



Yewstock School

# Attendance Policy (Pupil)

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## Yewstock School Attendance Policy – September 2022

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### 1.Aims

**At Yewstock School we believe that it is a special place for everyone to learn, achieve and be valued. Children only get one chance at school, and your child’s chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly. It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children attend school. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:**

Promoting good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

**We recognise that all pupils at Yewstock have a special educational need outlined in individual EHC plans, and that additional needs including profound medical needs can sometimes impact on good attendance. We will work carefully and sensitively with parents, carers and professionals to ensure that our children are supported in an appropriate and individual manner to achieve good attendance.**

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 Yewstock School governing board is responsible for:

Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Yewstock Governing Board Member responsible for monitoring attendance may be reached via the clerk to the Board: [office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk)

### **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

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

Leading attendance across the school

Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

Having an oversight of data analysis

Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address]

### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs M. Morgan and can be contacted via 01258 472 796 or [office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk)

### **3.5 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at 9.10 a.m. and 1.20pm each day.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Transfer calls from parents to the class teacher, department leader or senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents and carers**

Parents and carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day and on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45 a.m. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

Attend every timetabled session on time

## **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 the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It 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 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

[For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.10 and will be kept open for not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.20 p.m.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45 a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parent and Carers are required to call the school office on 01258 472 796 or email: [office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk)

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent or 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 and carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

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

Parents and Carers should request leaves of absence via the school office number 01258 472 796 or email: [office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk).

However, we encourage parents and 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 or 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 appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Yewstock School will identify and respond to ongoing punctuality issues through individual meeting with parents and discussion supportive measures to ensure good punctuality.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

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

Call the pupil's parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact Dorset Social Care, named support workers, police or other appropriate supports.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Inclusion officer (Dorset Council)

#### **4.6 Reporting to parent and carers**

Yewstock School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via written reports. Where we have concerns, we will contact parents directly.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the office 01258 472 796 or [office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@yewstock.dorset.sch.uk) The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical 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

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday visiting relatives include to support bereavement, visits overseas to support cultural family needs, or specialist holiday and respite provisions

#### **5.2 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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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

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

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Yewstock School monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. We recognise that some pupils have additional needs including medical that impact on attendance, we review each individual pupils attendance in this context.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data bi-weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and Dorset 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.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (or Dorset Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 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 headteacher, Attendance Officer and Governing Board 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
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>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day