



Attendance Policy

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Contents

Our policy is consistent with Pathway Learning Centre’s mission statement;	2
1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5. Strategies for promoting attendance	6
6. Attendance monitoring	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes.....	9
Appendix 2: Lesson Monitor.....	12

Our policy is consistent with Pathway Learning Centre’s mission statement;

“To provide outstanding individual provision for young people; enabling them to develop social and emotional independence, achieve success and fulfil their potential now or through future pathways.”

1. Aims

Pathways Learning Centre aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence;
- Ensuring every student has access to an education programme which best meets their needs;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular school attendance is essential to ensure the best outcomes for our students. By “regular” our expectation is that all students attend each and every day that they are expected to attend. There may be exceptional circumstances when absences may be agreed in line with national attendance code guidance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school](#)

[attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, Pathways Learning Centre is required to keep an attendance register, and all students attending must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session (AM) of each school day and once during the second session (PM). It will mark whether every student is:

- Present;
- Authorised Absence;
- Unauthorised Absence.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Students must arrive in school within 30 minutes of their expected start time on each school day. If this does not happen, school staff will be in contact with those who have parental responsibility to establish the reason for absence.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45 and will be kept open until 13.15.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify Pathways Learning Centre on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – within 30 minutes of the students start time.

Parents are able to call **01454 862630** and speak to a member of the administration team directly, or leave a message on the answerphone. Calls are accepted from 8 am Monday to Friday.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the we have a genuine concern about the frequency of the illness and this will be discussed with parents/carers either via a telephone call or meeting. If the frequency of the illness is a concern, we may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If we are concerned about the frequency of any illness, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of the students' school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out for the minimum amount of time necessary.

A letter or call from parents confirming the appointment and supporting evidence (letter from medical professions, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence) is welcomed to confirm the appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance and in writing. Information relating to whether Pathways Learning Centre can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L code). A pattern of late attendance will lead to the school inviting parents/carers to a meeting to establish how the student can improve their punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

Pathways Learning Centre will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We will regularly request updates of parent/carers contact information. Adults who have day to day care of a student are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will contact parents/carers on the first day of an unexplained absence and every day thereafter if an unexplained absence continues. We will also ask for our Education Welfare Officer to make a home visit to establish the reason for absence if attempts by ourselves at making contact are not successful.

Where absences are of a concern and all other attempts to engage with the parent/carers have not been successful, we will then refer to the Access and Response team for further investigation.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact our Lead Professional for Attendance and Behaviour for regular updates about their child's attendance. Attendance figures will be made available throughout the academic year via termly, annual and exit reports and all forms of review meetings. Where requested, a parent/carers may also make an appointment to discuss attendance in person with the Student Support and Interventions Manager and or Lead Professional for Attendance and Behaviour.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Pathways Learning Centre considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3;

- There may be occasions when special arrangements are in place to support the attendance of a student who is more vulnerable. For example, a student who has been ill may be on phase return provided there is agreement from all parties;
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, Pathways Learning Centre will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with Pathways Learning Centre but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision;
- Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence with supporting information we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy (<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Medical-Needs-Policy-December-2016.pdf>);
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to students in year 11. Provision will still be made available for students who wish to revise in school.

Absence which has not been agreed with Pathways Learning Centre will be considered, **unauthorised absence**.

The 1996 Education Act requires parents/carers to ensure students attend school regularly and are punctual. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified and where there are unauthorised absences we will seek to engage with the parents/carers and the young person to understand the reason or reasons for the unauthorised absence.

Where efforts to address attendance have not led to a reduction in unauthorised absence, consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Term-time holidays;
- No reason provided by parents/carers for a period of absence;
- Pathways Learning Centre is unsatisfied with the reason for the student's absence;
- Arrival after registration has closed (30 minutes of the students expected start time).

We believe regular attendance is important in ensuring the best outcomes for our students that we review our attend performance each term. We will regularly look at the students where there is a pattern of absence.

Where there is a pattern of broken weeks we will contact the parent/carer and arrange to meet to review the situation and get a greater understanding of what may preventing full attendance.

There is clear evidence that young people on Free School Meals (FSM) attend less than students as a whole. We will support to ensure that attendance for all students on FSM is prioritised.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Pathways Learning Centre can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year, this may include where all, or almost all absences are U coded (late after registration);
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We will acknowledge excellence in attendance, where a student has achieved 100% attendance termly or yearly and also where progress has been made by an individual to have outstanding attendance. Acknowledgement will be seen through certificates, vouchers and letters home to acknowledge the progress that is being made.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Lead Professional for Attendance and Behaviour monitors student absence on a weekly, monthly and termly basis.

The student support Worker (Attendance) supports the Lead Professional through operational monitoring and implementing the school strategy.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

We expect parents/carers to call each day of a students' absence.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents/carers a student's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level, through the DfE's school absence national statistical release. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with our Management Committee.

Pathways Learning Centre looks at individual and group attendance certificates using the School Information Management System (SIMS). For students with specific medical, special educational needs and vulnerabilities who have a high level of absence, Pathways Learning Centre will look to support these groups of students through the following strategies:

- Text messages, daily phone calls, letters and supportive conversations with the student once they return from a period of absence to see how they are;
- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence;
- Recording absence as authorised, if we are satisfied there is supporting evidence for the absence, including medical evidence;
- Provide home visits where appropriate;
- Recognise that some students are not “available for learning” and work with the Local Authority and other agencies to support individual needs, e.g. medical and review frequently the suitability of the educational programmes we are offering.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for Pathways Learning Centre on at least a bi-termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across Pathways Learning Centre, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the management committee. The Headteacher is supported by the Student Support and Interventions Manager and Lead Professional for Attendance and Behaviour to achieve this.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Student Support and Interventions Manager and Lead Professional for Attendance and Behaviour

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level;
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher;
- Works with the Education Welfare Officer to address attendance concerns;
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance concerns;
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance through the use of lesson monitor on SIMS and submitting this information to the school office. Pathways Learning Centre uses a coded system to help support identifying those students who are present and engaging in their learning and those who are absent. See Appendix 2 for the lesson monitor codes.

7.5 Attendance administration staff

Attendance administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

7.6 Dual registered students

Pathways Learning Centre has a number of students who are dual registered with another educational setting, for this reason it is important that we share our attendance data with these settings for their records. Pathways Learning Centre achieves this through;

- Sending the attendance certificate of dual registered students to their “Main Dual” school weekly.
- sending a daily message to the “Main Dual” school to notify them of any unexplained absences (N codes).
- Main Dual schools must also ensure they remain responsible for monitoring and supporting nonattendance. e.g. attending a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) at Pathways Learning Centre.
- There may be occasions when PLC may need to end a placement for dual registered students, where the students do not respond to the strategies and interventions put in place to support their regular attendance.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Student Support and Interventions Manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Management Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



Lesson Monitor

- Please use one of the following five codes **ONLY** for all lesson registers
 - **Please do not replace any pre-populated letters for numbers**
- The member of staff running the session takes the register
- If the student is present please mark as a 5 at the start of the lesson, making any adjustments required at the end of the lesson.

0 Refusal to engage in anything

1 Student expected but they did not arrive

Ask a support member of staff to establish if the student is on site and if not to inform the office.

2 Partly engaged/in and out of lesson

Please ensure support staff are aware if they have left the lesson

3 Worked outside of the classroom but evidence of all work completed

4 Late to lesson but then fully engaged in class

5 Fully engaged in their programme. Either in the classroom or intervention session.