



UNICORN SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School, including those in the EYFS.

RESPONSIBILITY

Staff Member:

Headteacher

Governors' Committee:

Education & Staffing

Last Reviewed:

September 2024

Approved by (Committee):

October 2024

Noted by (Governors):

November 2024

Introduction

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance including those laid out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance

Working Together to Improve Attendance DFE 2024

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between a child's attendance and their attainment at school. We recognise the importance of regular attendance all staff are committed to supporting children and families to achieve high levels of regular attendance.

Unicorn School's Attendance expectations

The Front Door is opened at 8.20am on every school day. Pupils are expected to be in their classrooms by 8.30am at the latest for Registration.

The Front Door is closed at 8.30am and any pupils arriving after this time will be marked Late.

The school day finishes at 3.15pm (EYFS), 3.25pm (Yellow and Green) or 3.35pm (all Juniors)

There is a dedicated e-mail address for parents to use to report absences on the day (eg. child ill).

absences@unicornschoool.org.uk

As soon as possible, and before 10.00am, the parents of any pupil who is still marked as "Absent (Awaiting Details)" will be contacted by the School to explain the

absence. The school will phone all available numbers and use all means possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent without explanation.

Safeguarding and attendance

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and Working Together to Improve Attendance (2024) the school:

- seeks to have at least two emergency contacts for each child.
- will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register, including where the child has been taken out of school by his/her parents to be home educated, has moved away from the school's location and where the child has been permanently excluded.
- will inform the Local Authority if any children join or leave Unicorn School at non-standard points i.e. joining after reception or leaving before Year 6.
- will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of ten school days.
- Will inform the Local Authority if there is reason to believe a child will miss 15 days of school in the year due to ill health

Persistent and Severe Absence strategy

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues including the criminal exploitation of children.

Unicorn School is committed to working with parents to ensure that children are able to access education.

Attendance data is scrutinised regularly. Should a child's attendance fall below 90%, even if those absences have been authorised, the Head will contact parents to open a dialogue over improving that child's attendance.

We are aware that in some cases ill health, mental health concerns or SEND may impact attendance and adjustments may need to be made. Unicorn is very happy to work with parents and any relevant professionals to support children and their attendance. It may be appropriate in some exceptional cases for school and parents to agree on a temporary part timetable. Unicorn is happy to provide work to do at

home and facilitate contact between a child who is on a part time timetable and their teacher.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority Attendance team should attendance not improve over time.

The DFE guidance outlines a clear framework that schools should follow in seeking to improve attendance: Expect high attendance, Monitor, Listen and Understand, Facilitate support, Formalise support and Enforce.

Working Together to Improve Attendance outlines the National Framework for Penalty Notices. These would be used as a last resort and in consultation with the Local Authority should parents not engage with support.

More information can be found here:
[National Framework for Penalty notices](#)

If parents have concerns about their child's attendance they should contact the Head polly.fraley@unicornschoo.org.uk for support and guidance.

Procedure for Parents Needing to Obtain Prior Authorisation for an Absence

Parents must seek authorisation in advance from the Head if they plan to take their children out of School during term time. Apart from exceptional circumstances class teachers will not be expected to provide work for any period of absence.

Medical Appointments

Such absences must be notified in advance to the Class Teacher

Parents are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside normal school hours. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible. If it is necessary for a pupil to attend a medical appointment during school hours then the Class Teacher must be notified in advance. The School will monitor any recurring patterns for a pupil.

Religious Observance

Such absences should be notified in advance to the Class Teacher

All requests for absence due to days of religious observation will be granted but parents are expected to inform the Class Teacher in advance.

Approved Educational Activity

Such absences must be notified in advance to the Class Teacher

This covers activities such as visits to other schools, entrance examinations etc. The Class Teacher must be notified in advance.

Special Family Events

Such absences can only be authorised by the Head

Parents must obtain authorisation in advance from the Head if their child needs to be absent from school for significant family events such as baptisms, weddings, funerals.

If such a request is made to a Class Teacher then it must be passed on to the Head for authorisation.

Holidays during Term Time

With very few exceptions all absences for holiday in term time will not be authorised. Parents should inform the Headteacher and class teacher with as much notice as possible.

Updated PF Sept 2024

Updated PF Nov 2022

Updated KL May 2019

Updated KL July 2017

Updated: KL July 2016

Updated: KL July 2015

Updated: KL July 2014

APPENDIX

Unicorn School - Register Codes 2024-2025

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Notes
/	Present (am)	Attending	Arrives by 8:30am
\	Present (pm)	Attending	
B	Educated off site	Approved educational activity	e.g. Laid Law
C	Authorised Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised absence	e.g. Funeral/Wedding, agreed with PF in advance, other exceptional circumstances, family event
C2	Reduced timetable	Authorised absence	Agreed with PF for specific pupils
D	Dual Registration (another school)	Not a possible attendance	e.g. Canada/Australia pupils
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	Authorised absence	
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Unauthorised absence	
I	Illness	Authorised absence	
J1	Interview/Visit to another school	Authorised absence	Anything to do with admission to their next school. (Admission to another educational institution)
K	Attending Education provision by L.A.	Approved educational activity	
L	Late arrival BEFORE register closed	Attending	To be used after 8:30am
M	Medical or Dental Appointment	Authorised absence	
N	Reason not provided yet	Unauthorised absence	Awaiting details for absence - if a reason cannot be established within 5 school days, must amend to "O"
O	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised absence	Any reason for absence given that is not classified as Authorised
P	Sporting Activity	Approved educational activity	
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Not a possible attendance	Unable to attend due to lack of provision provided
R	Religious Observance	Authorised absence	
S	Exam /Study Leave	Authorised absence	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence	
U	Late arrival AFTER register closed	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational Visit / Trip	Approved educational activity	
W	Work Experience	Approved educational activity	
X	Non-Compulsory School Age (Red Class)	Not a possible attendance	
Y	Forced enclosure	Not a possible attendance	Will create more Y1-Y7 in the event that it is required.
Y1-7	Enforced Closures	Not a possible attendance	Travel, Health, Covid, School premises closed
Z	Prospective Pupil not on Admission Register	-	
#	School Closure		ALL Holidays