TAKE 1
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2026/27 Academic Year

Policy owner	Headteachers / Senior Attendance Champion
Approved by	Governing Body / Proprietor
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review date	August 2027, or sooner following statutory or local-authority change
School day	9:00am-3:00pm
Expected arrival	By 8:50am
Applies to	All pupils registered at Take 1
Recording system	Electronic admission and attendance registers / school MIS

1. Policy statement

Take 1 Independent School is committed to securing regular attendance and punctuality for every pupil. Attendance is fundamental to educational achievement, safeguarding, wellbeing, relationships and successful progression. The school will work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, commissioners, local authorities and other professionals to identify and remove barriers to attendance as early as possible.

Take 1 adopts a 'support first' approach. Legal intervention may be appropriate where support is not appropriate, has not been successful or has not been engaged with, but it is not a substitute for understanding and addressing barriers to attendance.

2. Legal and statutory framework

- Education Act 1996, including parental duties relating to suitable full-time education and school attendance;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which replaced the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance, statutory guidance updated 9 July 2026 and applicable to independent schools;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, effective from 1 September 2026;
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance, updated September 2025 and statutory for schools;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR; and
- The current national framework and Nottingham/appropriate local-authority code of conduct for school-attendance penalty notices.

Where statutory guidance, regulations or national attendance codes change, Take 1 will apply the current legal requirements and update this policy as necessary.

3. Aims

- Promote a culture in which attendance is everyone's responsibility;
- Expect every pupil to attend every session for which they are required to attend;
- Promote punctual arrival and reduce lost learning caused by lateness;
- Identify emerging absence before it becomes entrenched;
- Reduce persistent and severe absence;
- Understand and remove barriers to attendance through early, individualised support;
- Ensure SEND, disability, health, safeguarding and family circumstances are properly considered;
- Maintain accurate statutory admission and attendance registers;
- Work effectively with commissioners, local authorities and other agencies; and
- Use legal intervention only where appropriate and in accordance with the national framework.

4. Leadership and responsibilities

4.1 Proprietor and Governing Body

- Recognise improving attendance as a school leadership priority;
- Hold leaders to account for implementation of this policy and the effectiveness of attendance strategy;
- Review attendance information, including persistent/severe absence and vulnerable groups;
- Ensure appropriate resources, systems and training are in place; and
- Have regard to the Independent School Standards and statutory attendance guidance.

4.2 Senior Attendance Champion

Take 1 will identify a senior leader or governor with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure a clear attendance strategy, coordinate support, monitor data and patterns, and work with the DSL, SENCO, commissioners and local authority as required.

4.3 School staff

- Take and complete registers accurately and on time;
- Never mark a pupil present unless they are physically present at registration or the relevant statutory code properly applies;
- Identify unexplained absence promptly and ensure first-day contact;
- Report safeguarding concerns arising from absence to the DSL;
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families;
- Identify barriers and contribute to attendance support plans;
- Record actions and communications accurately; maintaining confidentiality and sharing information lawfully.

4.4 Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends regularly and punctually where the child is of compulsory school age;
- Ensure the pupil arrives by 8:50am ready for the 9:00am start;
- Notify Take 1 as soon as possible, and by 9:30am at the latest, on each first day of an unexpected absence and explain the reason;
- Keep the school updated during continuing absence;
- Make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible;
- Request any leave of absence in advance;
- Provide accurate and up-to-date contact information; and
- Engage with attendance support, meetings and agreed plans.

4.5 Pupils

- Attend every required session and arrive on time;
- Engage with support intended to improve attendance;
- Tell a trusted adult about difficulties affecting attendance or punctuality; and
- Follow agreed attendance, reintegration or support plans.

5. School day, registration and punctuality

The school day is 9:00am-3:00pm. Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50am so that they are ready to learn when the morning session begins.

Take 1 uses a 30-minute registration window for each session.

