

Colham — — Manor

Primary School

Aspire, Achieve, Thrive

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Last updated: July 2026

Contents

Statement of Intent

1. Why Attendance Matters

2. Roles and Responsibilities

3. Attendance Expectations and Registers

4. Reporting an Absence

5. Authorising parental absence requests

- Leave of Absence
- Medical Appointments
- Other Authorised Absence

6. Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

7. Leaving the School Site During the School Day

- Leave During Lunchtime
- Unauthorised Absence During the School Day
- Pupils Leaving the School Site Without Permission

8. Working Together to Improve Attendance

- Early Support
- Persistent Absence
- Formal Intervention

9. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

- Education Supervision Orders

10. Monitoring Attendance

- Monitoring and Review

Appendices

- **Appendix A** – Attendance Monitoring Pathway
- **Appendix B** – Definitions
- **Appendix C** – Legal Framework

Statement of intent

At our school, we believe that **every day matters**. Regular attendance gives children the best opportunity to achieve academically, develop socially and emotionally, build positive relationships and feel a true sense of belonging within our school community.

We recognise that attendance is influenced by many different factors and that every family's circumstances are unique. Our approach is built on **kindness, partnership and high expectations**. We work alongside pupils and their families to understand any barriers to attendance, offering support at the earliest opportunity so that every child can access the education they deserve.

We believe that the strongest outcomes are achieved when pupils, parents and school work together. Listening to the voices of our children and families helps us understand their experiences, celebrate what is working well and identify where additional support may be needed.

"A supportive, safe and engaging school environment encourages children to attend regularly and feel positive about learning." – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

Our approach is guided by five key principles:

Belonging

Every child deserves to feel safe, welcomed and valued. We create an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated and every pupil feels part of our school community.

Partnership

Parents and carers are our partners in promoting good attendance. We communicate openly, listen carefully and work together to remove barriers that may affect a child's attendance.

Pupil Voice

Children's views matter. We provide regular opportunities for pupils to share their experiences so that their voices help shape our practice and strengthen our school community.

Early Support

When attendance becomes a concern, our first response is to understand the reasons and provide appropriate support. We believe that early intervention and positive relationships are the most effective ways to improve attendance.

Equity

We are committed to ensuring every child has equal access to education. Our support is tailored to individual needs so that all pupils, particularly those facing additional challenges, have the opportunity to thrive.

By placing relationships, belonging and partnership at the heart of our attendance culture, we aim to create a school where every child feels **seen, heard and supported** to attend regularly and fulfil their potential.

Together, we strive to ensure every child is able to **Aspire, Achieve and Thrive** through excellent attendance, strong relationships and a genuine sense of belonging.

"I feel able to come to school all the time because I'm happy here."

– Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

The school's attendance officers are Carly Slade and Sam Cooper, and can be contacted via attendance@colham.org or by calling the school office on 01895 442 879 and leaving a message on the attendance line (option 1). Staff and parents/carers will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Why Attendance Matters

Our Attendance Approach

Every Day Matters

At Colham Manor Primary School, we believe that every day in school gives children the opportunity to:

Learn

Every lesson builds on previous learning and helps children make progress.

Belong

Children build friendships, develop social skills and feel part of our school community.

Grow

Regular attendance helps children develop confidence, resilience and independence.

Achieve

Good attendance gives every child the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

***"I'm excited because I get to see all my friends.'
– Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"***

"I can't wait to go to sleep so I can come back and see my friends and my favourite subjects.' – Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

"School helps children develop social skills, build confidence and stay on track with their learning.' – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

Our Attendance Promise

"Communicating regularly with parents, offering support when a child is struggling with learning or wellbeing, and working with families to address any challenges helps children attend school more regularly."

When attendance becomes difficult, our first priority is to understand why.

We promise to:

- ✓ Listen without judgement.
- ✓ Work in partnership with families.
- ✓ Identify barriers early.

✓ Offer support before formal intervention.

