

The Mary Bassett Lower School

Attendance Policy



Date policy last reviewed: October 2025

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Statement of intent

The Mary Bassett Lower School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and punctuality and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to reduce absences and late arrivals.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Emily Yirrell, and can be contacted via the school office on office@marybassett.co.uk. Parents should contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE 2025 when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Supporting staff with monitoring attendance.

- Appointing a member of the SLT to have responsibility for the school's attendance and to work in conjunction with the attendance officer. The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance is Stephanie Finniss - Deputy Headteacher/DSL.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Supporting the attendance officer with parent communication, interventions and meetings
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance is Stephanie Finniss - Deputy Headteacher/DSL/SENDCo

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Ensuring reasons are known for pupil absence each day.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Monitoring punctuality.
- Communicating with staff with regards to attendance and punctuality concerns.
- Communicating with the Designated Senior Leader with escalating attendance concerns.
- The attendance officer is Emily Yirrell - Family Support Worker

Office Staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system (Arbor).
- Monitoring the school answer phone and office email for recorded and written messages about pupil absence and record them on the school system.
- Ensuring registers are complete with a mark for an attendance or absence code for all on roll.
- Adjusting the N codes on a register for known reasons for absence.
- Contacting the first then second contact by phone and email for any absent pupils where school has not been notified of the reason for absence that day.
- Notifying the attendance officer, or in their absence the senior lead for attendance, of any remaining N codes so that they can be rectified the same working day.

- Compiling fire evacuation lists by 9.30am based on the morning session's attendance register.
- Compiling fire evacuation lists by 1.45pm for the afternoon session
- Completing the daily and weekly attendance data on the school monitoring sheet on the G Drive ready for analysis.
- Liaising with the local authority for the issuing of any Fixed Penalty Notices(FPN) that have been agreed to be issued.
- Maintaining a leave of absence log to support the monitoring of unauthorised holidays in term time and liaising with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher for the issuing of FPNs linked to unauthorised holidays.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day using Arbor or in its absence a class list which is sent to the office.
- Teachers are responsible for promptly ensuring they record a present code (/) or absent code (N) for the morning and afternoon session.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Following home routines in order to arrive punctually at school.
- Talking to adults in school if they have any difficulties or worries about their school attendance

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details for at least two adults.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The punctual attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Providing evidence of reasons for absence when requested.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has been informed and agreed to authorise the absence
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave in advance and seen evidence of the appointment attended
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave in advance
- An agreed absence due to a family emergency
- Regulated performance
- Part time timetable

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day (school hours are 8.45am -3.15pm)

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Severe Absence (SA)

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be allowed into classrooms from 8.40am and the

school site is opened at 8.35am to facilitate arriving at the classroom door for classroom opening time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 8.45am for YR-Y4 and by 9.00am for Nursery.
- The morning register will close at 9.15am.
- Pupils will receive an authorised late mark if they are not in their classroom at 8.45 but do arrive before 9.15am.
- The morning register will close at 9.15am. Pupils will receive an unauthorised late mark to show that they are now present in school. This mark counts towards absence statistics.
- The afternoon register will be marked by 12pm for Nursery, 12.45pm for Reception and Key Stage One, and 1.30pm for Key Stage Two.

Parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff so that support and advice can be offered.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via email or telephone as soon as possible and before 8.45am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Email: office@marybassett.co.uk Telephone: 01525 373017

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9.15am to report the absence, the school office staff will contact the parent by telephone or text as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

If no response is gained from the first contact, then an email will be sent and other emergency contacts called.

If there is no response from any emergency contact by 12pm then the attendance officer will be informed and the unauthorised absence risk assessed. Measures that the school may take include a home visit by two members of staff (one must be a member of SLT), contacting the multi – agency safeguarding hub as well as contacting the police for a welfare visit.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ensure that the pupil is safe.
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school system.
- Ensure any appropriate safeguarding action is being taken.

The school will not usually request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is a concern e.g. the frequency of self-certified absences. Medical evidence of an appointment in school hours should always be made available to school.

In the case of initial attendance concerns, arrangements will be made for parents to have voluntary support from the Family Support Worker to improve attendance. If attendance continues to be a concern and/or drops to 90% or below then parents will be required to attend an in person or virtual meeting with the Family Support Worker.