- Present: a pupil who is present when the register is taken is marked with the appropriate present code.
- Code L: where a pupil arrives after registration has started but before the register closes, they are recorded as late but present.
- Code U: where a pupil arrives after the register has closed and no other statutory code applies, they are recorded as absent for that session because of late arrival.
- Morning register: begins at 9:00am and closes at 9:30am. Arrival after 9:00am but before the register closes is therefore Code L where the pupil was not present when registration began; arrival after 9:30am is normally Code U unless another statutory code accurately describes the circumstances.

6. Reporting and following up absence

Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and by 9:30am at the latest, giving the reason and, where known, expected duration.

Where a pupil expected to attend is absent and no reason has been provided, Take 1 will make first-day contact. The urgency and extent of contact will reflect known safeguarding risk.

- Check the attendance register and known authorised arrangements;
- Contact parents/carers using available contact details;
- Where appropriate, contact the commissioning/referring school or relevant professional;
- Consider the pupil's vulnerabilities, previous absence and safeguarding history;
- Escalate immediately to the DSL/deputy DSL where absence creates or may indicate a safeguarding concern; and
- Continue reasonable contact and safeguarding action where the reason for absence remains unknown.

Where Code N is initially used because the circumstances have not yet been established, Take 1 will establish the reason and replace Code N with the correct code as soon as practicable and within the statutory timescale.

7. Attendance and absence codes

Take 1 will use only the national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE statutory guidance. Staff must not create local codes or use a code simply because it produces a preferred attendance statistic.

The correct code depends on the actual circumstances. This includes pupils attending approved educational activities, other schools, alternative provision, medical appointments, religious observance, leave of absence, illness, reduced timetables and circumstances where attendance is not possible.

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Only the school can authorise an absence from the attendance register. A parent's explanation does not itself authorise absence, although it provides evidence that the school must consider when selecting the correct statutory code.

8.1 Illness

Where a pupil is unable to attend because of illness, including mental ill health, the appropriate illness code will normally be used. Take 1 will not routinely require medical evidence. In most cases, a parent's notification that the pupil is too ill to attend will be sufficient.

Medical or other evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the accuracy of the reason, or where information is needed to understand barriers and put appropriate support in place. Take 1 will not apply an automatic rule requiring medical evidence simply because attendance falls below a particular percentage.

8.2 Medical and dental appointments

Routine appointments should be arranged outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, parents should notify the school in advance. Pupils should attend before and/or after the appointment where reasonably possible.

8.3 Religious observance

Absence will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

8.4 Leave of absence and holidays

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence only where the applicable statutory criteria are met. Leave must normally be requested in advance and each application will be considered individually.

A holiday or leisure trip during term time is not an exceptional circumstance simply because it is convenient, cheaper or connected with a family celebration. Unauthorised holiday absence will be recorded using the appropriate statutory code and may contribute to consideration of a penalty notice.

8.5 Exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave for exceptional circumstances will be considered on their individual facts. Where leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of school days authorised.

9. Attendance support and early intervention

Take 1 will use attendance information to identify pupils whose attendance is deteriorating or who are at risk of persistent or severe absence. Intervention will not wait for a pupil to cross a particular percentage threshold where concerns are already evident.

- Early conversation with the pupil and parent/carer;
- Identification of barriers within school, at home and in the wider community;
- Reasonable adjustments and SEND support;
- Pastoral, mentoring or behaviour support;
- An Individual Attendance Support Plan or attendance contract where appropriate;
- Support with routines, transport or transition where these are barriers;
- Work with commissioners/referring schools;
- Family Help/early help or multi-agency involvement where appropriate;
- Liaison with health, social care, youth justice or other services where relevant; and
- Regular review with clear actions, responsibilities and timescales.

10. Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence means a pupil misses 10% or more of their possible sessions. Severe absence means a pupil misses 50% or more of their possible sessions. These are indicators for intensified support and oversight; they are not targets at which Take 1 waits before acting.

For persistently absent pupils, Take 1 will identify causes, intensify support and work with the local authority and other partners where needed. Severe absence will receive particular priority and may require a coordinated multi-agency response.

11. Pupils with SEND, disabilities and health needs

Take 1 recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance because of SEND, disability, physical or mental health needs. High expectations for attendance will be balanced with an individual understanding of those barriers and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and SEND framework.