***"It helps when adults listen and help us sort things out.'
– Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"***

"Communicating regularly with parents, offering support when a child is struggling with learning or wellbeing, and working with families to overcome challenges helps children attend school more regularly.'" – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

What We Ask From Families

We ask parents and carers to support us by:

- ★ Ensuring children attend school every day unless they are genuinely unwell.
- ★ Establishing positive bedtime and morning routines.
- ★ Arriving at school on time.
- ★ Letting us know as soon as possible if their child is absent.
- ★ Working with us if attendance becomes a concern.

How We Support Families

If attendance starts to become a concern, we will:

Notice

We monitor attendance carefully and contact families early if we identify concerns.



Listen

We take time to understand any barriers affecting attendance.



Support

We agree on practical strategies and provide the right support for your child and family.



Review

We celebrate improvements and continue working together to achieve sustained attendance.

When attendance becomes a concern

Attendance drops below 95%



Attendance Concern Letter 1



Attendance Concern Letter 2



Supportive Attendance Meeting



Attendance Contract



Review Meeting



Further support if needed

(further information on this can be found in Appendix A of this policy).

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. By working together—governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers—we can ensure every child has the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring the school meets its statutory duties relating to attendance. This includes monitoring attendance, reviewing the impact of the school's attendance strategy, ensuring appropriate policies are in place and providing support and challenge to school leaders.

Headteacher & the Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and SLT is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of attendance, ensuring that statutory requirements are met and that attendance is prioritised across the school. This includes working with the Local Authority where required, monitoring attendance patterns and ensuring early support is provided to pupils and families.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer leads the school's strategic approach to attendance by:

- Monitoring attendance and identifying pupils who may need support.
- Working closely with pupils, parents and external agencies to improve attendance.
- Coordinating attendance interventions and reviewing their impact.
- Implementing formal attendance procedures where support has not led to improvement.

School Staff

All staff play an important role in promoting good attendance by:

- Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where pupils want to attend.
- Recording attendance accurately.
- Identifying and reporting attendance concerns promptly.
- Working positively with pupils and families to support regular attendance.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless they are genuinely unable to do so.
- Arrive on time and ready to learn.
- Engage positively with any support provided to improve their attendance.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly unless they are genuinely unwell. We ask parents and carers to:

1. Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
2. Notify the school promptly of any absence.
3. Provide accurate emergency contact details and keep these up to date.
4. Arrange medical appointments outside the school day wherever possible.
5. Work in partnership with the school to address any attendance concerns.
6. Request leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances and in advance.

3. Attendance Expectations & Registers

Regular attendance is one of the greatest gifts we can give children. Every day in school helps them learn, belong and thrive.

Therefore we have high expectations for attendance and punctuality because we know that regular attendance gives children the best opportunity to achieve, develop friendships and enjoy school.

Pupils are expected to attend school every day unless they are genuinely unwell or there is another authorised reason for absence. They should arrive on time, ready to learn.

School Start Times

Year Group	Arrive by	Learning begins
Nursery	Allocated session start time	8:30am, 11:30am or 12:30pm
Reception & KS1	8:30am	8:40am
KS2	8:40am	8:50am

Attendance Registers

Attendance is recorded using **Arbor** in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements.

Morning registers are taken at the start of the school day.

Year Group	Registers Open	Registers Close
Reception & KS1	8:40am	8:50am
KS2	8:50am	9:00am

Pupils arriving after the register has opened but before it closes will be marked **late**. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked **absent**, unless there is an authorised reason.

Nursery pupils attending the 11:30am or 12:30pm session will be marked present on arrival. Pupils arriving after the start of their session but before 11:40am (11:30 session) or 12:40pm (12:30 session) will be marked late. Arrivals after these times will be recorded as absent for that session.

Afternoon registers are taken at:

Year Group	Registers Open	Registers Close
Reception & KS1	1:05pm	1:10pm
KS2	1:20pm	1:25pm

Attendance is recorded using the national attendance codes set by the Department for Education. Registers are legal documents and are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

If pupils have any concerns about coming to school, they are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult.

