

Greenfield Secondary School

Attendance Policy (Example Template)

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This is an example policy for a typical secondary school in England. Replace placeholders (names, times, contacts) and take local advice before adoption.

1. Why attendance matters

Being in school every day helps pupils learn well, build friendships and feel part of the community. We aim for every pupil to attend as close to 100% as possible and to arrive on time for every lesson.

2. What the law and guidance say (England)

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure regular attendance. Schools must keep admission and attendance registers and follow up unexplained absence. This example aligns with the Education Act 1996, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE guidance “Working together to improve school attendance” (in force from 19 August 2024).

3. Our commitments to families

- We will welcome pupils warmly every day and notice when things are hard.
- We will contact you on the first day of any unexplained absence.
- We will listen to barriers and put support in place quickly.
- We will only consider legal action if support is not appropriate or not working.

4. Who does what

- Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion – leads strategy and reviews impact each term.
- Attendance Lead/Team – runs daily processes, checks data and coordinates support.
- Tutors/Teachers – take accurate registers every session and follow up concerns.
- Parents/Carers – make sure your child attends and phone us when they cannot.
- Pupils – arrive on time, talk to us if you’re worried, and work towards your attendance goals.

5. The school day & punctuality (example times)

Registers open at 08:40 and close at 09:10. Pupils arriving after the register is taken but before it closes are marked late. Arrivals after the close of register are recorded as unauthorised absence for that session unless there is a valid reason. We will follow up repeated lateness and agree simple steps to improve punctuality.

6. Reporting an absence

- Phone the attendance line by 08:30 on each day of absence (example number: 01234 567890).
- Tell us the reason and the expected date of return.
- Send evidence if we ask (e.g., appointment letter).

7. Planned absence & term-time leave

Please request leave in advance. We can only agree leave in the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 Regulations (e.g., performances or work abroad under licence, interviews, public examinations, or other exceptional circumstances). Holidays taken in term time are very unlikely to be authorised.

8. If attendance dips – our staged support

We respond early and proportionately. Typical steps are: a tutor check-in; a conversation with you and your child to understand barriers; reasonable adjustments in school (short-term and reviewed); and, where needed, a coordinated early-help plan with external services. Pupils attending 90% or less (persistent absence) or 50% or less (severe absence) are prioritised.

9. Escalation & legal intervention (national framework)

If support is not appropriate (for example, an unauthorised term-time holiday) or does not lead to improvement, the local authority may consider legal action. A penalty notice may be considered when a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions within a rolling 10 school-week period. Where support is appropriate but not engaged with, a Notice to Improve will normally be issued first (usually 3–6 weeks). Under national rules, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years. The first notice is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; 28 days to pay). Any second within that period is £160 (28 days to pay). Non-payment can lead to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

10. Monitoring, data & review

Attendance is reviewed daily, weekly and termly at pupil, cohort and whole-school level. We look for patterns such as repeated lateness, frequent single-day absences or emerging persistent absence. Governors receive a termly report.

11. Safeguarding & vulnerable pupils

Poor attendance can signal safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding team will review persistent or severe absence and act in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. If a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, we make enquiries and, where required, refer to the local authority.

12. SEND, health needs & part-time timetables

We make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities or additional needs and involve the SENDCO. A part-time timetable is only used in exceptional circumstances, is time-limited, recorded in a plan and reviewed frequently to support a return to full-time education.

13. Communication & recognition

We keep families informed (start/finish times, how to report absence, who to contact) and recognise improved attendance in a fair and inclusive way.

14. Data protection & records

Attendance information is processed under UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018. Registers are completed accurately each session and kept in line with statutory requirements. We share data with the local authority and DfE where required by law.

15. Local details to insert

- Senior Attendance Champion: [Name] • Email: [address]
- Attendance Lead/Officer: [Name] • Email: [address]
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: [Name] • Email: [address]
- Attendance line / email for reporting absence: [details]
- Local Authority Attendance Support Team: [contact details]

NOTE

This is an example document for a typical secondary school in England. It is not legal advice.