Attendance Policy

Last reviewed: September 2026

Vision Statement:

"We want each child to leave Markeaton with resilience, empathy, cultural awareness and confidence at the core of everything they do. We want our children to experience a challenging and immersive curriculum which will encourage them to become responsible and ambitious citizens of the future; looking back positively on their time at Markeaton."

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Markeaton Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. We aim to achieve or exceed 97% whole school attendance each school year.
This policy has regard to the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Derby City Council's current penalty notice code of conduct.
The Senior Attendance Champion is Ian Johnson, Headteacher, contactable through the school office. The Attendance Officer is the day-to-day contact for reporting absence and seeking attendance support. Parents can also seek support from the Pastoral Lead or SENDCo through the school office. Governors oversee attendance trends and challenge the effectiveness of support and school procedures.

Our School Day – Foundation Stage 2 (FS2)

- Main school gates open at 8.40am
- Children go straight into class from 8.45am. The morning session starts and the register is taken at 9.00am.
- Children arriving after 9.00am and before 9.15am will be marked as late (code L).
- The register closes at 9.15am. Children arriving at or after this time will be recorded with code U unless another absence code more accurately applies.
- Lunch is between 11:45am and 1.00pm
- Afternoon classes start at 1.00pm
- School ends at 3:20pm

Our School Day – Years 1 - 6

- Main school gates open at 8.40am
- Children go straight into class from 8.45am. The morning session starts and the register is taken at 9.00am.
- Children arriving after 9.00am and before 9.15am will be marked as late (code L).
- The register closes at 9.15am. Children arriving at or after this time will be recorded with code U unless another absence code more accurately applies.
- Lunch is between 12.00pm and 1.30pm (dependent on year group)
- Afternoon classes start between 1.00pm and 1.30pm (dependent on year group)
- School ends at 3:25pm

Absences:

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence.
When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used. Please see the key at the end of this policy for the different register codes.

Types of Absence:

Authorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence. Absence or attendance away from the school site will be recorded according to the applicable national code. Examples include:

- Illness, and medical or dental appointments. Appointment confirmation will be requested; routine evidence of illness is not required.
- Days of Religious Observance
- Exclusion
- A mobile child travelling with a parent in the course of the parent's trade or business, where the conditions for code T apply.
- Family bereavement
- Involvement in a public performance
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)
- Approved sporting activity (code P where the statutory conditions apply; classified as attendance at an approved educational activity).
- Non-compulsory school age absence (code X where applicable; not counted as possible attendance).
- Approved off-site educational activity or local authority-arranged provision, recorded with the appropriate attendance code rather than automatically as authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence:

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- The reason remains unknown after reasonable enquiries. Code N is used initially and replaced with the appropriate code within five school days; if the reason remains unknown, code O is used.
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, leisure activities, etc.)
- Family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances)

Persistent Absence:

Persistent absence (PA) means missing 10% or more of possible sessions, equivalent to attendance of 90% or below, whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Severe absence means missing 50% or more of possible sessions.

In instances of persistent absence, we will endeavour to support parents to improve their child/ren's attendance at school wherever possible. Parents/carers may be invited into school to discuss their child/ren's attendance, concerns school or parents may have and ways in which we can work together to improve attendance in school.
The school will identify emerging patterns early, listen to the pupil and family and agree support to remove barriers. Attendance support will be reviewed with families and, where necessary, formalised with the local authority through an attendance contract or other suitable intervention. Severe absence will receive priority multi-agency support, with safeguarding escalation where concerns arise. Attendance data will be reviewed regularly, including in local authority Targeting Support Meetings.

Approved Educational Activity:

Approved educational activities away from school are recorded using the appropriate national code, subject to the required approval and supervision arrangements. Attendance at the provision must be confirmed and non-attendance followed up promptly. Code B is not a general code for all off-site education: code K applies to qualifying local authority-arranged provision and code D applies when a dual-registered pupil is due to attend their other school. Codes B, K, P and V count as attendance for statistical purposes; code D is excluded from possible attendance at this school for that session. Records must clearly distinguish pupils physically on site from those attending elsewhere.

Registers:

Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. Parents/carers should ensure children arrive before the morning session starts at 9.00am. Afternoon registration takes place at a common time for all pupils following the staggered lunch arrangements; the time must be confirmed and communicated to families. Registers remain open for 15 minutes in each session.
Pupils arriving after the session starts but before the register closes are recorded with code L. Pupils arriving at or after closure are recorded with code U unless another absence code more accurately applies. Code U is classified as unauthorised absence for that session, although the pupil is physically present after arrival.
Parents/carers must report unexpected absence to the school office before the morning session starts, giving the reason, and update the school on each day unless another reporting arrangement has been agreed. Where no explanation is received, staff will contact parents on the first day and try the recorded emergency contacts if necessary. Enquiries will continue until the child's whereabouts and welfare are established. Unresolved absence or concerns about safety will be referred promptly to the DSL or deputy; children's social care or the police will be contacted where appropriate. A home visit may be considered following a risk assessment. The response will take account of known vulnerabilities and will not wait for attendance to fall below a percentage threshold.

Attendance data and data sharing:

Registers are legal documents. In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Should a persistent non-attending pupil be identified, information regarding this pupil will be shared with Educational Welfare. This information will include the pupil's name, date of birth and address, along with, their parents'/carers' names and addresses. Should the parents of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- Support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a termly and yearly basis
- Identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees
- Facilitate and encourage early intervention
- Identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc.); match attendance trends with attainment trends.
- Identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- Report attendance matters to parents

As a school we have a legal duty to accurately record pupils' attendance and share information with the Local Authority if a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern. Any information shared with the Local Authority will be done so through secure means and in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Parents/Carers

We expect parents/carers to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Ensure school have up to date contact information for emergency contacts
- Engage with school positively to reduce barriers to irregular attendance at school
- Notify school of their child's absence on each day of absence.
- Ensure, where possible appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Ensure that your child is collected from school on time at the end of each day. (3.20pm for FS2. 3.25 pm for year groups 1-6)
- Ensure that a Request for leave of absence is only made in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Ensure that any concerns that may affect your child's school attendance, are shared with the school.

Punctuality:

In addressing punctuality at Markeaton Primary School we:

- Clearly advertise times for the school day
- Publicise this policy in school and communicate it to parents/carers
- Balance any sanctions with positive encouragement
- Praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality
- Ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons
- Follow up the reasons for lateness and are alert to any emerging patterns or problems

In cases of persistent lateness, we are committed to working with parents to help improve their child/ren's punctuality at school. When necessary, parents/carers may be invited to meet with school staff to discuss their child/ren's punctuality, any concerns the school or parents may have, and explore ways in which we can work together to overcome any barriers to irregular school attendance.

At Markeaton Primary School, we recognise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in ensuring the best possible outcomes for all children. We also understand that families with children who have additional needs may face unique challenges in maintaining consistent attendance.

To support these families, we have a dedicated Attendance Officer and a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) who work closely with parents and carers. Together, they provide

tailored assistance and guidance to help overcome any barriers to attendance and punctuality, ensuring that all children, regardless of their needs, have access to their education.
The school will consider and review reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, working with the pupil and parents to address barriers associated with disability or health needs. Support will be coordinated with relevant services and with the local authority where an education, health and care plan is involved. Attendance communications will acknowledge authorised and unavoidable absence and focus on practical support.
Part-time timetables are permitted only in very exceptional circumstances where they are in the pupil's best interests. They must not be used to manage behaviour. A timetable requires parental agreement, a documented support or reintegration plan, regular reviews and a proposed end date, with a clear ambition to return to suitable full-time education. Safeguarding arrangements for time away from school must be assessed. The social worker will be involved where applicable and the local authority consulted where the pupil has an education, health and care plan. Sessions not required under an agreed timetable are normally recorded with code C2 for compulsory-school-age pupils, or code X where applicable.

Leave of Absence:

Applications for discretionary leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form. The headteacher may grant such leave only where exceptional circumstances apply and will determine its duration. Other statutory leave and absence grounds are recorded under the applicable national codes. A pupil will not lose their school place simply because they do not return on the agreed date. Removal from roll is permitted only where a ground under regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies. For the failure-to-return ground, this includes non-attendance within ten school days after the end of authorised leave, no reasonable grounds to believe sickness or unavoidable cause prevents attendance and joint reasonable enquiries by the school and local authority that satisfy the statutory conditions. Safeguarding and children missing education procedures will be followed.

When considering exceptional leave, the headteacher will assess each application individually, including the following factors:

- The importance of settling into a new class during the first term of the academic year.
- Whether the absence falls during an assessment or test period, including Key Stage Two SATs.
- The pupil's attendance record and individual circumstances, including any disability or other barriers to attendance. These factors do not create an automatic refusal.

All Leave of Absence Requests are evaluated on an individual basis, the Head Teacher will only consider authorising the request for leave if it is deemed to be an exceptional circumstance.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
Penalty Notices:

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

A penalty notice may be issued as an alternative to prosecution for an attendance offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, subject to the National Framework and Derby City Council's current code of conduct.

Since 19 August 2024, the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been ten sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of ten school weeks. The sessions need not be consecutive and may include different types of unauthorised absence. The period can span terms and

school years. Meeting the threshold requires individual consideration rather than automatic issue of a notice.

The school will follow Derby City Council's current penalty notice code of conduct and take a support-first approach where support is appropriate. Where the national threshold is met and appropriate support has not been engaged with or has not improved attendance, a Notice to Improve will be requested and jointly issued with the local authority in accordance with the local process. It will explain the support available, the improvement required and an improvement period of three to six weeks. A Notice to Improve is not normally required for unauthorised term-time holidays. Where a leave request is refused, parents will be informed in writing that a penalty notice may be requested if the absence is taken. Decisions will consider individual circumstances and Equality Act duties. Derby City Council determines whether to issue a penalty notice.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change parental behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being considered for the same parent a further penalty notice is unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices being issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period will apply:

First Offence:

The first penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child is £160, payable within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If unpaid, the local authority must decide whether to prosecute for the original attendance offence or withdraw the notice.

