



Shakespeare

Primary School

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025 2026

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review: October 2026

Introduction

Shakespeare Primary School is committed to providing a broad, balanced, and inclusive education for all pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is vital to ensure every child reaches their full potential, both academically and socially.

Excellent attendance helps children to:

- Access the full curriculum and make good progress;
- Build positive relationships with peers and staff;
- Develop resilience, independence, and good habits for adult life.

We recognise that promoting good attendance is a shared responsibility between school, parents/carers, pupils, and external agencies. Our aim is to work together to remove barriers to attendance and to provide early help and support to families where needed.

Legal and Strategic Framework

- The Education Act (1996)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2024)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
- Children Missing in Education (updated Sept 2025)

Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Clarify school procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Outline the responsibilities of parents/carers, staff, governors, and external partners.
- Ensure the school meets statutory duties in accordance with *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)* and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. We expect all parents/carers to:

- Ensure their child attends every day and arrives on time (by 8:45 a.m.).
- Contact school before 9:00 a.m. on the first day of absence, providing a clear reason and for each consecutive day thereafter.
- Inform the school if their child will be late and accompany them to the school office to sign in.

- Keep school informed of ongoing absences and provide medical evidence if requested.
- Notify school immediately of any change of contact details.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.
- Promote the value of good attendance and punctuality with their child.

Failure to ensure regular attendance may result in a referral to the Local Authority and/or the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice in accordance with statutory thresholds.

School Staff

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority across all areas of school life.
- Provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment in which pupils feel valued.
- Promote the importance of attendance and punctuality through the curriculum, assemblies, and communications with families.
- Monitor attendance daily, identify concerns early, and engage with families to provide support.
- Record attendance accurately and promptly using SIMS.
- Follow up all unexplained absences in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Work collaboratively with the Inner East Cluster Attendance Team, the Local Authority, and other agencies to support families where attendance is a concern.
- Comply fully with statutory guidance and local authority attendance protocols.

Class Teachers and Support Staff

- Record attendance accurately twice daily.
- Follow up on absences with pupils and parents.
- Discuss attendance and punctuality with parents during meetings.
- Encourage good attendance on days highlighted as an issue by the Attendance Champion as per recent data (e.g. Fridays, Mondays, if there is a test in school, etc).
- Refer any emerging attendance or punctuality concerns to the Attendance Team promptly.

Governors

- Receive regular attendance reports and data from the Head Teacher.
- Monitor attendance trends and challenge where necessary.
- Ensure the policy is implemented consistently and complies with national and local requirements.

Early Years Attendance

Attendance in Nursery and Reception is equally important in establishing positive routines. Although statutory school age begins the term after a child's fifth birthday, regular attendance in Early Years supports children's learning, development, and transition.

Attendance in Early Years will be monitored in line with the rest of the school, and families will be supported to develop positive attendance habits from the outset. If a child's whereabouts are unknown, a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education Team in accordance with guidance.

Recording Attendance

Attendance is recorded electronically via SIMS twice daily — by 8:55 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. All absences must be coded accurately in line with DfE guidance. Attendance is shared with the DfE via Wonde to allow school and other agencies to monitor attendance on the DfE dashboard.

Authorised Absence

Absences may only be authorised by the Head Teacher in the following circumstances:

- Genuine illness (with medical evidence if requested).
- Emergency medical/dental appointments (proof required).
- Religious observance (maximum three days per year).
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Head Teacher prior to the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

Absences will be recorded as unauthorised if they do not meet the above criteria, including:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family visits or celebrations.
- Parent or sibling illness.
- Oversleeping or refusing to attend.
- Appointments without evidence or prior agreement.

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or further legal action in line with Local Authority procedures.

Monitoring and Intervention Procedures

1. **First Day Response:**
 - Phone calls are made to parents/carers for any unexplained absence.
 - Home visits may be conducted where no contact is made.
2. **Ongoing Monitoring:**
 - Attendance is reviewed weekly by the Attendance Champion and data shared with the wider staff team for intervention.
 - The Attendance Team carry out regular focals to identify any families in need of support or intervention.
 - Patterns of absence or lateness are identified and discussed with families.

3. Early Support and Escalation:

- Where attendance falls below 95%, parents/carers will be contacted.
- A plan of support may be initiated to identify barriers and agree actions.
- Where attendance fails to improve, the case may be referred to the Inner East Cluster Attendance Team for targeted intervention.

4. Formal Procedures:

- If attendance continues to fall and support has not resulted in improvement, the Local Authority may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Punctuality

- The school day begins at 8:45 a.m.; children should be on site by 8:40 a.m.
- Arrivals after 8:45 a.m. must report to the office and sign in.
- Arrivals after 9:15 a.m. will be marked as unauthorised absence (U code).
- Persistent lateness (10 or more occasions per term) will be monitored and may result in further action or a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Medical Appointments

Parents are expected to arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible.

In exceptional or emergency circumstances, appointments during the school day may be authorised if evidence is provided.

Pupils must be signed in and out at the school office when leaving or returning for appointments.

Exceptional Leave

Under current legislation, headteachers may not authorise leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

Each request will be considered individually, taking into account:

- The reason for the request;
- The child's current attendance record;
- The timing of the proposed leave.

Parents must complete an Exceptional Leave Request Form in advance (see Appendix).

If leave is not authorised but still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

From August 2024, the DfE introduced a national framework for penalty notices.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where a pupil has:

- 5 or more unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 2.5 days) within a rolling 10-week period; or
- Persistent lateness recorded as unauthorised after registration closes.

The penalty is:

- **£80 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days;
- **£160** if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Failure to pay may result in prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Safeguarding and Children Missing Education (CME)

A child not attending school is a safeguarding matter. Absence may indicate wider welfare concerns, including neglect, domestic abuse, or exploitation.

The Attendance Team and Safeguarding and Child Protection Team will work with, where necessary, external agencies such as Children's Social Work Services, West Yorkshire Police, and the Education Safeguarding Team at Leeds City Council.

If a child's whereabouts are unknown, a referral will be made to the **Children Missing Education Team** in accordance with statutory guidance. This includes children not of statutory school age (2-5 year olds).

Celebrating Good Attendance

Shakespeare Primary School promotes and rewards good attendance through:

- Ongoing initiatives which target attendance at a class, child and family level (Golden Tickets class attendance award for additional play times class trip or ice cream van visit, Attendance Element cards for individual children, flowers and chocolates scheme for parents, etc).
- Half-termly recognition for pupils achieving 100% attendance.
- Positive communication with families to celebrate improvement.

Coding

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (see Appendix for Coding).

Appendix 1: Coding

If a pupil is present in school the following codes from table 1 should be used

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present at school AM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
\	Present at school PM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.	Attending (present)

1. If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code from table 2 should be used.

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
K	Attending education provision arranged by the LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of the provision must also be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Code V can only be used if the pupil is present at the visit. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
P	Participating in a sporting activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; the activity is of an educational nature; the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

W	Attending Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA • In session for which it is recorded • The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or • a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's • attendance has been approved. 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA • In session for which it is recorded • The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and • the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure 	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

		<p>that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education'. pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register. 	
D	Dual Registered at another school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up. 	Not a possible attendance (neither present nor absent)

2. If a pupil is absent with leave (NB schools not required to follow regulation 11 in granting a leave of absence should still use the relevant code)

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance licence issued by LA or • Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or • Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose 	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for medical or dental appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement in advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • Minimum time necessary • Where pupil is absent at registration 	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement in Advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • In session absence recorded 	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This code should be used sparingly for Y11 pupils during public exams. 	Authorised absence
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For part time attendance • Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X 	Not a possible attendance (neither present nor absent)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional circumstances • if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time • Temporary • See Working Together to improve attendance 	Authorised absence
C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional circumstances • No blanket approach • School discretion • Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. 	Authorised absence

Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. 	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves) 	Authorised absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. 	Authorised absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education 	Authorised absence

Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if— (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil under section 508B(1) of the 1996 Act(13) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil because of section 508E(2)(c) of the 1996 Act(14) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and— (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home; (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school; and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, 	Not a possible attendance

		<p>awaiting trial or sentencing, or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detained under a sentence of detention. <p>A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day</p>	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	<p>The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. 	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	<p>This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))</p>	Not a possible attendance

3. Absent for unauthorised reasons

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
G	Holiday not granted by school	<p>The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.</p> <p>A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.</p> <p>If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.</p>	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes	Unauthorised absence

Administrative Codes

Code	Meaning	Statistical Value
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	NOT COLLECTED
#	Planned whole school closure	NOT COLLECTED

Appendix 2: Exceptional Leave Form



Leave of Absence Request

SCHOOL:		DATE OF REQUEST:	
First Name	Surname	Date of Birth	Class
Leaving date:		Date due back in school:	
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):			days
Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend	First Name	Surname	School
Contact Details			
Parents: (eg. Mother, Father, Grandparent, Carer):	First name:	First name:	
	Surname:	Surname:	
	Address:	Address:	
	Postcode:	Postcode:	

	Email: Home phone number: Mobile: Alternative number while away:	Email: Home phone number: Mobile: Alternative number while away:
Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) The exceptional circumstances are...		
Point of departure (eg. Airport, Coach, Train Station etc.):	Destination:	
Time of departure:	Flight numbers and name of airline:	
Emergency Contact Details (preferably someone who is staying in Leeds): First Name: Surname: Address: Postcode: Relationship to the child: Contact Number:	<u>*Provide copies of travel plans to support your request.*</u> If child is not leaving with parent(s) who is accompanying them? Who will be caring/responsible for the child? Why is/are the parent(s) not leaving with the child? Name: Relationship to child: Address: <u>Postcode</u> :	

Statutory Declaration

Legal responsibility

As a parent/guardian I understand all children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is my responsibility as a parent to ensure the regular school attendance of my children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.

*I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are **exceptional circumstances**, and **holidays are not considered exceptional**. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the **Department for Education** has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.*

Fines

- *First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.*
- *Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.*
- *Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. **A guilty verdict at the Magistrates' Court can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities.***

School places

I am aware that a referral will made to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team (CME) if my request is unauthorised, and my child hasn't returned to school on the agreed date. This can result in my child losing their school place.

I am also aware that there is a shortage of places in the area, so if my child loses their school place it could result in having to travel to a school out of area or my child without a school, being a detriment to their education and causing implications to my own employment.

Parent's Full Name:

Parent's Signature:

Date:

Parent's Full Name:

Parent's Signature:

Date:

<u>School Section</u>	Is the requested absence during exams Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any previous request Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reason for refusal/Comments				
Authorised <input type="checkbox"/>		Approved		for School days
Unauthorised <input type="checkbox"/>		Not approved		for School days
Headteacher's Signature				