4. Reporting an Absence

We understand that children become unwell. Letting us know as early as possible helps us ensure they are safe and supported.

If your child is absent, please contact the attendance team (email attendance@colham.org or leave a message on the attendance phone line) by 8:30am on the first day of absence, explaining the reason for the absence and, where possible, how long you expect your child to be away from school.

If we have not received a reason for your child's absence, we will:

- send a text message requesting that you contact the school;
- telephone all available contacts; and
- if we are unable to make contact, a home visit will be carried out (there doesn't need to be a safeguarding concern, we will safeguard all children)

Where we remain unable to establish a child's whereabouts after an unsuccessful home visit we will request a welfare check by calling 101, we may also seek advice or support from external agencies, including the Local Authority, Police or MASH, where appropriate. All actions are recorded on CPOMS.

The school may request medical evidence where there are concerns about the authenticity or frequency of illness-related absence.

5. Authorising parental absence requests

Leave of Absence

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**.

Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least **two weeks in advance**, explaining the reason for the request and the dates involved.

Each request will be considered individually, taking into account:

- the reason for the request;
- the child's attendance record;
- the impact on the child's education.

Family holidays during term time will not normally be authorised.

Unauthorised leave of absence may result in a **Penalty Notice** or other legal action in line with current legislation.

Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible.

Where this is not possible, parents should notify the school in advance and ensure that pupils miss as little learning as possible. The school may request evidence of appointments where appropriate.

Other Authorised Absence

The Headteacher may authorise absence for:

- religious observance;
- regulated performances or licensed employment;
- traveller families travelling for occupational purposes;
- other exceptional circumstances permitted under current legislation.

Each request will be considered individually and in accordance with DfE guidance.

6. Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs

The school recognises that some pupils, including those with SEND, mental health issues or medical needs, may experience additional barriers to attendance.

Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with families and external agencies to provide reasonable adjustments and tailored support. This may include:

- pastoral support;
- phased returns;
- adjusted timetables;
- safe spaces;
- specialist agency involvement;
- individual attendance plans.

Support will always be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the child.

***"My friends help me with my work when I come back."
– Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"***

"Emotional support and a trusted adult can help children feel safe, understood and more confident about coming to school." – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

7. Leaving the School Site During the School Day

Leave During Lunchtime

In exceptional circumstances, parents/carers may request permission for their child to leave the school site during lunchtime.

Requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher, outlining the reason for the request. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the child's welfare, attendance and the school's ability to ensure their safe departure and return.

Where permission is granted:

- Parents/carers must collect and return their child via the school office.
- Pupils must be signed out when leaving and signed back in on their return.
- Permission may be reviewed or withdrawn if circumstances change or attendance becomes a concern.

Unauthorised Absence During the School Day

If a pupil leaves the school site without permission or is absent from lessons without a known reason, the school will investigate immediately to ensure the pupil's safety and establish the reason for their absence.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible. If there are concerns about a pupil's welfare or whereabouts, the school will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and involve external agencies where necessary.

Unauthorised absence during the school day will be managed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and may result in further attendance intervention where appropriate.

Pupils Leaving the School Site Without Permission

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school site during the school day unless authorised by the school.

If a pupil is found to be missing or leaves the school site without permission, the school will act immediately to ensure the pupil's safety. This will include searching the school site, contacting parents/carers and, where appropriate, involving the Police or other external agencies.

Once the pupil has been located, the school will review the circumstances, provide appropriate support and take any necessary action in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8. Working Together to Improve Attendance

We know that attendance can sometimes become difficult. Our first priority is always to understand and remove barriers to attendance by working in partnership with families.

We believe that the best outcomes are achieved when schools and families work together.

If attendance begins to decline, we will offer support at the earliest opportunity.

