unreported absences to school on any given day.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Follow section 5.2 (Reducing persistent absence)

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will receive attendance percentage reports during the calendared school reporting.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Attendance Lead Assistant Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence (including holidays) to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the schools' discretion.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Each students attendance percentage will contribute towards the actions listed below. The school can and will employ higher stages in the attendance ladder depending on the circumstances and severity of absence.

1. Stage 1 – Monitoring

If attendance falls to 96% or less

Action Point		
1	Letter A is sent to parents/carers stating their child has fallen below our expected attendance level and current attendance is between 96% and 93%	
2	A phone call will be made to support this letter and to discuss barriers to good attendance	
3	A meeting with a PL or SLT may be appropriate at this stage	
Next steps (non-compliance from parent or no improvement in attendance)		
Stage 2 - Phone calls and meetings arranged with pastoral team and Attendance Team.		

2. Stage 2 – Support and interventions

93%-90%

Action Point		
1	Letter B is sent to the parents/carers	
2	Pastoral intervention meetings with parents/carers	
Next steps (non-compliance from parent or no improvement in attendance)		
Stage 3 –		

3. Stage 3 – Persistence absence

Falling below 90%

Action Point		
1	Letter C is sent to the parents/carers	
2	A record meeting with SLT and PL	
Next steps (non-compliance from parent or no improvement in attendance)		
Stage 4 – Attendance Service referral		

4. Stage 4 – Referral and investigation by Kent PRU Inclusion and Attendance Service

Falling below 85% attendance or 20 unauthorised absences

Action Point		Staff to oversee
1	Letter F sent out	
2	Referral to SLO and investigation by Kent PRU Inclusion and Attendance Service	
Next steps (non-compliance from parent or no improvement in attendance)		
Stage 5 – Legal proceedings		

5. Stage 5 – Legal proceedings

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Malling School we expect excellent attendance to school. When students have consistently high levels of attendance we celebrate this in various ways.

- > Students receive 25 TMSW points for 100% attendance in a half term
- > Students receive Amazon Vouchers in the end of year celebration assembly for 100% attendance
- > Year 11 students who achieve 96% attendance will have priority access to Prom tickets
- > Year 13 students who achieve 96% attendance will have priority access to Prom tickets
- > Regular communication with families about the attendance policy, support and incentives
- > Weekly tutor group and year group attendance competitions and rewards.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school before 08:45 am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

Students are legally required to attend school every day and should only be absent for illnesses. If a student is not in school, they must have a justified reason given by an adult who (one with parental responsibility) represents them. We ask parents to arrange medical appointments out of school hours.

If a child is absent from school our dedicated absence lines should be used before 08.45 am with a message left clearly stating the reason for the absence. An email will also be sufficient. Absence should continue to be reported daily unless a medical note is supplied stating the period of absence which can then be approved by the school.

If a pupil's absence falls below 96%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to be a concern after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the School Liaison Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, (below 90% attendance) the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

We collect and store attendance data 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
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum each year by the Senior Leadership and Governing Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

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
K	KCC provision	Attending education provision arranged by
V	Visit	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
B	Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual	Dual registered at another school
Code	Definition	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or	
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	
E	Pupil has been excluded and no alternative provision has been made	
I	Illness (not medical or dental)	
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for	
M	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment	
R	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance	
S	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	
G	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school	
N	Reason for absence not yet established	
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	
U	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed	
X	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly being closed	
Y5	Unable to attend as a pupil is in criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other avoidable cause	