

Potterspury Lodge School

Supporting & Understanding Attendance

Attendance Information for
parents, carers and guardians to
support their child's behaviour
for learning, academic progress
and personal development

2025/26

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Introduction

The importance of attendance

Dear Parent/Carer

Regular attendance at school is a critical and important factor in ensuring that children benefit fully from their full-time education with us at Pottersbury Lodge School. It is recognised nationally that those who have lower attendance achieve less well than those with good levels of attendance. However, as the Head Teacher of our specialist provision, I know that our children have found attendance a real challenge before joining us and often still need additional support to build and maintain confidence in attending school.

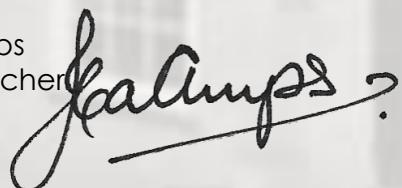
Our staff and senior leaders monitor attendance closely and, as you may know, contact families as any absence, particularly if not known about in advance, raises concern and of course immediately stops the students learning and therefore their progress in both academic and personal development activities. These phone-calls are made as a first step in our supportive process and this booklet, I hope, will help communicate in more detail our actions as well as our intentions to support improved attendance where it is needed.

It is important to know that we, like other schools we share information around attendance on an individual and whole school basis with authorities as part of our statutory duties and aim to work in partnership with you and others to give your child the best educational chances possible. In this booklet we aim to detail some of the facts around attendance, not to place pressure upon you or your child, but to outline what percentages mean in the context of attendance and what you may want us to make available to you in the way of support.

Please contact us if you need help or advice relating to any attendance and punctuality challenges you face no matter how small, short or long term they may be. We are here to help, so where possible please inform us of issues that may lead to absence in advance. While we may not be able to authorise an absence, we will where possible, make adjustments so that attendance remains high.

Sincerely,

Mr. J Amps
Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Amps". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small question mark at the end.

Policies and action plans

Our Policy

Like almost all schools, we have an attendance policy and clear actions for supporting attendance.

You can view, read and download a copy of our attendance policy and other information direct from our school website:

Key information for attendance link

School policies page:

<https://www.cambriangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/autism-schools/potterspury-lodge-school/reports-policies/>



As stated in our policy and the Department for Education Attendance guidance, it is the primary and legal responsibility for parents or carers to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends education. At our school this means that each pupil is expected to attend the school every day or as agreed in transition or support of their mental health and EHCP needs with Authority awareness.

In line with our group expectations, we at Potterspury Lodge School track attendance and report on this through our whole school reporting system using the School Pod platform.

As a school we will keep parents informed of current attendance levels when sending home reports and aim to proactively engage with parents where attendance requires additional intervention and support.



Traffic Light Monitoring System

The importance of attendance 2025/26

We use a 'traffic light system' to track, monitor and plan actions to improve attendance. The example provided suggests different actions that we may take at different levels of attendance.

93-100%

Attendance levels are good to excellent

Positive encouragement/incentives/rewards applied to help maintain high levels of attendance and recognise students within this area. Where early signs are identified by parents or staff that may lead to absence we aim to maintain open lines of communication so that adjustment and support can be put in place to help prevent absenteeism.

90-
92.9%

Attendance levels average 1 day off every 2 weeks (90%)

Parents may be invited to a meeting or attendance review either in person or over the phone. This is a focused supportive measure to develop an agreed attendance action plan or monitoring. A date for the plan to be reviewed is agreed at the meeting.

Below
90%

Attendance is more than 1 day off every 10 school days

Nationally below 90% is classed as "persistent absence". This is 1 day per fortnight or more.

As a school we would aim to put in additional support and either introduce or extend a previously visited plan to see what other adjustments we are able to make to support parents and carers get their children in to school.

