

# Paxcroft Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Reviewed: March 2023

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## 1. Aims

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.

## 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 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

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school level
- › 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 Mrs Lou Rhodes.

### **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/a member of SLT (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Alison Brown and can be contacted via [admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk).

### **3.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office for the morning session and afternoon session.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Make first day callbacks where a child is absent with no reason being given by parents

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day on time

- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00 (register close) on the day of the first 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

## 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:

- › 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.

The school day starts at 8.45am and finishes at 3.15pm for all pupils. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.15pm.

### 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 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents should call the school office and, if before 8.45am, leave a message on the answerphone regarding their child's absence from school. If calling after 8.45am, the parent should have an opportunity to talk to a member of the school office team about their child's absence from school.

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/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 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/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should fill in an absence form in the event of a planned absence and return these to the school office. Absence forms can be collected from the school office or from the 'Attendance' page of the school website.

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 appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code

### 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/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 the police
- › 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 education welfare officer

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half-termly reports.

## 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as extremely sensitive (e.g., bereavement) or a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, decided at the headteacher's discretion.

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

Where a leave of absence in term time is not agreed, or no application has been made, or the pupil does not return on the agreed date, that absence will be unauthorised and the parent/carer may incur a penalty notice.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or the 'Attendance' page of the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

'Exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday

## 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 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

Following Wiltshire guidance, our threshold for issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence is 10 sessions or 5 full days.

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

The attendance of each class will be published weekly in the school newsletter, with a special mention to the class with the strongest attendance % that week.

Where we identify families or pupils who are struggling with attendance, we offer support through our school's Parent Support Adviser.

Information for parents about the importance of school attendance and school attendance processes will be published on the school website.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, 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 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, data-led, discussions during Safeguarding Vulnerable Pupils Meetings, feeding back to teachers to facilitate individual support for pupils and families
- › Hold a termly Attendance Review Meeting to look at attendance figures for pupils who have reached persistent or severe attendance threshold and co-ordinate response in line with policy
- › 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
- › Send a reminder letter to parents about attendance when their child reaches the 90% threshold for persistent absence, or for children who have 5 or more Late marks in a half-term
- › Monitor continued attendance following a reminder letter for 4 weeks
- › Make contact with parents of children whose attendance remains low following a reminder letter through the school's Parent Support Adviser
- › Invite parents of children whose attendance have not improved after a reminder letter and/or contact from the Family Link Worker to a School Attendance Meeting, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Invite parents to follow-up School Attendance Meetings, focused on continuing to improve attendance
- › 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 bi-annually by the headteacher.

## **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.

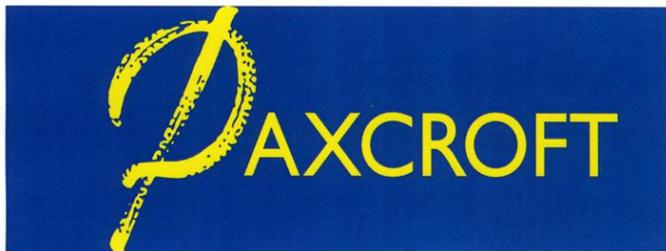
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the 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>		
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 circumstances
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
<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

## Appendix 2: High Absence Letter to Parents – Below 90%



Paxcroft Primary School  
Ashton Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 762244

E-mail:  
[admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Deputy Head: Mr Alex George

[Date]

Dear [parent's name],

I am writing to express my concern at [child's name] recent high levels of absence from school.

Their current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on their academic achievement. They have currently missed [percentage] of the school year, equating to [hours] of missed education.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

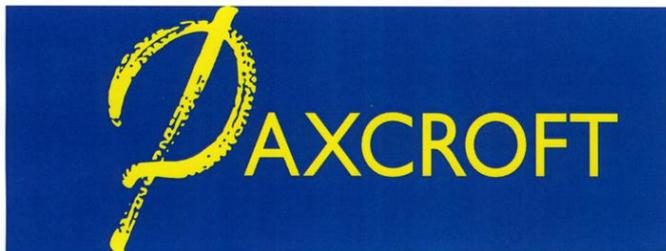
Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence. Please continue to work with the school. You are more than welcome to contact us to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

If you would like to contact the school for further support, please either speak to your child's class teacher or email the school office at [admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Headteacher

## Appendix 3: Punctuality Letter to Parents



Paxcroft Primary School  
Ashton Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 762244

E-mail:  
admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Deputy Head: Mr Alex George

[Date]

Dear [parent's name],

I am writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

They have arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time]. Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

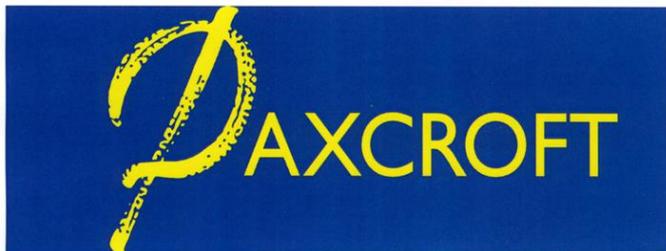
We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need.

Please contact the school office if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Headteacher

## Appendix 4: Unauthorised Absence Letter to Parents



Paxcroft Primary School  
Ashton Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 762244

E-mail:  
[admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Deputy Head: Mr Alex George

[Date]

Dear [parent's name],

I am writing to express my concern at [name's] recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] unauthorised sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

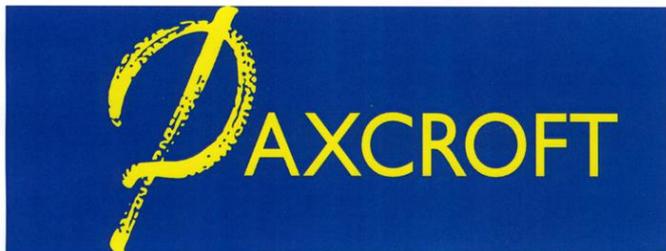
Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than 10 unauthorised absences within a 6 month period. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

If you would like to contact the school for further support, please either speak to your child's class teacher or email the school office at [admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Headteacher

## Appendix 5: Unauthorised Holiday Letter to Parents



Paxcroft Primary School  
Ashton Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 762244

E-mail:  
admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Deputy Head: Mr Alex George

[Date]

Dear [parent's name],

I am writing about your action in taking [name(s)] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We are treating this as an unauthorised holiday because [explain the evidence you have]. This will be recorded as [number] days unauthorised absence.

Our school works with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent, or before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than 10 unauthorised absences within a 6 month period. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on [name(s)] education.

Please contact the school office if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Headteacher

## Appendix 6: Penalty Notice Letter to Parents



Paxcroft Primary School  
Ashton Street  
Trowbridge  
Wiltshire  
BA14 7EB

Tel: 01225 762244

E-mail:  
admin@paxcroft.wilts.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Deputy Head: Mr Alex George

[Date]

Dear [parent's name],

With reference to our letter dated [date], [name] has now had a total of [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. These absences occurred on the following dates:

> [date]

> [date]

> [date]

In line with our attendance policy, and the local authority's code of practice, we have to now request a penalty notice be issued by the local authority.

On receipt of the notice, you must pay:

- > £60, if paid within 21 days
- > £120, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would like to invite you in for a meeting with [appropriate member of staff], so we can discuss how we can support you to help improve [name's] attendance.

Please contact the school office on 01225 762244 urgently so we can arrange this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lou Rhodes  
Headteacher