The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly. or are absent for 15 days due to illness.

The school will use the local authority and DFE guidance for the issuing of a FPN for pupils who have missed 10 school sessions (5 days equivalent) or more within 10 school weeks without authorisation

If a pupil's attendance continues to be a concern after initial support then a meeting will be arranged with the Designated Senior Leader for Attendance.

The school follows the Central Bedfordshire Council guidance for reporting children missing from education and for persistent absences. This includes referring the pupil not attending to the Education Welfare officer. Pupils not attending school without good reason may qualify for the local authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The school follows the August 2024 updated guidance for attendance. Further information can be found in Appendices B and C and at the following links.

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/522/school_attendance

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/526/non-school_attendance

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day for the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.

The school office staff will code any known absences appropriately. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. See Appendix D.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. transition days for EYFS classes.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

All N codes are investigated from the first day of absence by the office staff and attendance officer.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered for authorised leave, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. This form is available from the school office or by contacting:

office@marybassett.co.uk

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a fixed penalty notice. The

school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 95 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be authorised for pupils from these communities under this code if the school is notified in advance..

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or Individual Healthcare Plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where there is a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, the DSL will be informed and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.
- Contact the Medical Education Team for support for education away from the school site.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a positive attendance support plan
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through an Early Help Assessment.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Whether consideration should be given for a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.

- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Support for and adjustments to the return to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher’s discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunchtime and their child’s behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher’s decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of strategies to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a monthly monitoring review for all pupils.
 - Holding regular reviews for attendance cases of concern
 - Engaging with an LA school attendance officer (SAO).
 - Providing attendance support to families and pupils
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge excellent and outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Weekly class attendance promotion in Celebration assembly
- Half termly best class attendance certificate in assembly and class reward eg non uniform day, priority access to hall at lunchtimes, SLT joining them for lunch, in class treat
- Half termly praise texts to parents for excellent (98+%) and outstanding (100%) attendance.
- Termly pupil certificates in Celebration Assembly for excellent and outstanding attendance for the preceding term

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. Early Help, social services.

The school and parent will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness, or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will initially approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENDCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access the support that they may need.

Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children with or previously with a social worker
- Children in Care or previously in Care
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination
- Pupils who have previously been suspended

The school will use a number of methods to help support these and other pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

The school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of persistent and severe absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Issue a Notice to Improve letter

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's guidance.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA (90-93% attendance).

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half termly and termly basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in self-certified illness.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- School trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to monitor and promote the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will be notified of potentially at-risk pupils.

Awareness raising will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance

The governing body will provide time in the school day for dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

The school's attendance target is 96 percent.

The school's attendance is communicated weekly to staff and parents through the school's weekly bulletin.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026

Any changes made to this policy in the interim will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix A

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

The Mary Bassett Lower School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Contact is made by the school office with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported by the school office to the attendance officer or Attendance Lead daily.
2. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established on the school day are recorded as an unauthorised absence. These can be amended up to 5 days later for any authorised or unauthorised absence codes.
3. Any pupil with an unexplained absence, coded as N, and with no contact being secured with all known contacts then has their situation risk assessed for a home visit on the first day of absence.
4. A home visit will be carried out by two members of staff – one must be a member of the SLT on day two. This follows further attempts to make contact and parents made aware by voicemail or email that school will carry out a home visit if no response is received by 12pm on day two.
5. All pupils who have an attendance of 90% or less are reported on the termly Register Check with the Local Authority.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls to an area of concern level (90-93%), the attendance officer offers support to parents to improve attendance via a letter.
7. If this attendance does not improve after four weeks, then the attendance officer invites parents to an attendance support meeting in school or online.
8. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% at any point, the parent is invited to an attendance review meeting for initial support to improve attendance and to address barriers. This pupil's case is then monitored weekly as a case of Persistent Absence. A monitoring period of 4 weeks is allowed for the pupil to make progress with their attendance from the point of concern.
9. If the pupil's attendance is below 90% and attendance does not improve after the attendance review meeting, then the SLT member responsible for attendance will invite parents to a formal review meeting in school.
10. The School Attendance Officer (SAO) may be referred to at any time for support. However, a referral will always be made by school if attendance has not improved after a term of advice and support.
11. The school follows the Central Bedfordshire Guidance as well as Government guidance for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for poor attendance when thresholds have been met.
12. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to the agreed target.
13. Whole school attendance is recorded by office staff on the whole school monitoring sheet daily to support analysis and patterns of specific days of absence.