Lower Attendance

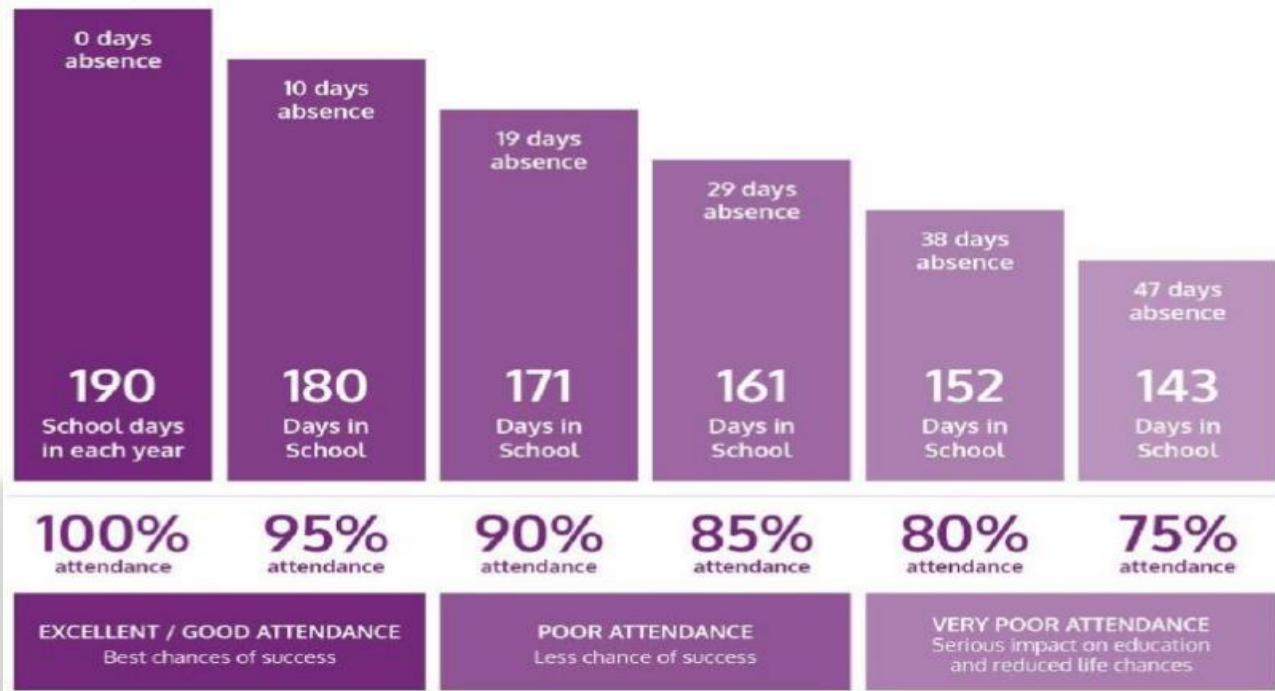
We know that most of our children have found attendance either impossible in previous settings or extremely difficult for a variety of reasons. We will often see pupils go from non-attendance to well above 50, 60 or even 80% over a relatively short period of time.

However, we also know that attendance for our student may also be fragile and small changes or concerns can increase anxiety quickly and see a reduction in attendance. Wherever possible changes will be communicated in advance and we would encourage parents and carers to keep us informed of anything happening outside of school that pupil may be processing so that we can support too in school.

Where a pupils attendance drops close to or below 50%, they are classed as SPA or severely persistently absent and a bespoke plan will be written in partnership with you at home and our pastoral mentor.

What do attendance percentages mean?

National Data On Attendance Based Upon Research



It is true that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poorer attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. At Potterspury Lodge School we know how hard you as parents and carers have had to work to get your child to us and the right educational platform. You also know how important attendance is already.

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require all maintained schools to open to educate their pupils for at least 190 days (380 sessions) in each school year for this very reason.

Table 1 puts absence in the context of the day's children miss at school based on a school being opened for 190 days per year and Table 2 puts absence in the context of the day's children miss at school over a six-week period (approx. half termly).

It can be helpful to talk to your child about days rather than percentages at times as in most tests, 90% or even 80% would be seen potentially as a very good performance where attendance is of course different.

Table 1:

Days Absence	Year percentage
9.5 days	95%
19 days	90%
28.5 days	85%
38 days	80%
47.5 days	75%
57 days	70%
66.5 days	65%

Table 2:

Number of days absence	Attendance over a 6-week period (~ half a term)
1.5 days	95%
3 days	90%
4.5 days	85%
6 days (1 day off every week)	80%
7.5 days	75%
9 days	70%
12 days	65%

Reports and Attendance Contracts

Attendance Reports

If a student's attendance begins to cause concern, we aim to explore and support the reasons for this.

As part of a support process a student may be placed on an attendance report to their form tutor, or our pastoral mentor within the pastoral team. These reports allow parents and students to see in detail how attendance is impacting their learning. It also allows them to see and celebrate improvement as targets are met.

Some may engage with a paper report while others may simply know that they are being supported and teachers' feedback to the staff member overseeing the monitoring in support of their needs. While on monitoring students are still able to access rewards systems if their attendance during these periods meets the criteria set out for all students and additional bespoke rewards may be set as part of the report in consultation with home.



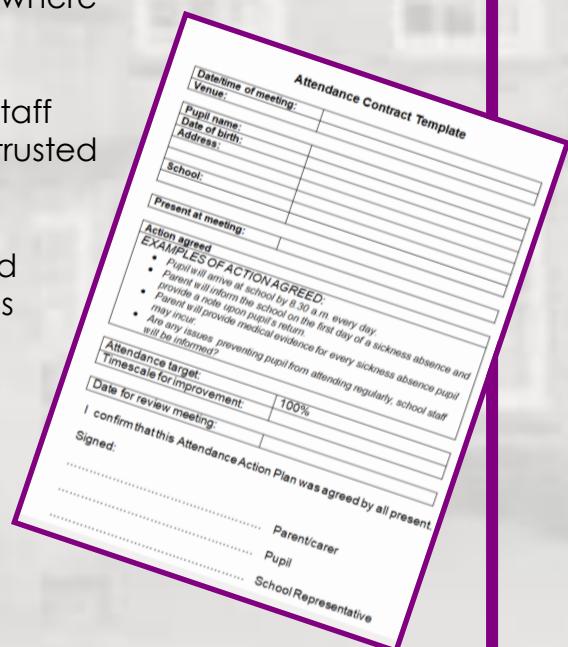
Attendance Support Clinics

As a school we convene half-termly Pastoral Mentor and Senior Leader led attendance clinics for parents of students where attendance continues to need support.

