



Pitsford School

School Policy Document

Name of Policy: Attendance and CME Policy Sept 2025

Audience: Public

Date for Next Review: Summer 2026

SLT Member(s) Responsible for Reviewing and Updating the Policy: FMK/CGW

1. Introduction

This policy gives due regard to the following statutory guidance:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 (DfE)
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance 2024
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Children Missing Education 2016

School attendance is essential for the wellbeing and academic progress of pupils. Barriers to accessing education are diverse and complex, often specific to individual pupils and families. Some pupils find attending school more challenging than others. At all stages of improving attendance, Pitsford School will work with pupils and parents to remove barriers, build strong and trusting relationships, and implement appropriate support.

DfE research indicates that absence can significantly affect a pupil's academic achievement. Ensuring good attendance complements the effective management of behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, and pastoral, mental health, and wellbeing provision. Addressing attendance is a whole-school responsibility involving teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as external partners.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their child receives this education, either through attendance at school or otherwise.

Every child of compulsory school age must attend school every day it is open, except in specific circumstances such as illness or with prior permission for authorised absence.

Pitsford School is required to classify each half-day absence as authorised or unauthorised, and therefore requires accurate information on the cause of each absence.



Pitsford School

- Authorised absences include illness or unavoidable causes.
- Unauthorised absences include absence without good reason, truancy, or late arrivals after registration without a valid explanation.

2. Aims and expectations for pupil attendance

Pitsford School students are expected to attend school regularly and on time and this policy aims to make clear the importance of maximum attendance at school to enable students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities. This is every child's fundamental right and every effort will be made to help students engage in their education in a positive and rewarding way.

In order to achieve this aim, school and home need to work together so that:

- Students are committed to their education and understand the importance of good attendance
- Parents instil in their child the expectation to attend school daily and support school if it becomes necessary to monitor attendance as is their legal duty.
- School has clear lines of responsibility for dealing with attendance and are consistent in the implementation of the policy, including a wide range of positive intervention strategies if concerns continue and, very importantly, rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance. At Pitsford we have outstanding attendance and we have outstanding exam results and it is important to recognise the link between the two.
- AM Registration opens at 8.40 and pupils are required to be on time. The register closes at 9.10am.
- PM Registration opens at 2pm and closes at 2.30pm. Pupils are expected to be in school until 4pm.
- Pupils arriving in school after the register is closed will be marked as unauthorised absent.
- Afternoon activities are registered via a different process. Only pupils who have formally registered for an afternoon activity should be on site after 4.20 pm. Pupils remaining on site after 4.20 should sign in at Pitsford Hall and go to Prep. Pupils leaving site when signed up to an afternoon activity should sign out at Pitsford Hall.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Deputy Head Pastoral** holds responsibility for school attendance in the **Senior School** and the **Head of Juniors** holds responsibility for attendance in the **Junior School**.



Pitsford School

The Deputy Head Pastoral is the **Senior Attendance Champion**, supported by a team comprising: Head of Juniors, Section Head of KS4 and KS5 and DDSLs. Together they make the Attendance Champion Team.

The Attendance Champion team:

- Promotes a whole-school culture of positive attendance
- Maintains regular communication with parents and pupils
- Ensures all staff complete attendance responsibilities in line with school policy

The **Governing Body**:

- Reviews attendance data
- Supports school leaders to focus on pupils needing additional support
- Promotes a whole-school culture of positive attendance
- Ensures statutory duties are fulfilled
- Reviews staff training on attendance

4. **Authorised Absences**

Pitsford School follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines (and codes) detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention
- Days of religious observance *notified in advance*
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness)

There are other events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school and professional discretion will be used in these cases about whether the absence can be authorised. If the absence is foreseen however, a request should be made in writing to the headmaster at least two weeks in advance.

The school acknowledges that allowing students to take part in extra-curricular activities during the school year gives the opportunity to enhance their learning experiences. In these circumstances it is possible to grant absence of up to 10 school sessions in any academic year.

Please note a school day is made-up of 2 sessions (morning and afternoon) therefore a maximum of 5 full days or a combination of full days and half days can be taken. In any circumstance attendance must be above 96%. We ask parents to notify the school well in



Pitsford School

advance - a minimum of four weeks' notice. Permission will always be at the discretion of the Headmaster.

Absences will be unauthorised if:

- no reason or acceptable explanation is provided by a parent
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

It is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not within the guidelines that have been set for us. A note or telephone call from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid, justified or authorised. ***You will likely be required to provide evidence of an appointment or from a medical professional.***

5. Intervention Triggers

Attendance	Intervention
97–95%	Emerging concern: Form Tutor meets pupil, identifies barriers
95–90%	Frequent absence: Head of Section contacts parents, support plan
90–85%	Persistent absence: Support plan, Follow SASS advice
<85%	Ongoing intervention with Local Authority and external agencies
<50%	Severe absence: escalate, may constitute neglect

6. Procedures for parents reporting absence

7.

All absences for illness should be reported through our absence reporting line on 01604880306 or by email to office@pitsfordschool.com with the tutor copied in. Pitsford School expects absences to be kept to a minimum and routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible, and family planned engagements should take place during school holidays wherever possible. The school should be notified of any unavoidable medical appointments in writing, and in advance of the appointments, so that a note can be made on your child's file.



Pitsford School

No absences except those stated, are deemed acceptable reasons for missing School. The School advises that parents do not take their child out of School for any other reason.

The above also applies to those days during the year where attendance or availability is compulsory:

- Speech Day
- Open Days
- Open Evenings
- Curriculum visits
- Sports fixtures
- Concerts and performances, as required.

8. Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. Pitsford School asks for parents support to:

- Do all they can to ensure their child arrives on time for morning and afternoon school. Morning registration is at 8.40am and students should be in their classrooms by 8.40am. Afternoon registration is at 2pm for Seniors and Juniors at 1pm. It is a parental duty to ensure that children are at school on time and expects parents' support in encouraging this. Students failing to arrive on time will incur a late mark on the register and monitored for future punctuality.
- Notify the school of their child's absence by calling the school office on 01604880306 or emailing office@pitsfordschool.com (with a copy to the tutor)
- Keep school informed on a daily basis where absence extends to two days or more again by calling or emailing office@pitsfordschool.com.
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school. Failing to attend school can be indicative of underlying stresses or concerns and it is important to try to resolve these before a pattern of poor attendance develops.
- Where absence is unavoidable the onus is on the parent/child to ensure that work is caught up and thus minimise disruption to the teaching and learning in the classroom.

Please contact your child's tutor in the first instance.

In return the school will:

- Make daily contact with a parent where a reason for their child's absence has not been provided.
- Contact home regarding any outstanding unexplained absences if point a has not been followed.



Pitsford School

- c. Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of well-being in school.
- d. Work to help students re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances.
- e. Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- f. Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.
- g. Work with parents to identify other agencies who may be able to support the child and family. This may involve implementing an Early Help Assessment.

9. The SASS - School Attendance Support Service and the local authority – our wider partnerships

Pitsford School is supported by the SASS, part of West Northamptonshire County Council. The school works with the SASS where students' attendance or welfare is giving cause for concern. The school has a SASO (School Attendance Support Officer) who meets regularly with us to advise and support the school in maintaining our excellent attendance. This can lead to legal action if parents fail to fulfil their responsibility of getting their children to school. We will engage with families to do what we can to prevent this happening.

To facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, Pitsford School is also legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- New Pupil and Deletion returns: notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Attendance returns: providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).
- Sickness returns: providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

10. Supporting Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance, the school summarises attendance figures on reports and grade cards, and attendance can be reviewed by parents on firefly or by contacting the school office. Good and outstanding attendance is celebrated in Achievement Assemblies twice a year.



Pitsford School

Rewards for attendance are incorporated in the rewards system issuing electronic points to students.

11. Children Missing From Education CME

Prolonged or repeated absences may indicate safeguarding concerns, including neglect, sexual abuse, or criminal exploitation. Pitsford School works with external professionals to safeguard absent pupils.

- 10 consecutive days unauthorised absence triggers contact with Local Authority CME teams.
- Similar intervention may occur for authorised absences with wider concerns.
- Please see the procedure for CME:

Day 1 - Phone call. A staff member trained to do so, will telephone the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe.

Day 2 – Follow up phone call. A subsequent telephone call will be made.

Day 3 – Write/email parents. Write or email to the parent in plain English, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. If we are aware that English may not be the parent's first language we will endeavour to copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

Day 5/6 - Home visit. We will arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that appropriate school procedures for home visits are in place.

Once we have completed these checks, Pitsford School will report the child as missing from education (CME).

12. The Admissions Register

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils who attend Pitsford School are placed on both registers. Pitsford School will remove a pupil from our register where the pupil:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated in another setting and we have received confirmation from the setting that the child has started.



Pitsford School

- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- has been permanently excluded.

We will notify West Northamptonshire when we remove a pupil from our register for any of the grounds above. This should be done as soon as these grounds for removal from the register are met, and in any event no later than removing the pupil's name from the register, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education and follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Pitsford School will report to West Northamptonshire Council via the online form or via West Northants Council - email cmetracking.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk who will refer the case to one of the CME Tracking Officers who will complete further investigations and feedback to our school. West Northamptonshire CME Tracking Officer will let Pitsford School know (usually within 10 working days) if the child can be removed from the school roll.

12. Pupils with Ill Health or SEND

- Regular attendance is expected; the school works with parents to overcome barriers
- Support may include: pastoral support, phased return, reasonable adjustments under Equality Act 2010
- Daily or consecutive absence triggers contact from Form Tutor, Pastoral Support Lead, or Attendance Secretary
- External services (GP, CAMHS, LA) may be involved for additional support

13. Part-Time Timetables

Full-time education is the legal entitlement, but temporary part-time arrangements may be considered in exceptional circumstances (e.g., serious illness).



Pitsford School

- Decisions made by Deputy Head Pastoral, Head, or Head of Junior School with parents
- Pastoral support plan in place
- Reviewed at least fortnightly
- Pupils on part-time timetables are registered as **code X**

14. Strategies for Monitoring, Managing and Improving Attendance

- Promote whole-school culture valuing attendance
- Maintain clear, understood attendance policies
- Complete registers accurately and follow up absences promptly
- Analyse attendance data to identify pupils/groups needing support
- Track attendance patterns at individual, cohort, and group levels (EAL/SEND)
- Analyse historic and emerging trends
- Produce percentage attendance reports, weekly reports to staff, and termly/full-year reports
- Build strong relationships with families and remove barriers
- Collaborate with Local Authority and external partners as appropriate