PAPILLON HOUSE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

October 2024

Approved by:	Management Team	**Date:** September 2024
Last reviewed on:	N/A	
Next review due by:	September 2026	

Contents

Introduction

Papillon House School is an independent specialist primary, secondary and Post-16 provision for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum with a wide range of cognitive and communication abilities. It provides a caring and nurturing environment with an emphasis on strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils.

At Papillon House School, we recognise the vital role that regular school attendance plays in the education and well-being of our pupils. However, we also understand that for autistic children and young people, attendance can be impacted by a range of factors related to their individual needs, including anxiety, sensory sensitivities, changes in routine, and other challenges associated with their autism.

Our approach to attendance is supportive and flexible, working in partnership with families to identify and overcome any barriers that may affect a pupil's ability to attend school regularly. We are committed to creating a nurturing and understanding environment where pupils feel safe, valued, and ready to engage in learning at their own pace.

This policy outlines our commitment to promoting good attendance while recognising the unique challenges our pupils may face. We aim to work collaboratively with parents, carers, and external professionals to develop personalised strategies that support each child in achieving the best possible attendance. Our goal is to balance high expectations with a compassionate and individualised approach, ensuring that every pupil can access education in a way that meets their needs.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show the Schools commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils

Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address barriers to and patterns of absence

Building strong relationships and working closely with families to make sure they and their chidlren have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)](#)

[The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Director

The Director is responsible for:

Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- o Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- o Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources

Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most

Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge

Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs

Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

Making sure all staff are aware of:

- o The importance of good attendance
- o That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- o The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- o The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

The implementation of this policy at the school

Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Management Team

Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

Communicating with the local authority when a pupil has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance regularly to parents through all available channels

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

Liaising with parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues

Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Head Teacher and can be contacted via email head@papillonhouseschool.co.uk or telephone 01372 363663.

3.4 The School Administrator

The school administrator is responsible for:

Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Transferring calls from parents/carers to the Head Teacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Record afternoon attendance on Arbor on a daily basis

Ensure the correct attendance codes (see Appendix 1) are inputted into Arbor on the same day. Alongside the Head Teacher, monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher

Termly reporting of attendance data to the local authority.

The School Administrator can be contacted via email admin@papillonhouseschool.co.uk or telephone 01372 363663.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for the morning registration by 10am on a daily basis.

Work with parents/carers, alongside the Head Teacher, to identify barriers to attendance and provide support/strategies to improve attendance.

Carry out home visits as required to provide ongoing support and advice in the home environment when a barrier to school attendance has been identified and strategies are to be implemented at home.

3.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

Make sure their child attends school every day on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Head Teacher who can be contacted via email head@papillonhouseschool.co.uk or telephone 01372 363663.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day and on time.

The School recognises that there are occasions when pupils may be late due to transport issues which are beyond the pupil or parents control.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once during the afternoon. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

Whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 9.30am and ends at 3pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.30am and will be kept open until 10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30 and will be kept open until 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school administrator, who can be contacted via email admin@papillonhouseschool.co.uk or telephone 01372 363663.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should inform the school office staff of any medical or dental appointments, who can be contacted via email admin@papillonhouseschool.co.uk or telephone 01372 363663.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. However, due to most pupils at Papillon traveling to school by local authority transport, pupils will not be marked as absent if they are late due to LA transport related issues where it is beyond the pupil (or parents) control. In these circumstances, the pupil will be marked as late and the reason explained.

Where a pupil is persistently late on arrival to school, the reason for this will be discussed with parents and appropriate action taken to support the improvement of the pupils punctuality. This may include reporting persistently late transport providers to the relevant local authority, or where the parent provides transport to and from school, a meeting arranged to discuss the barriers to punctuality and support offered to improve this.

If lateness is persistently due to LA transport, this will be reported to the relevant authority:

Surrey - travel.assistance@surreycc.gov.uk or call 0208 541 7667

Sutton – assistedtravelteam@cognus.org.uk or call 0208 3230 450/0208 323 0460

Croydon - transport@croydon.gov.uk or call 0208 726 6000

West Sussex - school.transport@westsussex.gov.uk or call

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the transport provider (if the pupil travels by local authority transport) to check whether the pupil has been picked up and is on route to school prior to contacting the parent. If the transport company informs the school that transport was cancelled or they were unable to collect the pupil that morning, parents will be contacted next.

Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parent, they will contact the emergency contacts. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached, the school may contact social care and/or the police.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the day for which the pupil was absent.

Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.

Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent' in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports generated and sent via Arbor.

Parents will receive a letter from the Head Teacher midway through the year if their child's attendance falls below 90% due to being in the category of **Persistent Absentee** in accordance with government guidelines (a student is deemed a Persistent Absentee if their attendance falls below 90%, which can have significant implications for their academic progress and overall well-being). Parents will be asked to contact the School to arrange a meeting to discuss any barriers to attendance and explore ways in which the School can assist.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

Attending an interview

Study leave

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as any occasion where it is in the pupils best interest, physically, emotionally or other, to access the reason for the requested leave, such as a holiday due to religious observance, or a family situation beyond the control of the pupil and/or their parent.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday, except where the pupils specific needs impact their ability to travel during busy holiday periods and when their attendance is good.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Parent(s) 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 the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

Attending provision arranged by the local authority

Attending work experience

If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, issuing a Notice to improve – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

The school will follow the procedures established by the local authority's **code of conduct** for managing attendance issues.

A **Notice to improve** may be issued when a pupil's attendance falls below an acceptable level, and it serves as a formal step to address the issue. The school and local authority will work together to support the family in improving attendance, and this process will follow the specific guidelines set by the local council in that area.

Depending on the local authority's policies, this could involve:

- Meetings with parents/carers to discuss concerns and support options.
- Development of an attendance improvement plan.
- Possible referrals to external support services.
- Legal action as a last resort if attendance does not improve.

Since Papillon House School recognises that autism can present unique barriers to attendance, the process would likely consider individual circumstances and focus on supportive interventions rather than punitive measures.

The Notice to Improve sent to parents will include:

Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences

The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996

Details of the support provided so far

Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

At Papillon House School we recognise that many of our pupils may come across barriers to attendance due to their autism and complex needs. This may include high levels of anxiety, sleep difficulties, behaviour leading to school refusal, and/or transport difficulties. We will always work with pupils and parents to try to find the root cause of the barrier to attendance and work together to establish positive support strategies to enable the pupil, and their parents, to overcome these barriers.

Parents will be offered support from the Class Teacher, Therapist and/or Head Teacher via phone call initially, then if required, a meeting in school and/or a home visit. If this is not successful in overcoming the barriers to attendance, parents may be asked to liaise with the pupils GP or other health services, such as sleep clinics, and/or be open to support from other services provided through social care.

6.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

Pupils who require a higher level of support due to absence related to their SEND, mental or physical health, will be supported as above. Strategies that may be put in place include visual supports through symbols,

social stories and calendars to set expectations for attendance in school. An adapted timetable and/or curriculum may be necessary to encourage and motivate the pupil back into school, as well as lowering the demand of the school day, depending on the reasons established for the pupils absence. Video calls and messages from preferred and familiar adults may also be offered, as well as home visits.

All pupils at Papillon House School have an education health and care (EHC) plan. If their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local   authority.

6.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Pupils will be encouraged to return to a full timetable and curriculum as soon as it is felt manageable following a lengthy and/or unavoidable period of absence. If the pupil requires a phased return to successfully support them back into school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, this will be discussed with the parent, Head Teacher and SEND Case Officer (if appropriate).

7. Attendance monitoring

The school uses an electronic system, Arbor, to input and monitor pupil attendance. This is collated and reported twice yearly to the Management Team. Ongoing monitoring of pupil attendance data is carried out by the school administrator and the Head Teacher. Termly meetings are carried out between the Head Teacher and the Surrey Inclusion Officer to discuss any concerns related to specific pupils whose attendance is below 90%.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil and class group level.

Data will be collected each term and published to the local authority by the School Administrator. Individual pupil attendance data is shared via the Annual Review paperwork yearly to the local authority and to parents.

The Head Teacher will report attendance data to the Management Team, including the Director, twice yearly through governance reports, identifying areas of focus for improvement.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

7.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

    Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils that it has identified via data analysis

    Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

    Highlightattendance concerns to the Class Teacher, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

    Provide reports to the Management Team and school leaders (including designated safeguarding leads) in termly Management meetings

    Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

    Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

7.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- o Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- o Explain the help that is available
- o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- o Review any existing actions or interventions

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Management Team.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

The Management Team evaluates and approves this policy at each review, ensuring it complies with the law and holds the Head Teacher accountable for its implementation.

It was reviewed and agreed by the Management Team October 2024

Written	Katie Lonnborg	Head Teacher	October 2024

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study

		for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly	Every pupil absent as the school is closed

	closed	unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays