



Connection ● Communication ● Independence ● Aspiration

Attendance Policy 2024/2025

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole- school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners Promoting good
- attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every learner has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled Acting early
- to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure learners have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#) Part 3
- of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, learners and parents/carers Making sure
- school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all learners, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting learners' needs
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors Supporting
- staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils Monitoring the impact of
- any implemented attendance strategies Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where
- necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for learners with SEND, including where local authority school transport is regularly being missed, and where learners with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a learner with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a learner's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of learners who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school Setting a
- clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance Evaluating and
- monitoring expectations and processes
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers Delivering
- targeted intervention and support to learners and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Sinead Walsh and can be contacted via 01706 750815 or Sinead.walsh@redwood-school.com

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/senior leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed- penalty notices
- Following the Attendance protocol daily (see Appendix 2) and liaising with parents/carers and staff members regarding attendance

The attendance officer is Nicola Wright and can be contacted via 01706 750815 (ext 261) or Nicola.wright@redwood-school.com

3.5 Class Leads

Class leads are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by the close of registers

Class leads will also provide parents/carers with an Attendance report at every pastoral/progress meeting and EHCP annual review

3.6 School Admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow the Attendance protocol (appendix 2)

3.7 Parents/Carers

Are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, unless other temporary arrangements have been agreed with the school for medical reasons
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Officer

➤ 3.8 Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time, unless other temporary arrangements have been agreed with the school for medical reasons

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all learners onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Any

An amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry The
- amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See

Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a learner is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at **8.50am** and ends at **3.00pm**

Learners must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school on 01706 750815

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment, and provides evidence of the appointment in the form of a hospital letter or dental card. These can be brought to the office in person or emailed to office@redwood-school.com.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The learner's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Repeated concerns around punctuality could result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, and subsequent fines

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any learner we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the learner's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to other professionals involved with the learner or learner's family
- Where appropriate, offer support to the learner and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the learner needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels during parents/carers meetings, EHCP meetings as will send attendance reports together with academic reports

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or school office. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision
- If the learner is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a learner to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that learner
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the learner's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Supporting learners who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Learners who are absent from school due to mental or physical ill health will be supported by school staff and referrals to outside agencies will be made, where appropriate. The school works closely with school health and will also engage other outside agencies such as CAMHS, SALT, Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists and the Educational Welfare Service, to support the family and learner, in removing or mitigating any barriers to attendance.

Where a learner has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the learner's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual learners, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 7.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class leads and pathway leads, to facilitate discussions with learners and families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a learner's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of learners who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually, by Sinead Walsh (Assistant Headteacher). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Office staff:

If any messages are received prior to the registers being done, search for the student and complete the 'record a planned absence'

Input the dates concerned, the correct code and enter a message in the notes box – remembering to include your initials

9:10am Check the Attendance registers are completed: Students – Attendance- Daily Attendance

If any of the registers have a ? at the end of the line this means marks are missing. Ring the tutor group to complete. Any registers that are not done ring tutor group.

When a student arrives after **9:10am** alter the attendance mark through InVentry and choose a dinner option

Marks through InVentry, if after 9:25am, also need to go into attendance – bulk edits – marks advanced – change year – class, check the 1st session mark is also changed.

Students arriving via the office will receive a present mark up until 9:25am

Run report from: Student - Attendance Absentees - Absentees by date - Change the selection to choose N codes only.

Tick the students you would like to send a reason for absence message to. Press the green bulk action button, selecting follow up with guardian. This will then bring a list of all the parents you are sending the message to, check and confirm. This should be done by **10:00am**.

Office staff to check Arbor communications for any messages re absence, and process accordingly then email the Attendance Officer to say attendance complete.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer (A.O) to start making calls to parents who have not responded at **10.30am**.

If no response, A.O to contact other known contacts registered on Arbor.

1-3pm, The A.O will arrange home visits to families where no reason has been given for their child's absence and we have a safeguarding concern about the learner or family.

(If A.O is absent, this stage will be completed by a member of the Safeguarding team)

Office staff

1:10pm- Check Afternoon registers are done in the same way as the morning registers. If any classes are out of the building complete the register with a **V** and note as to where they are, using the EVF form that should have been left on reception.

On a Friday afternoon check the roll call marks for all enrolled students for the whole of the week: Students – Attendance - Roll call marks - Change the dates to cover the whole week. This will show up any missing marks, put right anything that is wrong by changing to appropriate code - i.e. put an **I** in the morning but an **N** in the afternoon the **N** would be changed to an **I**. Missing marks cannot be changed from here and have to be done by finding the relevant register

Also on a Friday, send messages out to the parents of those students who still have an **N** Mark in. To Find this Run report from: Students - Attendance - Absentees by date changing the date range to the whole week

Message to be: **“Please provide a reason for (name) absence from school on (enter date). If no reason is provided by (following) Monday (enter date) the absence will be unauthorised. Regards Redwood”**

Send via text through **Arbor**

On a Monday change any **N** marks from the previous week to **O** and Note - No reason provided (check communications on Arbor to see if anybody has sent any messages in before doing this)

Recording Planned Group Absences E.g. Residential:

Students – Attendance – Absentees – Planned Absences – Record – Add Information Creating an absence Report

Students – Attendance – Absentees – Persistent Absentees – Do Dates – Apply – Download