

Quick Guide: Devising a Whole School Attendance Policy

Schools should ensure that the attendance policy reflects their own specific requirements, such as setting, pupil ages, and percentages of pupils with special educational needs as well as national guidance. It is recommended that schools use [guidance](#) published by the DfE in September to evaluate their current policies and practices. [Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities](#) in particular sets out the principles underpinning an effective whole school strategy for attendance.

The policy should accurately reflect the attendance practice in school. It should be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective. The policy needs to be available to all staff and parents/carers; it should be made publicly available via the school's website.

Key sections of an attendance policy:

- Aim of the policy (School ethos)
- Reference to statutory framework and relevant guidance
- Definitions of absence and attendance
- Categorisation of absence and attendance
- School term dates
- School day start and end times including details of when registers close
- School stance on term time holidays
- Procedures for the deletion of pupils' names from the register
- Roles and responsibilities of school staff, parents and pupils
- Attendance protocols – absence procedure for parents, support systems, rewards
- Links to related policies (Safeguarding, SEN, Admissions)

Key questions to consider when developing your school attendance policy and practices:

How will you seek the views of children to inform your approach to promoting good attendance?

How will your ethos and goals inform your approach to promoting good attendance?

How will you communicate your policies to everyone involved with the school, including parents, and ensure they contribute and take ownership?

How will you make sure your policy links to other pertinent statutory policies including safeguarding, behaviour and bullying?

Who will be accountable and responsible for what?

How will you set clear and high standards using positive language?

How will you use rewards and sanctions?

What support and training will you provide for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors?

What support will you provide for parents and carers who want to learn more about how to help their children do well?

How will you monitor and evaluate your policies and consult on reviewing them so that they are fair and applied consistently?