



Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Version 3.0

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Version history

Version	Details
0.1	Previously ratified version of policy reviewed by Jamie Maloy, head teacher, and governing body curriculum & standards committee governors. Policy put into new style guide, and incorporating suggested changes from Ealing's 2022-23 policy.
1.0	This revised policy was shared with all curriculum & standards committee governors and ratified at the curriculum & standards committee meeting on 24 February 2023.
2.1	Draft policy prepared by Jamie Maloy, Headteacher, in response to 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024'
2.2	Policy reviewed and ratified by Governors in October 2024.
2.3	Policy updated by Jamie Maloy, Headteacher, in September 2026 to reflect current practices including arrangements for penalty notices.
3.0	Policy ratified by governing Body on 23 rd September 2026.



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1. Key contacts

The following Grange staff are the principal contacts for school attendance matters

- Designated senior lead for attendance/Senior Attendance Champion: Jamie Maloy, headteacher admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk
- School attendance officer: Sinead Cooney 0208 567 1432 / admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk
- School safeguarding officer: Yola Campbell 0208 567 1432 / admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk
- Local Authority Link Attendance Officer: Alison Mornix attendance@ealing.gov.uk

2. Introduction

Our school vision of 'Nurturing Excellence Together' underpins this policy. Regular attendance is essential for children to be nurtured and attain excellent results, and this is a joint venture between school and family working together. This policy sets out our expectations, but also our support for families in improving attendance.

The Department for Education's (DfE) guidance *Working together to improve school attendance*, with which this policy complies, provides advice for schools and governing bodies on maintaining high levels of school attendance.

Regular attendance is attendance at school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an 'authorisable' reason to be absent; [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) expects the school, local authority, and parents to work together to improve attendance. The Summary table in the link below should be read alongside the *Working together to improve school attendance* guidance. This guidance is statutory, and schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities must have regard to it as part of their efforts to maintain high levels of school attendance: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition, the school adheres to the following legislation / legal definitions

- *Regular attendance* at school means *In accordance with the rules prescribed by the school* (April 2017 Supreme Court ruling)
- *If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence.* School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 *Section 444, Education Act 1996*)
- **A pupil's unauthorised absence is an offence for the parent**



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3. School aims

As a school, we aim to

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and good time keeping for all children and groups of children
- Maintain an attendance rate of a **minimum** of 96%.
- Have no significant gap in attendance between different groups of pupils.
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Maintain a low rate of persistent and severe absenteeism (<90% and <50% attendance)
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of efficient and fulltime attendance.
- Help your child attain their full potential academically and socially

Good attendance is important because

- Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it's everyone's business.
- Regular attendance is an indicator of safe, healthy, and successful children.
- The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment (DfE, 2024).
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically and find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to cope with. Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attendance encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life.
- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime.

4. Rewards for good attendance and punctuality

To encourage good attendance and punctuality, the school runs a weekly **Attendance Super League**, with classes playing against each other with attendance figures. The top teams receive prizes and opportunities for rewards in school, such as extra breaks and non-uniform days.

For 100% punctuality, the school operates a raffle whereby children enter a prize draw. The prize draw operates termly, with one large prize (for example a tablet, or bike) won each term.



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5. Your responsibilities as a parent

As a parent, you can help us by

- Ensuring your child attends school on each day the school is open for the pupils unless there is an *authorisable* reason to be absent; **only the school can authorise an absence**
- Phone in to the school on each day of absence, with a reason for an absence
- Provide a timely reason, satisfactory to the school, for an absence; otherwise, the absence will remain unauthorised
- Arranging (where possible) all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Not planning any holidays during term time
- Keeping the school updated by telephone, email, or letter of any changes of circumstances
- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contact details

6. End of day collection of children

Parents are expected to collect their children on time at the end of the day. In the rare case of emergencies which mean that the parents cannot collect on time, children will be referred to a place of safety. The school reserves the right to charge parents a fee for parents who are repeatedly late in collecting their children, currently set at £10.

