



Attendance Policy

The Avenue

Approved by:	Proprietor Body
---------------------	-----------------

Last reviewed on:	June 2026
--------------------------	-----------

Next review due by:	June 2027
----------------------------	-----------

1. Introduction

The Avenue is an independent special school committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive, and nurturing educational environment for all its pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial for pupils to achieve their full potential, benefit from the curriculum, and develop positive social and emotional skills. This policy sets out The Avenue's expectations and procedures regarding pupil attendance and punctuality, reflecting our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Promote excellent attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Ensure all pupils have access to the full educational opportunities offered by the school.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and managing pupil absence.
- Define authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Identify and support pupils who are persistently absent or whose attendance causes concern.
- Fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities, particularly in relation to unexplained absences and Children Missing Education (CME).
- Comply with relevant legislation, guidance, and the Independent School Standards (ISS).

3. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils registered at The Avenue.

4. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with, and seeks to comply with, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR) 2014, particularly Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils) and Part 4 (Suitability of Staff, Supply Staff

and Proprietors)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (latest version)
- DfE's "Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024"

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The Governing Body / Proprietor

The Governing Body / Proprietor is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has a robust attendance policy that complies with legal requirements and the ISSR.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the attendance policy.
- Ensuring adequate resources are allocated to support attendance management.

5.2. The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall implementation and oversight of this policy.
- Ensuring attendance data is accurately recorded and monitored.
- Liaising with parents/carers, staff, and external agencies regarding attendance concerns.
- Authorising or refusing requests for leave of absence.
- Referring cases of persistent absence or Children Missing Education (CME) to the relevant authorities as appropriate.
- Ensuring staff are trained on attendance procedures and their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Will appoint a member of the SLT to be the Attendance Champion for the school

5.3. School Staff (including Class Teachers and Support Staff)

All school staff are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and across the school.
- Taking accurate daily registers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Reporting any attendance concerns or unexplained absences immediately to the designated staff member (e.g., Attendance Lead, Headteacher).
- Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to attend regularly, understanding the potential impact of their needs on attendance.

5.4. Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly

and punctually. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school every day they are required to, unless prevented by illness or other authorised circumstances.
- Notifying the school on the first day of absence, before the start of the school day (ie by 9.00am), providing a clear reason for the absence.
- Providing ongoing updates for prolonged absences.
- Making medical/dental appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Not taking holidays during term time.
- Working in partnership with the school to address any attendance concerns.
- Ensuring their child arrives at school on time.

5.5. Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Inform a trusted adult at school if they have concerns about attending.

6. Attendance Expectations

The Avenue expects all pupils to achieve high attendance. We recognise that illness or unavoidable appointments may occasionally prevent this, but every effort should be made to ensure consistent attendance. Punctuality is also vital; pupils should arrive at school by 9.00am to be ready for registration at 9.10am

7. Reporting Absence

7.1. Illness

If a child is unwell and unable to attend school:

- Parents/carers *must* notify the school by telephoning the school reception before 9.00am on the first day of absence.
- The message should clearly state the child's name, class, and the specific reason for absence.
- For prolonged illness, parents/carers should provide daily updates unless otherwise agreed with the school.
- The school reserves the right to request medical evidence (e.g., a doctor's note, appointment card) for prolonged or frequent absences due to illness.

7.2. Medical/Dental Appointments

- Parents/carers should endeavour to schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

- If an appointment must take place during school hours, parents/carers *must* notify the school in advance, providing evidence of the appointment (e.g., appointment card/letter).
- Pupils should attend school before and after the appointment whenever possible.

7.3. Other Absences

For any other unavoidable absence (e.g., bereavement), parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances.

8. Authorised vs. Unauthorised Absence

8.1. Authorised Absence

An absence is authorised only if:

- The pupil is too ill to attend school, and the school has been notified and accepts the reason.
- The pupil has a medical or dental appointment that cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours, and evidence has been provided.
- The pupil is attending a religious observance, provided prior permission has been sought and granted by the Headteacher.
- The pupil is attending an approved educational activity or an approved sporting event.
- The Headteacher has granted a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (see Section 9).

8.2. Unauthorised Absence

An absence is unauthorised if:

- No reason is provided for the absence.
- The reason provided is not deemed acceptable by the Headteacher (e.g., minor ailments that would not prevent attendance, shopping trips, birthday celebrations).
- The pupil is taken out of school for a holiday during term time without prior Headteacher approval.
- The pupil arrives late after the registers have closed without a valid reason.

9. Leave of Absence (Holidays During Term Time)

The Avenue strongly discourages any absence from school for holidays during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

- Parents/carers wishing to request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must do so in writing to the Headteacher well in advance, detailing the exceptional circumstances.
- The Headteacher will consider each request individually, taking into account the pupil's attendance record, the nature of the circumstances, and the impact on their learning.
- There is no automatic right to a leave of absence. If a request is declined and the pupil is still absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Where term time holidays are taken, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice.

