

INKBERROW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy 2026-2027

Reviewed: Summer 2026 | Next review: Summer 2027



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1. Policy Statement

Inkberrow Primary School is committed to securing high levels of attendance and punctuality so that every pupil can access an efficient full-time education and thrive. We use a support-first, whole-school approach, intervening early, working in partnership with families and the local authority, and only escalating to legal measures where appropriate and proportionate.

2. Aims and Ethos

- Promote a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment that pupils want to attend every day.
- Set clear expectations that excellent attendance and punctuality are everyone's responsibility.
- Identify emerging concerns quickly through regular analysis of data; act early to remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide additional, personalised support for pupils with SEND or medical/mental health needs.
- Work collaboratively with the Local Authority (LA) and partners to deliver holistic, whole-family support for persistent and severely absent pupils.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE) – statutory guidance applying from 19 August 2024, setting out roles and responsibilities for schools, trusts/governing bodies and local authorities.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 – introducing the national framework for penalty notices and revised fine amounts/thresholds (effective 19 August 2024).
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) – requirements for admissions/attendance registers and deletion from roll (Regulation 8).
- Children Missing Education (CME) – statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (updated 2025).
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance – DfE guidance (2023).

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Board

- Recognise and promote the importance of attendance across the school's ethos and policies; review the Attendance Policy annually.
- Review attendance data at least half-termly, challenging leaders and supporting targeted improvement for pupils/cohorts most in need.
- Assure that staff receive appropriate attendance training and that statutory duties are met.

4.2 Headteacher and Senior Leaders

- Lead a proactive, support-first approach and ensure systems for daily registers, first-day response, coding and follow-up are robust.
- Analyse attendance and punctuality data fortnightly to identify patterns (including protected characteristics/SEND) and deploy targeted actions.
- Chair/attend Targeting Support Meetings (with LA and wider partners) for pupils who are persistently ($\geq 10\%$) or severely ($\geq 50\%$) absent.
- Ensure accurate use of DfE attendance codes and compliance with admissions/register regulations and CME requirements.

4.3 All Staff

- Promote good attendance and punctuality daily; challenge and report concerns quickly.
- Record registers accurately and on time every session; follow school procedures for late arrival and unexplained absence.
- Build relationships with pupils and parents; listen to barriers and signpost to support.

4.4 Parents and Carers

- Ensure children attend school every day and arrive on time; avoid term-time leave.
- Inform school by 8:30am on the first day of absence and each day thereafter unless agreed otherwise; provide evidence if requested.
- Engage with support offered and attend agreed meetings to improve attendance.

5. Registers and Daily Procedures

The attendance register is taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, every pupil must be recorded as present, absent, engaged in approved educational activity, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Our school day: pupils arrive by 08:45. Morning register at 08:50 (closes 09:00). Afternoon register at 13:05 (closes 13:15). Pupils arriving after closure receive code U (unauthorised) unless there is an unavoidable reason (e.g., urgent medical appointment) in which case the appropriate authorised code is used.

We use DfE attendance codes including recent updates; staff receive annual training and on-going briefings. A summary appears in Appendix B.

6. First-day Response and Safeguarding

Unexplained absence is followed up promptly by school staff via text/call/email and, where necessary, home visits or welfare checks. We prioritise pupils who travel independently and those with safeguarding vulnerabilities (e.g., children with a social worker, looked-after children). Where the school cannot establish a pupil's whereabouts and has welfare concerns, we may request a police welfare check and will follow CME procedures.

7. Authorised Absence

Illness and Medical/Dental Appointments. Parents should make appointments outside school hours where possible and provide evidence for appointments during the school day. The school may request medical evidence to authorise illness where authenticity is in doubt or absence is high. Children

with vomiting/diarrhoea should remain at home for 48 hours after symptoms cease, in line with public health advice.

Religious Observance. One day of absence for a day exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the parent belongs will be authorised; additional days are unauthorised unless exceptional.

Traveller Pupils. Absence may be authorised when parents are travelling for occupational purposes, subject to limits. We encourage dual registration with a local school when travelling to maintain continuity of education.

