

Attendance Policy

More Than Ed | Independent School

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2028

Responsible Person: Michelle Needham

Contents

1. Rationale.....	3
2. Overview.....	3
3. Aims.....	4
4. Registration.....	5
5. National Attendance Codes.....	5
6. First Day of Absence.....	6
7. Holiday Absence.....	7
8. Long-term Absence.....	7
9. Children Missing from Education.....	7
10. Related Policies.....	8
11. Legislation and Guidance.....	8

1. Rationale

More Than Ed's Attendance Policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected conduct in dealing with attendance. It has been developed in accordance with Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance is statutory guidance. This means that poor attendance must be treated as a potential safeguarding concern, and the school must actively engage with children's services where appropriate.

The policy makes explicit the school's commitment to good practice and sound procedures, ensuring that attendance concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support students' wellbeing.

2. Overview

- 10% absence is the equivalent of one day or more per fortnight across a full school year. Expected attendance is at least 92.9% (the national average). Where attendance is as low as 90%, the school puts additional targeted support in place, working with the local authority.
- Admission and attendance registers are kept electronically, and all entries are preserved for at least six years.
- A data analysis is undertaken and kept weekly, focusing on individual students or cohorts with attendance problems, in order to target improvement for those who need it most.
- The local authority has the right to examine and take extracts of attendance registers, although it will not require as much information from independent schools as from maintained schools.
- Students missing school because of mental or physical ill health, or with SEND, are given extra support based on their individual needs. The school alerts the local authority about any student who misses 15 consecutive or cumulative days due to illness, as they may need additional support.
- When the policy is reviewed and updated, the views of parents and students are sought.
- In developing and implementing this policy, the school considers its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As a school, we are aware of the link between attendance and good outcomes. As our cohort have often found school attendance difficult, we implement a variety of strategies to ensure good attendance:

- Tutors collect and drop off all students to and from home each day to encourage a smooth transition between home and school. We do not use taxis or minibuses to transport students. Pick-up is at 9.15am and registration closes at 9.45am.
- If a student is unable to attend, parents/carers contact either the Headteacher, Karen Holmes (07852 699040), or the tutor due to collect the student that morning. The absence is recorded on the Student Absence chat and on the Attendance Register by Michelle Needham.

- As soon as a student is collected, a message is sent to the Senior Attendance Champion, Michelle Needham (07764 270679), who inputs the relevant attendance code.
- Parents/carers have daily contact with tutors at pick-up and drop-off, allowing them to discuss any concerns around attendance.
- Strategies range from waiting in the car while a student feels calmer, if they are dysregulated, to teaching sessions at home until the student feels confident enough to attend school.
- Any attendance strategy is bespoke to the young person and their needs, and includes working with parents/carers, social workers, the local authority and any other agency involved around the child.
- Students leave school at 2.15pm and are transported home. The tutor always ensures the student is safely indoors or with an approved adult before leaving. Drop-off is recorded on the Pick-up and Drop-off chat.
- If parents wish to request a planned holiday, they complete a holiday form. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason are made on a Leave of Absence Form for the Headteacher to consider, who decides whether the absence can be authorised.

3. Aims

- To work with each learner as an individual and improve their attendance by removing barriers to learning.
- To discuss individual plans on induction which will improve attendance.
- To transport all students to and from home by their key worker.
- To monitor attendance weekly and put interventions in place if patterns begin to emerge.
- To make the improvement of individual attendance a priority for all learners, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders, and to ensure parents/carers are aware of the link between good attendance and good achievement.
- To discuss attendance at relevant meetings, including SLT and whole-staff meetings, and to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data.
- To examine data from the Attendance Register and contact from parents/carers weekly, so that learners at risk of becoming persistent non-attenders are quickly identified.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, promoting a positive working relationship from induction and involving parents/carers in decisions.
- To identify potential issues as early as possible and work in partnership with parents/carers to solve them, recognising that many parents/carers are doing their best, often under difficult circumstances, while good attendance remains non-negotiable.
- To provide parents with termly reports which include a printout of attendance.
- To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence, being sensitive to their circumstances and working in partnership with parents/carers.

- To set up regular meetings, at school, at home or by telephone, to evaluate the reintegration plan, and to celebrate improvements and build the confidence and self-esteem of the learner.

4. Registration

The school is statutorily required to take an attendance register twice daily – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. This is managed electronically and displays present or absent using the national attendance codes, with reasons for absence recorded in more detail, input by the Senior Attendance Champion. The register is open for no longer than 30 minutes, after which a student is marked absent.

The attendance register will only be altered:

- where a learner's name has been legally changed;
- where an unexplained absence has been explained; or
- if an error has been discovered.