10. Punctuality

Punctuality is essential.

- The school day begins with registration at 9.10am
- Pupils arriving after this will be marked as late.
- Persistent lateness will be addressed by the school and may trigger intervention procedures similar to those for absence.

11. Monitoring and Recording Attendance

- Attendance is recorded twice daily, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, using Arbor
- Reasons for absence are recorded accurately
- Attendance data is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and designated staff
- Parents/carers will receive regular updates on their child's attendance

12. Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA)

12.1 A pupil is defined as persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90%

- The Avenue will closely monitor the attendance of all pupils, particularly those whose attendance is declining or falls below 95%.
- When a pupil's attendance becomes a concern, the school will:
 - Initiate contact with parents/carers to discuss the reasons for absence and offer support
 - Hold meetings with parents/carers to develop an action plan to improve attendance
 - Consider implementing an Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) or other supportive measures

- Involve external agencies (e.g., Local Authority attendance team, Early Help services, Education Welfare Officer) if attendance does not improve despite school intervention.

12.2 Severe Absence (SA)

A pupil is defined as severely absent if their attendance falls below 50%. The Avenue recognises that severe absence indicates significant barriers to a pupil's education and wellbeing, requiring immediate and intensive intervention.

When a pupil's attendance falls to, or is at risk of falling to, severe absence levels, the school will:

- Initiate immediate contact with parents/carers, typically within 24 hours of the attendance falling below 50% or becoming a severe concern, to discuss the reasons for absence and assess any immediate safeguarding risks.
- Request an urgent meeting with parents/carers and the pupil (where appropriate) to understand the underlying issues contributing to severe absence and to develop a comprehensive, multi-agency action plan.
- Proactively involve relevant external agencies without delay, such as Early Help services, and Children's Social Care, to provide coordinated support and intervention.
- Implement an intensive Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) or similar support measures, tailored to the individual pupil's needs, which may include reviewing school provision, pastoral support, and accessing specialist services.
- Clearly communicate the potential for legal intervention (e.g., penalty notices, court action) if attendance does not improve despite school and agency support.
- Maintain daily monitoring of attendance and regular reviews of the effectiveness of the support plan, adjusting interventions as necessary.

13. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Avenue recognises that pupils with SEND may face additional challenges that impact their attendance.

- This policy applies to all pupils
- Individual circumstances and needs will be taken into account when addressing attendance concerns for pupils with SEND
- The school will work closely with parents/carers, external professionals, and the pupil

themselves to identify and address barriers to attendance, providing appropriate support and reasonable adjustments as necessary

- Attendance patterns for pupils with SEND will be reviewed as part of their Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan reviews or other SEND support meetings

14. Safeguarding and Children Missing Education (CME)

Regular attendance is a key safeguarding issue. Unexplained or persistent absence can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

- If a child is absent and the school has not received a reason, or the reason is unsatisfactory, the school will:
 - Attempt to contact parents/carers immediately on the first day of absence.
 - If contact cannot be made, the school will follow its safeguarding procedures, which may include contacting emergency contacts, making a home visit, or escalating concerns to the Local Authority Children's Social Care.
- The Avenue has a duty to refer any pupil who is absent for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, without authorisation, to the Local Authority as a potential Child Missing Education (CME).
- All staff are aware of their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns related to attendance to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

15. Early Help

Where attendance concerns persist, and there are underlying family or individual challenges impacting a child's ability to attend school regularly, The Avenue will consider whether an Early Help assessment and intervention would be beneficial. This will be discussed with parents/carers.

16. Legal Intervention: penalty notices

The Avenue, in conjunction with the Local Authority, may issue Penalty Notices in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and the Department for Education's "Working Together to Improve School Attendance".

A Penalty Notice may be considered in cases of unauthorised absence, including but not limited to:

- **Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time:** Where a pupil is taken out of school for a holiday during term time without prior Headteacher approval.

- **Persistent Unauthorised Absence:** Where a pupil has accumulated a specified number of unauthorised absences (e.g., 10 or more sessions within a rolling 10-school week period) that are not due to illness or other authorised circumstances.
- **Persistent Lateness After Registers Close:** Where a pupil repeatedly arrives late to school after the close of the register, which is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- **Failure to Engage with Support:** Where parents/carers fail to ensure their child's regular attendance and do not engage with school-led or multi-agency support to improve attendance.
- **Pupils in Public Places During Exclusion:** Where a pupil is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five school days of an exclusion.

The decision to issue a Penalty Notice rests with the Local Authority, often following a referral from the school, and is typically considered after other school-led interventions have been attempted or deemed inappropriate.

17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Body / Proprietor, or sooner if there are changes in legislation or guidance.