8. Leave of Absence (Exceptional Circumstances)

There is no right to term-time leave. Holidays are not authorised. Only truly exceptional circumstances will be considered, and requests must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child normally lives. If granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of authorised days.

9. Unauthorised, Persistent and Severe Absence

Unauthorised absence includes: holidays not agreed; arriving after registers close without valid reason; absence where explanations are not provided or are not accepted by the school; and other avoidable reasons (e.g., shopping, birthdays).

Persistent absence: missing 10% or more of possible sessions for any reason.

Severe absence: missing 50% or more of sessions. These pupils are prioritised for intensive, multi-agency support. Attendance plans will be agreed with parents and reviewed regularly.

10. Support and Escalation

We operate a graduated, support-first approach: early contact; listening and understanding barriers; reasonable adjustments; pastoral and curriculum support; and, where needed, referrals to Early Help/other services. Targeting Support Meetings will be convened with the LA where absence is, or risks becoming, persistent or severe.

Where support is not appropriate, not engaged with, or fails to secure improvement, the school may request legal intervention from the LA in line with the national framework.

11. Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education suited to their age, ability and needs. Reduced timetables will be used only in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest time possible, with a written reintegration plan, frequent reviews and clear safeguarding oversight.

12. Penalty Notices and Prosecution (National Framework from August 2024)

A penalty notice may be considered where there are **10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period**. Sessions may include late arrival after register closure (code U). Decisions are made case-by-case considering support offered and the most effective route to improvement.

Amounts: £80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days. A second notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years is £160 (no discount). A maximum of two notices can be issued per parent, per child, within a rolling 3-year period; further offences may proceed to prosecution or other legal interventions.

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

We follow current CME statutory guidance. We notify the LA of standard and non-standard transitions in line with local procedures; we make and record reasonable enquiries where a child's whereabouts is unknown; and we work with the LA to secure swift re-engagement in education. Grounds for deletion from the admissions register are set out in Regulation 8 and must never be applied to "off-roll" pupils unlawfully.

14. Mental Health and Attendance

Where mental health is affecting attendance, we follow DfE guidance: intervene early; agree reasonable adjustments; consider flexible arrangements (including, where appropriate, time-limited phased returns); coordinate with health and SEND processes; and only request medical evidence proportionately. Decisions are reviewed with families and, where appropriate, professionals.

15. Data, Monitoring and Reporting

Leaders analyse attendance and punctuality data weekly to identify trends by year group, vulnerable cohorts and location/time patterns; actions are recorded and reviewed.

Governors receive termly reports on overall attendance, persistent/severe absence, vulnerable groups, and the impact of strategies.

We share data with the LA and relevant partners in line with data protection and safeguarding duties.

16. Communication

Key messages about attendance are communicated regularly to families via the website, newsletters and meetings. Parents receive half-termly updates where attendance falls below thresholds. A parent-friendly leaflet is available.

17. Linked Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Online Safety/Acceptable Use
- Complaints

Appendix A: Attendance Escalation Flow

1. Universal: promote attendance; clear routines; tutor/teacher check-ins; first-day response.
2. Early Help: identify barriers; meeting with parents; reasonable adjustments; short review period.
3. Targeted: pupil attendance plan; multi-agency meeting/TSM with LA; agreed outcomes and timescales.
4. Formal: consider legal interventions (Notice to Improve/PN/prosecution/ESO) where appropriate and proportionate.

Appendix B: Attendance Codes – Summary (including key 2024 clarifications)

- Present: / and \ (AM/PM present).

- Authorised absence:

I (illness, not medical/dental),

M (medical/dental),

R (religious observance),

T (traveller absence),

C (other authorised).

- Unauthorised absence:

O (unauthorised),

U (arrival after registers close),

G (family holiday not agreed or in excess).

- Approved educational activity (present off-site):

B (off-site education), V (educational visit), J (interview), P (approved sporting activity).

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances:

Y (partial/whole site closure, transport/local emergency), and special custody circumstances as set out in DfE guidance.

- See DfE 2024 updates for clarifications on use of E, Q, Y6/Y7 and the statistical meaning of C2. Staff should refer to the annual coding briefing.