14. Factors influencing attendance for a specific class or year group or whole school are also recorded on this whole school monitoring sheet e.g. outbreak of chickenpox, power cut so school closed etc.
15. Attendance for vulnerable groups and pupils of attendance concern is monitored monthly and parents are made aware of concerns by letter.

Appendix B

A Parent Guide to Working Together to Improve School Attendance

New Attendance Rules Parents Need to Know since September 2024

You will know that if a child misses just one day of school, that is one day's worth of education lost. If it's more than one day, those losses will be cumulative and the effect on long-term prospects could not be more damaging. The full Working Together to improve attendance guidance is available through the link below.

£80 fines and Improvement Notices

Parents will receive "improvement notices", where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with education and improve their child's attendance before a fine is issued.

Absence fines for a first notice (Fixed Penalty Notice) charged to each parent will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. From Autumn term 2024, only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. The second notice charged to a/each parent will be £160 with no option for a reduced rate if paid early. If a further breach of the attendance thresholds occurs within the three years then no further notices will be issued but prosecution and other attendance legal interventions will be considered by the local authority.

National fine thresholds

From September, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. They should "not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices". The threshold can be met with "any combination of unauthorised absence". For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

Long-Term Sickness to be Flagged with Local Authorities

Schools will have to give councils the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days. Schools will also be expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

Mental Health Awareness

All schools should now be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

The guidance acknowledges many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. But it is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://blog.gov.uk)

Appendix C

A Parent's Guide to Attendance Percentages

The table below illustrates why we should all be concerned if your child is not attending school regularly.

Your child is expected to be in school 190 days each year. This leaves 175 days for family time, holidays, appointments and personal time.

Attendance Percentage Concerns %	Equivalent days of absence if over a full school year	Equivalent weeks of absence if over a full school year	Number of lessons missed (Based on 5 lessons per day)
95	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
75	48 days	10 weeks	250 lessons

Why punctuality matters to your child

Arriving late for the school day means your child misses learning time as the school day starts promptly at 8.45am.

In addition your child may become anxious for arriving late into class when everyone else is seated and ready, and may take time to settle into learning after arriving.

Minutes late (everyday)	Lost learning time (over the year)
5	3 days
10	6.5 days
15	10 days
20	13.5 days
30	19 days and receives an unauthorised attendance mark

Appendix D

Attendance codes

The following codes will be used:

/ = Present in the morning

\ = Present in the afternoon

L = Late arrival before the register has closed

C = Leave of absence granted by the school

E = Excluded but no alternative provision made

H = Authorised holiday

I = Illness

M = Medical or dental appointments

R = Religious observance

B = Off-site education activity

G = Unauthorised holiday

O = Unauthorised absence

U = Arrived after registration closed

N = Reason not yet provided

X = Not required to be in school

T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

V = Educational visit or trip

P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity

D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Y = Exceptional circumstances

Z = Pupil not on admission register

Changes from September 2024 onwards

Inactive Codes

H, Y and J. If any service children require Holidays in term time then schools should use the code C.

The J code has been replaced by a new code J1 and has changed from and Approved Educational Activity to Authorised Absence.

Other new Codes

K Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority

(its set in place by the LA and not the school)

Q Unable to attend the school because of access arrangements.

(use this code where the LA has failed to arrange transport for the student, Y1 is used if the organised transport is not available)

Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 Unable to attend due to whole school being closed

Y5 Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6 Absent in accordance with public health guidance or Law

Y7 Unable to attend because of other unavoidable Cause

C Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstance (Guidance changed for this Code)

C1 Leave of Absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance (Or employment paid or unpaid, Continue to use W for Works Experience)

C2 Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Codes where schools MUST record nature of activity

B Attending any other approved educational activity

(Not Sporting Activity OR Work Experience)

Examples of nature of activity

- 1) Attending taster days at college
- 2) Attending courses at college
- 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school

K Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority

(A pupil attending a provision arranged by the school should use the code P or B)

Examples of natures of provision

- 1) Attending courses at college
- 2) Attending unregistered alternative provision such as home tutoring

Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

The DfE has not given any examples for the nature of the unavoidable cause

