Attendance policy checklist 2025

[DfE Working together to improve school attendance guidance](#)

Refer to pages 11, 15,19, 28, 39, 77, 91 for all policy requirements:

Schools Must:

Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand

26.   An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, all schools are expected to have a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out this guidance. As a minimum it should detail:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence.
- The name and contact details of the school's Senior Attendance Champion.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis (such as a form tutor, attendance officer etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as a head of year, pastoral lead or family liaison officer etc).
- The school's day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.
- How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance.
- The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.
- Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices and when Notices to Improve, penalty notices or other legal interventions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for a holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

27.   Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, the attendance policy should account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy should be applied fairly and

consistently but in doing so schools should always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of their policy, schools must consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 or considerations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

28.   Schools where all or some of their pupils are boarders are expected to cover all of the above areas in their policies but will want to do so in a way that meets their specific needs.

29.   The policy should be easily accessible to leaders, staff, pupils, and parents, including being published on the school's website. Parents should be sent it with any initial information when pupils join the school and reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated.

30.   As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the policy should be reviewed and updated as necessary. In doing so, schools should seek the views of pupils and parents.

Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

77.   As the proprietor of a school, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools are ultimately responsible for ensuring due regard to guidance and compliance with the law on school attendance. All trusts and governing bodies should therefore ensure their schools:

- Have an attendance policy which meets the expectations outlined in chapter 2, and which is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents and staff. Some trusts and federations may wish to have one attendance policy which covers all their schools. Whilst this can be useful in sharing effective practice, the attendance policy should be tailored to the needs of each individual school and the barriers to attendance pupils experience as identified through analysis of school level attendance data.

Confirm policy and processes for lateness:

43.   Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, effective schools have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school. All schools are expected to develop processes that

meet the needs of their pupils and contexts. As a minimum this should include arrangements to:

- Proactively manage lateness and set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be recorded as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.