7. Types of absence

Absence should only happen when

- Your child is significantly / symptomatically ill and therefore unfit to attend school. There should be an observable symptom/s; *feeling unwell* is not enough – we may ask for medical verification where absence claimed as illness is frequent, prolonged or where there are absences immediately before or after a school holiday
- There is an unavoidable /unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty – when the school will ask for evidence
- Your child has a documented medical condition that hinders regular attendance – when we ask to let us know and we will ask for evidence

8. Our absence procedures

Reporting Absence:

If your child is unable to attend school, please report them absent by calling the school office on 0208 567 1432. Where absences are prolonged, please keep the school updated daily.



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If the school is unable to establish a reason for absence, a member of staff will also contact other emergency contacts parent/carers have provided to the school. Schools have a safeguarding role, so home visits may be made by school staff and on occasion by the Local Authority Link Attendance Officer if a parent cannot be otherwise contacted.

The school requires proof for every absence; no absence will be authorised without proof.

Where a child has a social worker/foster carer/Youth Offending Team worker, we will inform them if we are unable to contact you regarding an absence.

Please note: For Children Looked After (CLA), in addition we may share attendance concerns with: the child's Social Worker, the Carer, the parent if applicable and child's virtual school; the case worker assigned to the child (this may not be Ealing).

What the school will do

- While we expect a parent to contact us with a reason for each absence, on occasions they might forget. As such, we will endeavour to call, text, or otherwise contact parents.
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality
- The school will express *a concern* either verbally or by letter. If attendance does not improve or explanations for absence or lateness are unsatisfactory, you may be invited to a meeting. In these meetings, the school will also outline what the attendance expectations are and what actions will follow.
- Regularly inform parents about your child's attendance and absence levels, through our school's MIS system 'Arbor', and conversations with parents where attendance has dropped
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the Home-School Agreement and in pupil's annual reports and during meetings.
- Publish our attendance data on the school website.

Early Intervention to Support

We encourage parents to notify school as soon as you detect a reluctance in your child to attend school, as it is widely recognised that early intervention is key to prevent further deterioration.

Many children experience difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school. This may be due to friendship issues, schoolwork, exams. In such cases pupils are still expected to come to school regularly. Further absence can exacerbate the problem and can create further problems as gaps in their education widen and a sense of isolation ensues. As a School there are ways, we can support pupils to overcome these hurdles and we will tailor an individual programme by considering a variety of reasonable adjustments to timetables,



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arrival/end of day routines, offer of counselling, Mentor, and signposting to external agencies.

- Seek to support you in various ways, including
 - Offer regular meetings:
 - If attendance begins to dip below 92%, you will be required to meet with your child's teacher and Year Group Leader, who will offer suggestions and support.
 - If attendance does not improve in the following 4 weeks, you will be required to meet the Headteacher, who may invite you to participate in an *Early Help and Assessment Plan (EHAP)* in conjunction with Ealing Children's Social Care
 - Consider reasonable adjustments we can make
 - Offering re-integration support for children and families following an extended absence
 - You may be invited to agree an *Attendance Contract*.
 - A referral may also be made to external partners, including the LA School Attendance Service, whose officers visit the school regularly to review and support attendance and punctuality issues
 - Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or LA) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent, to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them
Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals
 - Where appropriate work closely with local mental health services, school level senior mental health leads, the local School Nursing Service and the local authority's special educational needs and disability team(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability related barriers to attendance.
 - Remind you of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the school literature, on our website, at open evenings, in the *Home-School Agreement* and in pupils' annual reports and during meetings
 - Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality by in school competitions, newsletter announcements, and parent communications
 - If your child has a medical condition, we will discuss this with you. We may devise an individual health care plan in collaboration with you and



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invite relevant healthcare professionals to contribute. Although individual healthcare plans are likely to be helpful in the majority of cases, it is possible that not all children will require one. We will need to make judgements about how your child's medical condition impacts on their ability to participate fully in school life, and the level of detail within plans will depend on the complexity of their condition and the degree of support needed.

- Where appropriate work closely with local mental health services, school level senior mental health leads the local School Nursing Service and the local authority's special educational needs and disability team(s) to ensure joined up support for families facing health or disability related barriers to attendance.
- Additionally, if your child has an education health and care plan, any attendance concerns will be discussed as part of the annual review.