- Work closely with the SENCO, DSL, pupil, family and relevant professionals;
- Make reasonable adjustments where required;
- Ensure support is not withheld merely because written medical evidence is unavailable;
- Avoid punitive approaches where absence is connected to unmet need;
- Review provision and support where attendance difficulties persist; and
- Work with the local authority where health needs mean a compulsory-school-age pupil may require education otherwise than at school.

Where Take 1 has reasonable grounds to believe that a compulsory-school-age pupil will be unable to attend because of sickness for the period requiring a statutory sickness return, the school will make the required return to the local authority.

12. Reduced or part-time timetables

A part-time or reduced timetable must not be used as a behaviour-management tool or to manage staffing difficulties. Any temporary reduced timetable must be exceptional, time-limited, in the pupil's best interests, regularly reviewed and intended to support return to full-time education as soon as appropriate.

The arrangement must be agreed and recorded with the parent/carer and, where relevant, commissioner/local authority. Safeguarding, SEND, EHCP and alternative-provision implications must be considered, and the correct statutory attendance codes must be used for every session.

13. Safeguarding and absence

Attendance is an important safeguarding indicator. Patterns of absence, unexplained absence and changes in attendance can be signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental ill health, bullying, domestic abuse or other harm.

- Unexplained or concerning absence will be considered through a safeguarding lens;
- The DSL will consider the pupil's individual vulnerabilities and known risks;
- Home visits may be undertaken where appropriate and in accordance with Take 1 procedures;
- children's social care, police or other agencies will be contacted where safeguarding thresholds or immediate risk require it;
- Absence involving a child with a social worker or other identified vulnerability will be shared with relevant professionals as appropriate; and
- Repeated absence will be cross-referenced with safeguarding and behaviour information.

Police welfare checks are not an automatic attendance intervention. Police will be contacted where the circumstances indicate an appropriate policing or emergency safeguarding response.

14. Children missing education and deletion from roll

A child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise. Take 1 will comply with the September 2025 statutory Children Missing Education guidance and work with local authorities to identify and support children at risk of missing education.

A pupil will only be removed from Take 1's admission register where a statutory ground in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met and the required enquiries, notifications and procedures have been completed. A placement or funding dispute does not by itself create a lawful ground for deletion from roll.

Take 1 will make required admission, deletion, attendance and sickness returns to the relevant local authority in accordance with the 2024 Regulations.

15. Commissioned placements and dual registration

Where a pupil is also registered at another school or attends provision away from Take 1, the registration and attendance arrangements must be clearly agreed and recorded. Take 1 will use the correct statutory codes and will maintain appropriate communication with the commissioning/referring school and local authority.

Commissioning arrangements do not remove Take 1's responsibility to maintain accurate registers for pupils on its roll or to act on safeguarding concerns arising from absence.

16. Legal intervention and penalty notices

Take 1 will work with the relevant local authority and follow the current national framework and local code of conduct. The school does not operate a blanket approach to penalty notices.

The national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions can be consecutive or non-consecutive and may include a combination of unauthorised holiday, unexplained/other unauthorised absence and late arrival after the register has closed, in accordance with the statutory framework.

When the threshold is met, Take 1 will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate or has been tried, and whether a penalty notice or another intervention is likely to improve attendance. A Notice to Improve may be used where appropriate under the national framework/local code.

Where the local authority issues a first penalty notice for an attendance offence, the national rate is £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice for the same child within three years is £160. A third penalty notice cannot normally be issued to the same parent for the same child within the three-year period, so prosecution or another legal intervention may be considered. Other legal interventions available to local authorities may include prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, an Education Supervision Order, Parenting Order or School Attendance Order where the statutory criteria apply.

17. Attendance data, analysis and information sharing

- Attendance will be monitored daily and reviewed regularly by leaders;
- Data will be analysed by pupil and relevant groups to identify patterns and disproportionality;
- Persistent and severe absence will be specifically monitored;
- Governors/proprietor will receive regular attendance information and assurance about strategy;
- Attendance data will be shared lawfully with local authorities, commissioners and safeguarding partners where required or appropriate; and
- Records will be accurate, secure and retained in accordance with statutory and data-protection requirements.

