



**Exeter school**

## **Attendance Policy**

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### 1. Policy Statement

Attendance and punctuality are considered important aspects of pupil development and education at Exeter School.

For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the school, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will ensure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly through working in partnership with pupils and parents, and seeking support from the other agencies as required.

The deputy head (pupil development, welfare, and wellbeing) is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance within the school.

### 2. Aims

This policy aims to provide a clear framework which reflects statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils as well as outlining clear procedures for identifying and addressing situations where a pupil's attendance falls below the expected level or where their punctuality is impacted.

The policy aims to ensure that procedures and lines of responsibility within the school are clear, regarding the following:

- Attendance and registration.
- Authorisation and clearance of absence and lateness.
- How sanctions are used to reinforce expectations of attendance and punctuality.
- How and when to report concerns, including identifying and addressing any situation where a pupil goes missing from school.

### 3. Statutory Framework

The legal framework governing school attendance is summarised in [School attendance guidance May 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance-guidance/school-attendance-guidance-may-2022) (2022), published by the Department for Education. The school also complies with guidance published by the Independent schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by Devon County Council which can be found on their website [www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk).

This policy is also informed by current government guidance [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

### 4. Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

#### 4.1. Responsibilities of parents/guardians

The Education Act 1996 states that "Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to make sure that their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and ability (and to any special education needs they may have)." Compulsory school age lasts from the term after a child's fifth birthday up to the last Friday in the month of June in the academic year of their sixteenth birthday. Since September 2015, all children have been required to continue in education or training until their eighteenth birthday.



School attendance is a legal requirement. Pupils may not be absent from school, except through illness or for compassionate reasons, unless the Head's or junior school Headmistress' permission is obtained beforehand. Leave of absence is normally given for educational purposes only. Parents are responsible for informing the school on any occasion when their child is unable to attend due to any reason and parents must provide the reason for non-attendance when notifying the school. This should be done by emailing [registration@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:registration@exeterschool.org.uk) as far as possible in advance and by the very latest by 9.30am on the morning of the absence; it is helpful to copy the deputy head of house/head of house/head of section into this e-mail in order that they are aware of the situation. For the junior school, parents should phone or email reception at [jsreception@exeterschool.org.uk](mailto:jsreception@exeterschool.org.uk) by 9:30am on the morning of the absence.

Unless otherwise agreed with the school, daily updates regarding extended absences are expected. **For each day of absence** an email or phone call must be provided from a parent to explain the absence. If there is no parental communication, the school attendance officer will contact home and ask for the reason behind the absence.

#### 4.2. Planned absence

Parents are requested to arrange medical appointments during holiday times or out of school hours. If it is not possible to arrange an appointment outside of school hours, wherever possible the child should come to school before the appointment and return to school afterwards.

Parents wishing to take their child out of school for exceptional reasons (such as attending a funeral or wedding, religious observance, elective surgery, or involvement in a regional or national extracurricular competition) must seek authorisation for the absence by e-mailing their child's deputy head/head of house/head of section. The house staff, through confirmation with Deputy Head (pupil development, welfare, and wellbeing) and the Head in some cases will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted. In the junior school, absences that are seen as exceptional must be authorised by the Headmistress.

The school aims to support parents whose children do not have excellent attendance and punctuality. Where parents need support to prevent their child from truanting or regularly arriving late, the school may suggest a home-school agreement, under which the parent and/or pupil agree to comply with certain requirements and the school agrees to provide them with the support that they need.

Where parents are unable to ensure regular attendance or do not engage with support services or a home-school agreement, the school will need to consider further steps in accordance with national guidelines.

#### 4.3. Responsibilities of pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well and to arrive at school in time for registration (morning and afternoon) each day during term time. Failure to attend school regularly or punctually, or failing to attend registration without good reason, or leaving the school without receiving permission to do so breaches the school's behaviour policy and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

If, for any reason, a senior school pupil needs to leave the school site during the school day, they must report to the Head's reception, or if they are unwell to the bursary where the school nurse and other first aid trained staff are based.



Pupils are not permitted to report their own absences.

#### 4.4. Responsibilities of the school

The school has a legal responsibility for taking and maintaining an accurate school register of all pupils twice each day throughout term time: once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the second (afternoon) session. The school requires that Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth pupils also register twice per day.

#### 5. Registration procedure

Form tutors have primary responsibility for registering pupils in the morning and deputy head/head of house will follow up regarding any lateness (the junior school secretary will follow up on lateness in the junior school). Form tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each school day. A second attendance register will be taken at the start of the afternoon session by the class teacher.