"I like seeing all of my teachers and friends because they make me want to come to school." – Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

"Schools should listen to families, understand barriers and work together to find practical solutions." – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

Early Support

We may support families through:

- Attendance Concern Letters
- Supportive Attendance Meetings
- Individual Attendance Plans
- Attendance Contracts
- Pastoral support
- Referrals to external agencies where appropriate

Our graduated approach

Attendance below 95%



Attendance Concern Letter 1

We will write to you to let you know we have identified a concern.



Attendance Concern Letter 2

We will write to you to let you know that we have noticed a further decline and invite you to a supportive attendance meeting.



Supportive Attendance Meeting

Together, we will discuss any barriers to attendance and agree strategies to improve attendance.



Attendance Contract

Where attendance does not improve, a formal meeting will be arranged to agree an Attendance Contract and the support required moving forward.



Further Intervention

If attendance continues to decline despite support, we will follow the statutory attendance procedures in partnership with the Local Authority.

Where a pupil has an extended or unexplained absence, the school will work with the Local Authority to establish the pupil's whereabouts and fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities in line with current legislation.

More details on this graduated approach can be found in Appendix A of the policy.

Persistent Absence

A pupil whose attendance falls below 90% is classed as persistently absent. Where this occurs, we will work closely with families to identify barriers and provide tailored support. Some pupils, including those with SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities, may require additional support to improve attendance.

"I'd rather be in the lesson because then I know what we're learning and can join in like everyone else." – Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

Formal Intervention

Where attendance does not improve despite appropriate support, the school has a statutory duty to consider further intervention. This may include a Notice to Improve, Penalty Notice or other legal action in partnership with the Local Authority.

9. Legal Intervention and Penalty Notices

At Colham Manor Primary School, our priority is always to work in partnership with families to improve attendance. Formal legal intervention will only be considered where appropriate support has been offered and attendance has not improved, or where there has been a significant unauthorised absence, such as an unauthorised term-time holiday.

Before requesting legal intervention, the school will consider:

- whether appropriate support has been offered to the family;
- whether further support or intervention is likely to improve attendance;
- the individual circumstances of the pupil and family, including any duties under the Equality Act 2010; and
- whether the case meets the threshold for legal intervention in line with Department for Education guidance and the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Where appropriate, parents/carers may be invited to attend a formal attendance meeting or work with the Local Authority to agree further support, such as an Attendance Contract, Parenting Contract or other targeted intervention.

If attendance does not improve despite this support, the school may issue a **Notice to Improve**, providing a final opportunity for attendance to improve before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice is currently **10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with national regulations and the Local Authority's Code of Conduct. At the time of publication:

- the **first Penalty Notice** issued to a parent for a particular child is **£160**, reduced to **£80** if paid within **21 days**;
- the **second Penalty Notice** issued to the same parent for the same child within three years is **£160**, payable within **28 days**;
- a **third Penalty Notice** cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within three years. Where the threshold is met again, the Local Authority may consider alternative legal action, including prosecution or other statutory attendance interventions.

Penalty Notices are issued **per parent, per child**, meaning each parent may receive a separate notice for each child where the legal threshold is met. Non-payment may also result in prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

Our aim is always to resolve attendance concerns through positive partnership with families. Legal intervention is used only where support has not led to improvement or where legislation requires the school to act.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where appropriate, and where attendance has not improved despite support, the Local Authority may consider an **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** as an alternative to prosecution. An ESO places the child under the supervision of the Local Authority to provide additional support and guidance to improve attendance.

The school will work closely with the Local Authority, the pupil and their family throughout this process where an ESO is considered appropriate.

10. Monitoring Attendance

The school monitors attendance and punctuality regularly to identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide timely support to pupils and families.

Attendance data is analysed by the Attendance Officer and senior leaders to identify patterns, trends and any pupils who may require additional support. This information helps the school to:

- identify barriers to attendance;
- monitor the impact of interventions;
- fulfil statutory reporting duties; and
- improve attendance across the school.

Attendance information is regularly shared with governors and, where required, the Local Authority.

Deletion from the Admission Register

The school will only remove a pupil from the admission register in accordance with the **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**.

Where required, the school will notify the Local Authority and provide the information required by law.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board and Headteacher will monitor attendance throughout the year to ensure this policy is implemented consistently and effectively.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

Appendix A

Attendance Monitoring Pathway

Our Approach

At Colham Manor Primary School, we believe that the best outcomes are achieved when schools and families work together.

Our attendance monitoring process is designed to identify concerns early, understand any barriers to attendance and provide timely support. At every stage, our aim is to work in partnership with pupils and their families to improve attendance before formal intervention becomes necessary.

Attendance is reviewed regularly by the Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team. Where concerns are identified, we follow the graduated approach outlined below.

Stage	What this means	How we will support
Attendance falls below 95%	Attendance has begun to decline.	We will send an Attendance Concern Letter (Letter 1) to make families aware that attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard and encourage improvements before attendance becomes a more significant concern. Attendance will normally be reviewed after a minimum of two weeks .
Attendance Monitoring Letter (Letter 2)	Attendance has not improved or continues to decline following the initial two-week monitoring period.	We will write to parents/carers to explain that attendance is now being monitored and invite them to attend a Supportive Attendance Meeting . Attendance will normally be reviewed after a minimum of three weeks following this meeting.

Supportive Attendance Meeting	Attendance continues to be a concern.	We will meet with parents/carers to understand any barriers, listen to concerns and agree practical strategies to improve attendance. Support will be tailored to the needs of the pupil and family, with clear actions agreed by all parties.
Attendance Contract Meeting	Attendance has not improved following the supportive meeting.	A formal Attendance Contract will be agreed with clear actions, responsibilities and review dates. Support will continue throughout the agreed review period (typically 4–6 weeks). If parents/carers do not attend the Attendance Contract Meeting, the school will make reasonable attempts to rearrange the meeting. Where this is not possible, the school will continue to communicate in writing and attendance will continue to be monitored in line with this pathway.
Review Meeting	The agreed review period has ended.	We will review the effectiveness of the Attendance Contract, consider any ongoing barriers and agree to any additional support or next steps. Where attendance has improved, the school will acknowledge this in writing and continue to monitor attendance to ensure the improvement is sustained. If attendance has not improved sufficiently, the school will consider the next

		stage of the attendance pathway.
Warning of Legal Intervention	Attendance continues to be a concern despite sustained support.	Parents/carers will be informed that the school is considering legal intervention unless attendance improves within an agreed timescale.
Notice to Improve	The statutory threshold has been reached and previous support has not secured improvement.	A Notice to Improve will be issued in line with DfE guidance, providing a final opportunity to improve attendance. Attendance will normally be reviewed over a three-week period before a Penalty Notice is considered.
Referral to the Local Authority	Attendance has not improved despite all previous support.	The school will submit evidence of the support offered and may request that the Local Authority considers legal intervention in accordance with statutory guidance and the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

At Every Stage and throughout the process we will:

- Listen to the views of pupils and parents/carers.
- Seek to understand and remove barriers to attendance.
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies where appropriate.
- Offer practical support tailored to individual needs.
- Monitor progress and review the effectiveness of agreed actions.
- Celebrate improvements and recognise positive attendance.

"I feel happy. I would come in if I wasn't that ill because I like to know what I'm missing out on." – Pupil Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

"Being listened to and working together makes it easier to overcome attendance challenges." – Parent Voice, Attendance Survey 2026"

Formal Intervention

Whilst our priority is always to support families, there may be occasions where attendance does not improve despite sustained intervention or where there is significant unauthorised absence, such as an unauthorised term-time holiday. In these circumstances, the school has a statutory duty to work with the Local Authority and may consider formal legal intervention in accordance with current legislation and the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Appendix B

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence (including but not limited to):

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason – equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Appendix C

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Records Management Policy