Attendance clinics and panels may include a senior staff member, our deputy headteacher or/and the pupils' trusted Adult.

Parents are invited into the school for the meeting and attendance targets for improvement are set as well as any support reviewed and needs discussed.

Any reports or contracts then remain in place for an agreed period of time and until attendance rises above persistent absence thresholds (90%+)



Prevention, Intervention, Persistent & Severe Absence

Letters home

At Potterspury Lodge School we want parents or carers to be fully informed as to what their child's current attendance is and what needs to be done.

Attendance is primarily reported back at three key points on pupil reports. There are also a range of letters we use to make contact when attendance may flag to us as needing further support.

These are intended to raise awareness and offer opportunities for home and school to communicate and work together for the benefit of your child.

Copies of all letters home are kept in a students file so that we are able to monitor the support offered and what other options remain to improve attendance.

Feedback

At Potterspury Lodge School we welcome your feedback and ideas.

If you feel that we can do more to support attendance please let us know by Contacting the reception desk in the schools main lodge building or by emailing the child's tutor directly.



Dear *studentname*,
I am writing with reference to *studentname*'s recent absence(s) from the academy and to take this opportunity to give you some information regarding the provision we are able to make for children, should *chosen_name* feel unable to attend in the future.
We understand that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, and that some children find it harder than others to attend. We would like to work with you to identify and remove any barriers.
Some of the support we can offer is:
(Add/delete as appropriate)
If a child is feeling a little unwell in the morning, they may well improve during the day and therefore it is usually better to send them to the academy and we can provide a quiet working area until they feel able to re-join their classes.
We also provide 'stationery' areas for children to work in, should mobility be an issue so that they do not have to move around the academy. We would also allow students to leave lessons early to avoid crowds should they have an injury.
We have a full time first aider at *insert academy name* that can assess the condition and, with your authorisation, administer medication should *chosen_name* feel unwell after arriving at the academy.

School Attendance & Rewards

Rewards

At Potterspury Lodge School we have and continue to build and develop rewards to recognise good and excellent attendance as well as other positive behaviours that link to our whole school values of being kind, being respectful and being our best.

We believe that rewards are an important part of promoting good behaviours and habits around attendance and we use a variety of rewards as an incentive to improve attendance and punctuality. For instance, form tutors competitions along with praise postcard systems and individual and tutor group treats, certificates and awards.

The attendance of those children with 100 percent may be celebrated in assemblies or in private where pupils do not want to be rewarded in front of others. Recognising and rewarding those children who have the most improved attendance also act as an encouragement to promote even better school attendance and some of our rewards will focus around 100% attendance during specific period so that everyone can aim to gain rewards that are on offer.

School tutor periods

At Potterspury Lodge School our tutors promote good attendance and inform students of their attendance every week. Students should be aware of their attendance, know what their percentage is and know if they are a good attender or someone who needs to see their attendance improve. For some students they may be on reports as described earlier in this booklet.

What to do if...

...Your child is unwell and unable to attend school
If your child is unwell and unable to attend school because of illness, you must phone to report the absence, before 9.00am on every day of absence. Please phone **01908 542912**.

Provided that the reason for absence falls within the regulations set down by the Department for Education, the absence will be recorded as 'authorised'. Absence that falls outside these regulations or is not supported by a return of the absence form for longer periods, the absence will be deemed 'unauthorized'.

If you wish to see your child's attendance herringbone (full record) these can be requested but will be provided in line with data request timescales and can not be processed as an "on the day request".

School Attendance & Rewards

School attendance certificates and praise postcards

At Potterspury Lodge School we want our students to know that we value and appreciate good attendance and punctuality. While vouchers, trips and other rewards may recognise these behaviours, students who maintain 100% attendance or improve attendance after a dip, are recognised through the use of praise postcards.

These can be given by form tutors, other pastoral or senior staff. Students will be given these to bring home with them, so that parents are able to recognise these achievements or they may arrive in the post. Please do join us in congratulating your young people when rewards are received.



What to do if...

...Your child has a medical appointment during the school day

We request that all medical/dental appointments are sought out of school hours where possible, so as not to impact on learning. However, if your child has an appointment during the school day they should bring a copy of their appointment letter and/or a letter from home explaining the need to leave school early that day.

Your child will need to have this letter signed by their form tutor and take it to reception to sign out at the agreed time. Where an appointment is morning based, a student should return after the appointment wherever possible and as soon after the appointment so as to miss as few lessons as possible.