##### *Morning registration period*

- Pupils should be at school by 8:30am, for registration.
- Form tutors must register pupils as present or absent (using the appropriate code, appendix 1) within the morning registration period using the iSAMS registration module.
- Pupils must not be registered present unless they are seen by the tutor during the morning registration period.
- Pupils arriving late must report to the Head's reception (senior school pupils) or junior school office to register their presence and explain their lateness. Junior school pupils must also sign the 'late book'.
- If the pupil is absent the attendance officer will contact the period 1 teacher, where parents have not contacted to explain absence. If the pupil has not attended period 1, the attendance officer will phone the parent/guardian. If unable to contact parents, the attendance officer will inform a member of the safeguarding team.

##### *Afternoon registration period*

After lunch and at the start of the afternoon session, teachers register pupils as present or absent using the appropriate code (see appendix 1). In cases where a pupil was present in the morning but absent in the afternoon, the attendance officer (senior school) or junior school secretary will follow up.

#### 6. Review of attendance

Specific measures to monitor attendance are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils.

Exeter School records and collects attendance data using our data management system, iSAMS. We recognise that there are groups who nationally, and within our local setting, are more vulnerable and susceptible to lower attendance patterns such as children with special educational needs or disabilities. We work with families to overcome any specific barriers that children may be facing to ensure that pupils access all their education.

Attendance for all pupils is reviewed formally 3 times per academic year at the end of the autumn, spring, and summer terms.



Parents can access attendance data for their children through their secure login to My School Portal and the school adds attendance summary data to pupil reports.

### **7. Persistent absence and children absent from education for prolonged periods**

Pupils with 90% or less attendance are classified as Persistently Absent (PA). Persistent Absence includes both authorised and unauthorised absences. Up to the age of 16, if a pupil had 90% attendance, this would mean them losing over a year of education.

Pupils with 50% or less attendance are classified as Severely Absent (SA). Severe Absence includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

### **8. Children missing education (CME)**

We have due regard to our statutory duty to safeguard pupils who are CME. We follow the Local Authority's processes for reporting pupils missing from education. [The DfE guide can be found here.](#)

Children missing from education can mean either a child being unenrolled or a child with persistent absence.

### **9. Following up absence**

In the senior school, the attendance officer has responsibility for tracking punctuality and absence, with oversight from the Deputy Head (pupil development, welfare, and wellbeing). In the junior school, the junior school secretary and Deputy Head have this responsibility and oversight, respectively.

Any pupil with less than 95% attendance will be discussed by the school's safeguarding team and the pupil's deputy head of house/head of house. The school will speak to the pupil and contact parents if there are concerns about punctuality or attendance.

The school will follow up any absences daily to ascertain the reason if this has not been provided by parents. If the reason for absence cannot be ascertained by the school and no reason has been issued for the pupil's absence, the school will initiate safeguarding procedures and the DSL will decide on the best course of action to ensure the safety of the pupil, following procedures for children missing in education as outlined in the document from the Department of Education.

Parents will be contacted when their child's attendance drops below 92% to ensure that they are made aware that their child's attendance is low. Parents will be invited to share reasons behind absence so that support and strategies can be put in place to improve this.

The pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored throughout the following term and if there is no improvement or in cases of excessive or patterned absence, parents will be invited into school to meet with their child's head of house and a member of the safeguarding team to explore the pupil's needs and how best the school can support the pupil. Where pupils have an identified special educational need, the school's learning support staff will also provide appropriate support.

From this meeting, there may be one of two outcomes:

- School support plan in agreement with pupil and their parent
- Consideration of a multi-agency approach through Early Help assessment



The school might arrange with parents for a member of the safeguarding team to visit the pupil at home as part of the school's support plan.

If the situation does not improve, the school may consult Devon County Council and employ the support of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to improve the pupil's attendance.

In cases where a pupil is absent due to health issues, it may occasionally be necessary to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised for a particular pupil unless medical evidence is provided. This decision can only be made by the Head in consultation the Designated Safeguarding Lead and where relevant, learning support staff.

Where there is a known medical condition impacting a pupil's attendance, we will seek parental consent to speak with Devon Council Council's Education Wellbeing Team  
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-Schools-settings/inclusion/education-inclusion-service/support-for-pupils-with-health-needs/>.

If appropriate, we will refer to this service to request support for the pupil and the school.



## Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstance
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance





S	Study Leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>Other</b>		
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday