



Combe Pafford School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: Autumn 2025

Next Review: Autumn 2026

1. Legal Framework: The Right to Education and the Law

All children of compulsory school age in England are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs. This is a legal right.

Where parents choose to register their child at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance. Regular attendance means attending school **every day the school is open**, unless there is a lawful reason for absence (e.g. illness or authorised leave in exceptional circumstances).

This policy is aligned with:

- The Education Act 1996
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
 - **DfE guidance:** *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (latest update August 2024)
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2. Aims of This Policy

- To promote high levels of attendance and punctuality as key to student success
 - To ensure clear and consistent procedures for monitoring, recording, and following up absences
 - To ensure students and families understand the importance of regular attendance
 - To outline the school's partnership approach with the Local Authority and safeguarding services
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3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The School

We commit to:

- Promoting good attendance across the whole school community
- Monitoring all pupils' attendance and punctuality via Arbor
- Maintaining accurate registers taken at the start of AM (08:45–09:05) and PM (13:10–13:25) sessions
- Communicating regularly with parents/carers about attendance via newsletters, the website, and parent meetings
- Reviewing and analysing attendance data fortnightly
- Identifying and supporting pupils at risk of persistent absence (attendance below 90%)
- Setting an annual whole-school attendance target of 92% or above
- Reporting attendance to governors termly

3.2 Parents and Carers

Parents/carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly, on time, and ready to learn
- Notify the school of any absence before 9:30am on the first day
- Provide a valid reason for any absence and supporting evidence when requested
- Avoid taking holidays in term time, and request any exceptional leave in writing in advance

Failure to meet these responsibilities may lead to intervention or legal action by the Local Authority.

4. Monitoring Attendance: Procedures

4.1 Reporting Absences

- Parents/carers must call the school office between 08:15–09:30am on the first day of absence.
- If no contact is made, admin staff will attempt to contact parents and other named contacts by phone and text.
- Home visits may be made if no explanation is received and/or safeguarding concerns exist.
- Prolonged or unexplained absence (3 days or more if unexplained) may be referred to TESS (Torbay Education Safeguarding Service).
- If no reason is given, a letter will be sent home. After 10 days of unauthorised absence, a CME (Child Missing Education) referral will be made.

4.2 Recording Absences

- Absences must be explained by a parent/carer.
- The school decides whether to authorise the absence.
- Absences without explanation, or with unacceptable reasons, will be marked unauthorised.
- Medical evidence may be required for illness-related absences over 5 days or if attendance is below 90%.

Acceptable reasons for authorised absence include:

- Genuine illness (with evidence if required)
 - Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (with evidence)
 - Days of religious observance
 - Exceptional family circumstances approved by the Head Teacher
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5. Term-Time Leave of Absence

From September 2013, Headteachers may not authorise leave during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The decision rests with the Headteacher, who will also determine the length of any authorised leave.

- Leave must be requested in advance using the school's absence request form.
- The child's current attendance will be considered before authorisation.
- Holidays are not considered exceptional.

If unauthorised leave is taken:

- A **penalty notice** may be issued by the Local Authority
- As of **August 2024**, fines are:
 - £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days
 - £160 if paid between 22–28 days
- A second notice in three years is automatically £160
- 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) in a 10-week rolling period may trigger a fine

Continued unauthorised absence may result in prosecution, with fines up to £2,500, parenting orders, or imprisonment.

6. Lateness and Punctuality

Being late disrupts learning. Pupils arriving:

- **Between 08:55 and 09:05** will be marked 'L' (Late)
- **After 09:05** will be marked 'U' (Late after registers closed – unauthorised)
- Unless due to late-arriving LA transport

Persistent lateness (6+ times per half term) will lead to:

1. Letter to parents
 2. Meeting with Phase / Inclusion Leaders if no improvement
 3. Possible further action as per Local Authority procedures
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7. Sixth Form Attendance

- Attendance is monitored weekly.
 - Where concerns arise, parents and students are invited to a meeting to discuss support strategies.
 - A personalised attendance support plan is created.
 - The attendance leaflet and expectations are issued at Induction each year.
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8. Legal Action and Penalty Notices

Failure to ensure regular attendance may result in:

- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- School Attendance Orders
- Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court

Further information: [Torbay Council - Attendance and Legal Action](#)

9. Safeguarding and CME

The school has a duty to safeguard pupils. Immediate referral to **MASH** (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) will be made in cases of:

- No contact with a vulnerable child (Category 1)
- Ongoing unexplained absence (after Day 3 or sooner if concerns exist)

- Any child subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan

The DSL or Inclusion Team may also refer to the police or children's services in serious cases.

10. Supporting and Rewarding Good Attendance

Support Strategies:

- Regular communication with parents
- Attendance Support Plans
- Phase Leader or Inclusion Team meetings
- Parenting contracts
- Safeguarding referrals where necessary

Rewards:

- **Termly certificates** for attendance 96–100%
 - **Improvement certificates**
 - Other rewards and incentives throughout the year
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11. Letters and Communication

Letters will be sent to parents:

- If no reason is provided for absence
 - Fortnightly for 6+ unauthorised absences
 - Half-termly if attendance drops below 92%
 - If attendance drops to or below 85%:
 - **Letter 1:** Request for meeting with Phase Leader
 - **Letter 2:** Escalation if no improvement – meeting with Deputy Head
 - **Letter 3:** Final intervention and discussion of potential for legal action
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12. Attendance Data and Oversight

- Attendance is reviewed fortnightly by the Attendance Team
- Monitored monthly by SLT
- Reported termly to the Governing Body

- Persistent Absence (PA) threshold: **below 90%**
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13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually**.

Reviewed: Autumn 2025

Next Review Due: Autumn 2026