Independent schools are covered by the statutory attendance guidance but are not currently required to submit daily attendance data to the Department for Education in the same way as state-funded schools. Take 1 will nevertheless comply with all applicable statutory returns and information-sharing duties.

18. Rewards and recognition

Take 1 may positively recognise good or improving attendance, engagement and punctuality. Recognition will be inclusive and carefully designed so that pupils are not unfairly disadvantaged because of disability, illness, SEND, authorised absence, religious observance or circumstances outside their control. Attendance incentives will never replace individual support or safeguarding action.

19. Staff training

Relevant staff will receive attendance training appropriate to their role, including registration codes, punctuality, first-day response, safeguarding, SEND/equality considerations, escalation and record keeping. Updates will be provided when statutory guidance or coding requirements change.

20. Monitoring and review

The Senior Attendance Champion and Headteachers will monitor implementation of this policy. Attendance strategy and data will be reviewed by senior leaders and reported to governors/proprietor. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, DfE guidance, local-authority procedures or the school's operating arrangements change.

21. Linked Take 1 policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions and Placement Policy
- Children Missing Education procedures
- Missing Pupil and Leaving Site Without Permission Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions / Health Needs procedures
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Information Sharing / Data Protection Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

Appendix 1 - Staff attendance response checklist

- 1. REGISTER - complete the statutory register accurately and on time.
- 2. IDENTIFY - flag unexplained absence and lateness immediately.
- 3. CONTACT - complete first-day contact where no reason is known.
- 4. SAFEGUARD - consider vulnerability and refer concerns to the DSL without delay.
- 5. CODE - use the national code that accurately reflects the circumstances.
- 6. UNDERSTAND - speak with the pupil/family to identify barriers.
- 7. SUPPORT - agree proportionate actions, adjustments and attendance support.
- 8. PARTNER - involve commissioners, local authority and other professionals where appropriate.
- 9. ESCALATE - consider formal/legal intervention only in accordance with the support-first approach and national framework.
- 10. REVIEW - monitor impact, follow up and revise the plan if attendance does not improve.

Appendix 2 - Key amendments from the 2025 policy

- Replaced the repealed Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Updated Working Together to Improve School Attendance to the statutory guidance updated 9 July 2026.
- Updated KCSIE 2025 references to KCSIE 2026, effective 1 September 2026.
- Added the September 2025 statutory Children Missing Education guidance.
- Corrected the lateness procedure: Code L applies before register closure and Code U normally applies after closure; removed the previous 11:30am cut-off.
- Set a 30-minute registration window, with the morning register closing at 9:30am.
- Removed the automatic requirement for medical evidence below 93% attendance; evidence is not routinely required and should be requested only where justified.
- Reframed the previous 95% intervention trigger so support begins whenever emerging concerns are identified.
- Added the statutory persistent absence (10% or more sessions missed) and severe absence (50% or more sessions missed) definitions.
- Strengthened the support-first approach and responsibilities of the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Added detailed provisions for SEND, disability, physical and mental health needs and reasonable adjustments.
- Added safeguards around reduced/part-time timetables.
- Strengthened safeguarding, children-missing-education, admission-register deletion and statutory-return requirements.
- Updated penalty-notice provisions to the national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 school weeks and current fine structure.
- Clarified that police welfare checks are risk-based safeguarding decisions, not routine attendance enforcement.
- Clarified independent-school attendance-data requirements and commissioned/dual-registration arrangements.
- Made attendance rewards more inclusive so pupils are not penalised for unavoidable or protected absences.

Appendix 3 - Reference sources

Department for Education: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated 9 July 2026).
Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (effective 1 September 2026).
Department for Education: Children Missing Education statutory guidance (updated 8 September 2025).
School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/208).
Department for Education: School attendance and absence / legal action to enforce school attendance.
Current local-authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices should be consulted before any referral.