- Share attendance data regularly with the LA Attendance Service

Other attendance support is available at:

[Ealing Families Directory](http://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk) www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Phone: 020 8825 5588

[SAFE - Supportive Action for Families in Ealing | SAFE - Supportive Action for Families in Ealing | Ealing Council](#)

If your child is absent, the class teacher will provide you the missed work, and you will be expected to complete this with your child and return it.

9. Authorised absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as *authorised absences*. That is when the school accept the reason given for absence.

We realise that there are rare and unavoidable occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent, such as sudden bereavement, unexpected parental illness, or a family crisis. If this happens, please let us know and we shall try to deal with the matter sympathetically. Following such incidents, parents are expected to make



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any necessary arrangements for their child to return to school as soon as possible (ideally the next day). If the absence is likely to be prolonged, parents must write to the headteacher outlining the reasons.

Please note that when illness is a frequent reason claimed for absence, the school will ask for evidence other than a parent's word to allow for further authorisation of absences.

10. Unauthorised absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as *unauthorised absences*. Examples of unauthorised absence are

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out / going shopping
- Because you have visitors
- Because you did not know school was open
- Interpreting or supporting a parent at a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Parent's illness (other than in an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence, or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure (at the end and beginnings of terms and half terms) or following a period of authorised leave, unless satisfactory evidence to justify this has been provided
- Term time holiday

Please be aware that unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (fines) or other legal action¹.

11. Persistence absence and severe absence

Once a child's attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason, they are automatically defined by the DfE, irrespective of the reason for absence, as a *Persistent Absentee*. Once a child's attendance falls below 50%, they are termed *Severely Absent*. Both scenarios present a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never

¹ If you receive a school absence penalty notice, you have three options

Option 1: Within 21 calendar days of receipt of the penalty notice, pay £80

Option 2: Between 22 and 28 calendar days after receipt of the penalty notice, pay £160

(Payment of the penalty discharges liability for the offence.)

Option 3: Do not pay the penalty notice. In such cases, you will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 resulting in prosecution for irregular attendance where, on conviction, a fine of up to £1,000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction.



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made up, these gaps in their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement, particularly at GCSE.

Attendance (%)	Real terms	Missed lessons
95%	Attendance of 95% for the year equals 10 days that your child has been absent, that is 2 full school weeks of your child's learning missed for that year.	50 missed lessons
80%	Attendance of 80% for the year equals 38 days absent per year that is over 7 school weeks missed.	200 lessons
Punctuality	Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year	20 lessons

Such low attendance is well below our expectations and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent, the LA and other external partners to support parents to improve matters. In such cases, parents will be offered an EHAP and might be invited to agree an *Attendance Contract* with the school or the LA as a way of managing improvement.

Unauthorised absences are reported to the LA (this includes absence due to significant lateness). The School Attendance Service may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem. The school will then work in partnership with you until matters improve. Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence include warnings, penalty notices, prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

School will conduct unannounced home visits for the families of children with persistent absenteeism.

National Threshold for Fixed Penalty Notices

Since August 2024, the Department for Education has made clear that all state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. **The threshold is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a morning or afternoon spent in school.** [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#). You will be notified by the school if you are approaching this threshold, then **fined if it is breached**.



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In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

[Ealing School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol](#)

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub](#)

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (Pg.56 National framework for penalty notices).

12. Exceptional leave – term time leave of absence

Amendments to the *2006 School Attendance Regulations* make it clear that a headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time for holidays. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (eg if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

We will consider requests for leave of absence to take part in a regulated performance or employment, when supported by a licence issued by a local authority, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education.

Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be considered. All leave is granted at the headteacher's decision. Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence need to complete an application form (available from the school office, or on admin@grange.ealing.sch.uk) well in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements. Parents sometimes confuse *telling* the school as being good enough; this is not so. Informing the school verbally is not the same as submitting an application form.

You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Evidence supporting the reason for the pupil's absence. *
- The address/es at which the pupil will be staying.
- The details and contact information of the adult responsible for the pupil's care while they are staying at this address/these addresses and their relationship to the child.
- An evidenced return date confirming your intention to return within a reasonable time (travel documents such as flight tickets would be suitable). If you are unable to



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provide an evidenced return date a reason for this must be provided along with any available evidence supporting this statement.