Any alterations are recorded on CPOMS with the reasons for the change.

5. National Attendance Codes

Every session is recorded using the national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Codes B, K and Y7 must always have an explanatory note recorded against them.

Present and approved educational activity

- / – Present (morning session).
- \ – Present (afternoon session).
- L – Late arrival before the register closed.
- B – Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- K – Receiving education provision arranged by the local authority.
- P – Participating in an approved sporting activity.
- V – Attending an educational visit or trip.
- W – On work experience.

Authorised absence

- I – Illness.
- M – Attending a medical or dental appointment.
- C – Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
- R – Religious observance.
- E – Suspended or excluded, with no alternative provision made.
- T – Absence of a child of a family travelling for occupational purposes.
- S – Study leave.
- C1 – Participating in a regulated performance, or undertaking regulated employment, abroad.

- J1 – Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
- C2 – On a part-time timetable (the code for the reason for the remaining absence is also used).

Unauthorised absence

- G – Holiday not granted by the school.
- N – Reason for absence not yet established.
- O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
- U – Arrived after the register closed.

A parent can offer an explanation for their child's absence, but the law is clear that it is the Headteacher's decision whether the explanation is justified. For students on the non-attendance procedure at stage 2 onwards, absence will only be authorised when evidence is provided.

Unable to attend (not a possible attendance)

- D – Dual registered, attending the other school where registered.
- X – Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age and not timetabled).
- Q – No access arrangements made by the local authority.
- Y1 – Transport normally provided is not available.
- Y2 – Widespread disruption to travel.
- Y3 – Part of the school premises closed.
- Y4 – Whole school site unexpectedly closed.
- Y5 – In criminal justice detention.
- Y6 – Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.
- Y7 – Any other unavoidable cause (a note must be recorded; at this school this includes absence due to non-payment of fees).

Administrative codes (not collected for statistics)

- Z – Prospective pupil not yet on the admission register.
- # – Planned whole-school closure (for example, holidays).

6. First Day of Absence

If a student is absent for any reason, parents/carers must let the school know as soon as possible, and this information is placed on the register when received. If the student is on a child protection (CP) or child in need (CIN) plan, or we have concerns about the welfare of the student, a visit takes place on day 1 of the absence. Every case of absence is examined, and safeguarding is paramount.

If a student is absent and we have been unable to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason, the school may carry out a home visit or contact the relevant social worker for information.

7. Holiday Absence

Holidays in term time are classified as unauthorised and marked on the register as G. This will not change unless, at the discretion of the Headteacher and only in exceptional circumstances, a holiday is authorised. Parents must complete a Holiday/Planned Absence Form before their child is absent, and the Headteacher must approve or refuse to authorise the absence.

8. Long-term Absence

If there is a long-term absence for medical reasons where external tuition has been put in place – for example, hospital schooling – code B is marked on the register. If a student has been in hospital and is discharged under medical supervision, work packs are provided for up to two weeks. If the student has not returned to school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team completes a home visit and discusses the appropriate intervention needed.

9. Children Missing from Education

A student going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding Leads monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where students go missing on repeated occasions. More Than Ed follows DfE requirements for recording and reporting children who leave school without a known destination, and works closely with the local authority.

Where a student has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and reasonable steps have been taken to establish their whereabouts without success, the DSL will contact Doncaster's Children Missing Education Team on 01302 735311 and email childrenmissingeducation@doncaster.gov.uk. Reasonable steps include:

- telephone calls to all known contacts;
- letters home, including by recorded delivery;
- contact with other schools where siblings may be registered;
- a home visit where safe to do so;
- enquiries through friends, neighbours and other school contacts;
- enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the family;
- a request for a police welfare check (after 5 days); and
- recording all contacts and outcomes on CPOMS.

The Attendance Team will work with the school to identify the child's current whereabouts or destination. If the child is not found, the team completes a Child Missing From Education (CME) form, and the child's name is entered onto the Children Missing from Education Register held centrally, in accordance with the local authority's Children Missing from Education procedural guidance.

After four school weeks (20 school days), where such efforts have proved unsuccessful and confirmation has been received from the Attendance Team, the child may be removed from roll.

Welfare and attendance contacts

- Doncaster Council – 01302 736504 – APWS@doncaster.gov.uk
- Barnsley Council – 01226 787234 (option 1)
- North East Lincolnshire Council – 01472 326291
- Rotherham Council – 01709 336080

10. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's other policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Relational Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices

11. Legislation and Guidance

In drawing up this policy, the school has had regard to the following:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children Missing Education (DfE statutory guidance)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, current edition)
- Equality Act 2010
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014