Second Offence (within three years):

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first notice is £160, payable within 28 days, with no reduction. Non-payment may lead to prosecution for the original attendance offence.

Third Offence (within three years):

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first notice. Further offences will be referred to the local authority for consideration of alternative action, which may include prosecution or other attendance interventions. Court action is not automatic. Possible prosecution outcomes include:

- Prosecution under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, with a fine of up to £1,000 on conviction.
- Prosecution under section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, with a fine of up to £2,500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months on conviction.

Excessive Delayed Return from a Period of Leave of Absence:

Where leave has been granted by the head teacher, parents should be informed by letter of an agreed return date.
Extended periods of absence linked to holidays and/or trips away of 20 or more school days are likely to result in prosecution action rather than in a penalty notice being issued.

Supporting Evidence:

Supporting evidence may be requested where it is reasonable and necessary to establish the circumstances of an absence or understand a pupil's support needs. Electronic appointment confirmations and other suitable copies may be accepted; originals may be requested where authenticity

is reasonably in doubt. Evidence requirements will be proportionate and flexible. For most illness absences, a parent's explanation is sufficient. Medical evidence may be sought where there is genuine and reasonable doubt or where prolonged or recurring illness requires better understanding and support. Families will not routinely be required to obtain a GP letter.

Absence for Religious Reasons:

Absence will be recorded with code R where a day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent belongs. If the religious body sets apart one day, only that day qualifies for code R. Additional days require a separate leave request and will be considered individually under the applicable leave arrangements; code C applies where exceptional leave is granted.

Reporting Pupil Attendance to Parents:

School will communicate pupil attendance to parents in various ways. School will email parents/ carers via ParentMail to inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below 95%, 92% and 90%. These emails are for information purposes so parents/ carers are aware of their child's attendance percentage and how many days their child has had off school throughout the academic year.

In cases where attendance is a concern, parents will be contacted via letter and may be invited to a meeting in school where support will be offered to improve attendance at school.

Attendance recognition will be applied sensitively and without discrimination, taking account of disability and unavoidable absence. The school will recognise improvements and positive engagement as well as high attendance. Any certificate or attendance pin scheme will be reviewed to ensure that it does not unfairly disadvantage pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, or encourage children to attend when unwell.

Pupil's attendance may be discussed during Pupil Progress Meetings and their attendance percentage will be included in their end of year school report.

We have an Attendance Officer in School who is contactable via the school office to answer any questions parents may have regarding attendance.

Safeguarding:

The Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 document issued by DfE states that attendance is a core safeguarding indicator. Changes in a pupil's attendance, persistent lateness, or unexplained absences are highlighted as primary warning signs that require early staff recognition and reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Absence is a potential safeguarding concern, not simply an attendance issue.
- Repeated and/or prolonged absence should prompt consideration of whether there are underlying safeguarding concerns, including neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation/county lines and other risks.
- Attendance staff should consider absence alongside other information known about the child, rather than looking at attendance figures in isolation.
- Where appropriate, attendance concerns should be shared promptly with the DSL/deputy DSL and managed through safeguarding procedures.
- Particular consideration should be given to children who are already known to children's social care, including children in need, children with a child protection plan and looked-after children, because absence may increase existing safeguarding risks.
- This policy must be read alongside Markeaton Primary School's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and the applicable Derby City Council children missing

education (CME) procedures. Unexplained absence and concerns about a child's whereabouts will be managed through those procedures.

- Young carers: The school recognises that caring responsibilities may present a barrier to regular attendance. Where attendance concerns may be linked to caring responsibilities, the school will seek to identify and support young carers at an early stage and consider whether additional support or referral to appropriate services is required.

Key:

Absence Code	Meaning
/	Present in the morning
\	Present in the afternoon
L	Late before registration closes
B	Attending an approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school; due to attend that school
K	Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority
P	Participating in an approved sporting activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
C1	Leave for a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave for a compulsory-school-age pupil subject to an agreed part-time timetable
J1	Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
M	Leave to attend a medical or dental appointment
X	Non-compulsory-school-age pupil not required to attend
C	Leave for exceptional circumstances
T	Mobile child travelling with a parent for their trade or business
R	Religious observance
I	Illness, including mental ill health; not a medical appointment
E	Suspended or permanently excluded, with no alternative provision made
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend because normally provided school transport is unavailable
Y2	Unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend because part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend because the whole school site is unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend because of criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend under public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause; reason recorded
G	Unauthorised holiday
N	Reason for absence not yet established; amend within five school days
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived after registration closed without another applicable absence reason
Z	Prospective pupil not yet on the admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure

Review date – September 2027