*It is the parent's responsibility to provide this evidence. The school are not responsible for finding this information and are not obliged to accept the evidence you provide if it is not believed to be sufficient.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed as illness before or after a school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised leave.

If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad or within the UK, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof of original return dates ie tickets or an official travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances, if a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence is extended, their school place may be at risk.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Where a child's whereabouts cannot be established, they may be regarded as a *Child Missing Education* and their place cannot be guaranteed.

Except for leave taken in an emergency, retrospective approval cannot be given without an application having been made. Satisfactory evidence of an emergency will need to be provided

A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent in respect to each of their children in line with the LA fines protocol. [Ealing School Attendance Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol](#)

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) (Pg.56 National framework for penalty notices).

13. Punctuality – remains parents' responsibility

Good punctuality is a prerequisite to good learning and shows a respect between pupil, family, and school. Starting the day on time, being organised and following routine are part of the formula for a having a successful day. Being on time to school is not just a matter of minutes on the clock; it is a fundamental aspect of personal and academic development. By fostering punctuality, schools and families contribute to the holistic growth of pupils, preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead.



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Parents remain responsible for their child's punctuality at the start of the school day. Arriving late to school on a consistent basis can have longer-term academic effects. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. If showing up late to school becomes a habit, children may develop the notion that lateness is acceptable behaviour. This belief can negatively impact their future work ethic and employment opportunities.

Morning registration is at 8.45- 8.50am for Reception, and 8.50 – 9am for the rest of the school. You need to aim for your child to come through the school gate at 8.55am, at the latest. The school day ends at 3:10pm for Reception, 3:15pm for Key Stage 1, and 3:20pm for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Registers close at 9.10am.

All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information is discussed at regular meetings with the LA attendance officer and can be made available to the courts in the form of a report should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Arrival after the close of registration, where there is not an acceptable reason, such as a medical appointment, will be marked as a missed session; unauthorised absence code *U* in line with the DfE guidance. The *U code* has the value of an unauthorised absence, whilst noting the child is in school. When late arrivals are frequent or persistent, we will want to discuss this with you to assess what support or guidance you or your child may need. A referral may also be made to the LA Attendance Service and or other external partners for additional support and monitoring.

Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time and ready to learn.

14. Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than at the end of Nursery or Year 6) parents are asked to provide the following:

- The pupil's new address if they are moving.
- The details of the parent they will be living with, or of the appropriate adult who will be caring for them if they will not be living with a parent.
- Details of the school they will attend if already established, or confirmation of school applications if not yet determined.
- Travel documents if the pupil is moving outside of the UK.

It is easiest to provide all this information by completing a leaver's form. The form can be



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requested the school office.

For children leaving school with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will notify the Ealing SEND team. (Children with EHCP's in a special school, cannot be removed from roll without permission from the Ealing SEND team).

- When a child leaves and we do not have information about where they have gone/will be educated, then they are considered to be a *Child Missing Education*. This means that the LA has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (formerly Social Services), the police, benefits / council tax records and other agencies, to try to locate your child – even if you are leaving to live abroad. By giving us the above information, these investigations, which can be intrusive, can be avoided.

15. Withdrawals from school

Parents who remain resident locally can only withdraw their children from school if they have a confirmed start date at another school or are undertaking to educate the child at home (*Elective Home Education*). If the latter, this must be confirmed in writing to the school by the parent. Pupils remain registered at school until such conditions are satisfied.

[Elective home education \(EHE\)](#)

Pupils with EHCPs

All pupils with an EHCP who are being withdrawn to be Home Educated, must have the approval of the Ealing SEND team.

16. Legal note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure efficient and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils of statutory school age (*Education Act 1996*). This is the legal requirement. The LA School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families and other partnership agencies to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or are given a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine).

17. Data and Monitoring

Registers are taken for the AM and PM sessions.

The following codes are used to record pupil attendance.



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ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE CODES (DfE, 2024) can be found here: [Department for Education Guidance 2024](#)

The Department for Education expects schools to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. Further, to facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, all schools are also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority (DfE, 2024).

Attendance data is monitored monthly by school staff, and individual children are targeted for support as needed.

18. Legislation and Guidance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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