

Attendance policy (including CME)

St Martin's School



Reviewed by:	Tamara Spencer
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Next review due by:	October 2027
Approved by:	Tim Shenton

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 2026](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures 2023 to 2024](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation and guidance 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
- [Child Missing in Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools \(2025\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to proprietors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention re-integration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

The attendance champion is responsible for attendance

The attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for digitally recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office after each registration session.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls/messages from parents/carers to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call/message the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, routine appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep a digital attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. An electronic back up of the register will be made on a monthly basis.

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

If an amendment is made, we will record:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:05am. The register for the second session will be taken in the afternoon, typically at the start of afternoon lessons, or in the case of swimming/gymnastics afternoons, before the children leave the school site after lunch.

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 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school or sending a message on School Spider.

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of a prolonged illness, the school will ask for 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.

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.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make routine 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. See section 5 for details on which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as present, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

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.
- 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
- 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. If explanation is not provided, the school may contact social services (MASH) to register a safeguarding concern.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will collate and analyse absence and attendance information termly and inform parents/carers of any concerns.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via School Spider. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong
- Study leave/visiting other educational setting
- Significant cultural or family trips – details to be submitted prior to approval and for a **maximum** of 10 school days per year
- Flexi-schooling requests – in exceptional circumstances, to be decided on a case-by-case basis

6. Attendance monitoring

Attendance percentages will be calculated termly for each child and analysed by the attendance champion. They will then meet with the headteacher and discuss any children of concern to enable interventions to be put in place or actions to be taken. Concerns for significant absenteeism will be monitored on a weekly/termly basis as deemed necessary.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular pupils/groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 in response to address these patterns

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

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/carers of pupils who the school 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

7. Children with SEND

The school recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) may experience additional barriers to regular attendance. The Headteacher and SENCO will work closely with the child and their family on a case-by-case basis to understand and address any individual barriers to attendance.

Where appropriate, the school will consider reasonable adjustments, targeted support and appropriate strategies to help the child attend school regularly and access their education. The aim will be to support each child to achieve full-time attendance, or attendance as close to full time as is reasonably possible, taking into account their individual needs and circumstances.

8. Children Missing Education

The school recognises its responsibility to help identify children who may be missing education and to work with the relevant local authority to ensure that children receive a suitable education.

A child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education (CME)** where they are of compulsory school age, are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. A child who remains registered at the school but has poor or irregular attendance is **not** classified as CME; concerns about their attendance should be managed through the school's attendance procedures.

The school will take appropriate steps to prevent a child from becoming missing from education. This includes maintaining accurate admission and attendance registers, following up unexplained or prolonged absence, maintaining accurate pupil and parent/carer contact information, and making appropriate enquiries where a pupil's whereabouts or educational provision is unclear.

Where a pupil leaves the school, the school will follow the requirements of the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#) regarding the removal of pupils from the admission register and will provide the relevant information to the local authority as required.

Where there are concerns that a child may be missing education, the school will work with the relevant local authority and share information as appropriate. Where the child lives in a different local authority area from the school, the school will liaise with the local authority in which the child resides.

CME concerns will also be considered alongside the school's safeguarding procedures, particularly where there are concerns about a child's whereabouts, welfare or safety.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher/deputy head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the proprietors.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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
Authorised absence		
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
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

