


# Changes to attendance requirements for schools

09 September 2024  Laura Murphy

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently released their updated guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'. This guidance outlines significant changes to the attendance and registration requirements for schools, which came into effect on 19 August 2024.

In this article, we will explore the key changes and how schools can implement them for the new school year.

## Shift to statutory guidance

One of the most significant changes is the shift to statutory guidance. This means that schools must have regard to the guidance in their efforts to maintain high levels of school attendance.

The guidance sets out the minimum requirements for attendance and registration, and schools are expected to go above and beyond these requirements where possible.

## New requirements for school attendance

Under the new guidance, schools will be required to take a more proactive approach to attendance. This means that schools will need to identify and address attendance issues at an earlier stage, rather than waiting until a child has reached a certain level of absence.

Schools will also be required to work more closely with parents and carers to support children's attendance.

The guidance places a greater emphasis on the importance of regular attendance. Schools will be expected to promote good attendance and punctuality and visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life.

Schools will also be required to monitor attendance more closely and to act where necessary, under the new National Framework.

## New requirements for registration

The new guidance also includes changes to the requirements for registration. Schools will be required to take a more detailed electronic register (morning and afternoon), which includes information on the reason for any absence, using the revised nationally recognised attendance and absence codes.

This is to help schools identify patterns of absence and to act where necessary. This also links with the data sharing expectation that have been updated between the school, local authority, and where necessary other agencies.

### **"A more proactive approach"**

Schools will also be required to take a more proactive approach to registration. This means that schools will need to follow up on any unexplained absences and to work with parents and carers to address any issues, including updated use of 'parenting contracts'.

This will include working with the local authority where there are pupils who are unable to attend due to ill health or where there needs to be support for SEND pupils and part-time timetables.

## Implementation for the new academic year

Schools should have been considering how they will implement the new changes and what this means for the new academic year. This includes reviewing and updating attendance and registration policies, as well as providing training for staff.

Schools will also need to communicate the changes to parents and carers, and to work with them to support children's attendance. This may include providing information on the importance of attendance, as well as offering support and guidance on how to improve attendance.

In addition, schools will need to ensure that they have the necessary systems and processes in place to monitor attendance and registration. This may include investing in new software or technology, for the electronic registers, as well as ensuring that staff are trained to use these systems effectively.

# When do the changes to school attendance come into effect?

The changes to the attendance and registration requirements for schools from 19 August 2024 represent a significant shift in the way that schools approach attendance. The new guidance places a greater emphasis on the importance of regular attendance and requires schools to take a more proactive approach to identifying and addressing attendance issues.

## Further support

Look out for our further articles on attendance and [check out this webinar](#) where we'll be running through all the key changes and discussing what it means in practice.

## Key contact



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