Learners' Trust

Attendance Policy

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Statement of Intent

Schools within the Learners' Trust believe that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Communities and families are unique and the strategies to ensure our children and young people attend school regularly and engage fully in their school-life, are equally diverse.

The LEARNERs' Trust aims to bring together research and strategies from all education providers to help support improvements across the county, to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence alongside a programme of professional development. This toolkit will evolve and expand with the evidence of impact and new research to improve attendance for all.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

1. Building strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
2. Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Having a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
3. Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
4. Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
5. Sharing information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
6. Being particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

Legal framework

[Updated] This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- **[Updated]** DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

- **[Updated]** DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board (Board of Trustees) has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance The

headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer (Jemma Rees) is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.

- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

LA Attendance Teams

LAs are required to have a **School Attendance Support Team** which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

- **Communication and advice**: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- **Targeting Support Meetings**: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- **Legal intervention**: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

The contact details for the School Attendance Support Team are:

- **Derbyshire:** The supporting team are the 'Inclusion Support Advisory Teachers'. The main contact email is Sian Mansey who is the Service Lead for the Inclusion Support Advisory Service.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any

  reason **Severe absence (SA)**

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The headteacher will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Headteacher will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

To guide our training, we will take a research informed view. EEF research suggests:

1. There is a strong connection between school attendance and educational outcomes at all key stages
2. In 2022-23, just over one in five pupils missed 10% or more of their schooling
3. Pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were nearly twice as likely to be persistently absent than their classmates
4. Pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds with SEND have even higher levels of absence
5. Attendance levels are typically worse in secondary schools than primary
6. Schools in England use a wide variety of strategies to improve pupil attendance
7. There is some evidence of promise for parental engagement approaches and responsive interventions that meet the individual needs of the pupils
8. But overall, the evidence on the effectiveness of different approaches is weak, with very few high-quality studies taking place in English schools
9. The interventions that show promise take a holistic approach in understanding pupils and their specific need, and which address the specific barriers to attendance that have been identified

Reference: EEF. (2022). Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Making attendance expectations clear to all stakeholders

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

A model letter to go out to parents annually is available in **Appendix 1**

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8:50am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; the doors will be open from **8:40am**, therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:40am**.

For Early Years the school day starts at 9:00am, and pupils will be in their classrooms, ready to begin lessons at this time; the doors will be open from 08:45am, therefore pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 08:50am

Pupils will have a morning break at **10:45am**, which will last until **10.55am**, and a lunch break at **12:05pm – 12:55pm for KS1/KS2 and 11:45pm – 12:55pm for Reception**, pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:00pm.** Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:05pm.** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

[Updated] Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

[Updated] The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments

- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- **[Updated]** Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- **[Updated]** P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- **[Updated]** Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- **[Updated]** Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also

be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days. **[New]** Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via a message in the Class Dojo app or telephone before 9:00**am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. Absence procedures are detailed in a flowchart in **Appendix 1a & 1b**

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by message and/or **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where contact cannot be made by telephone call, an email, message via Class Dojo app they will be sent with a request to contact the school office.

Where no explanation is forthcoming **and** where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row or more than **10** school days in **one term**, further safeguarding checks will be actioned in line with the safeguarding policy.

Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.

Where an absence is unexplained

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Authorising parental absence requests

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account.

Absence request procedures are detailed in a flowchart in **Appendix 2**
A letter to parents informing them of the rules around requesting leave is available in **Appendix 2a**

The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Letters for replying to requests for leave are available in **Appendix 2b-2e**

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete the request for exceptional leave form at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will **not** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore,

any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Study leave

For public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.

A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable).

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body In question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher. The headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher reserves the

right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the child will have to be signed out of schoolboy an appropriate adult and signed back in on return

Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision.

If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a **termly** basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

SEND and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be

recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes (see chapter 8).

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting fulltime and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

[Updated] Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:55am** and **1:00pm for KS1 and 1:15pm for KS2**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

[Updated] The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy,

inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Absent pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - The library
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided

- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance Monitoring

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse weekly and termly attendance patterns and trends and ensure the delivery of intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.

The monitoring of attendance and absence data will be through looking at school data presented in dashboards (HelloData), reports (school MIS) the 'insights dashboard' of the Monitor your school attendance tool. This is accessed via the View your education data (VYED) platform.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school as a whole
- Each cohort
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **year to date (YTD)** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Whole school attendance
- Cohort attendance
- Individual attendance
- Punctuality
- Patterns in uses of certain codes
- Particular days of poor attendance
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

Pupils will be RAG rated for focus to ensure attendance levels are improving.

The attendance officer will provide regular information to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to support attendance improvement procedures.

This will be through the updating of a monitoring spreadsheet and automated check-ins in Operational Basecamp on a weekly basis. Details on how to set up the monitoring spreadsheet are in **Appendix 3.** Details on how to operate the Attendance monitoring spreadsheet and Basecamp are in **Appendix 4a & 4b.**

The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Headteacher will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data. Details of how to approach this are in **Appendix 4c**

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions. This will be done through network meetings and Basecamp online community.

LA Attendance Teams

LAs are required to have a **School Attendance Support Team** which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

- **Communication and advice**: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
    - **In DC**: Attendance Hub meetings every term and weekly Attendance drop in clinics weekly
- **Targeting Support Meetings**: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
    - **DC**: Target School Support led by ISAO (Inclusion Support Officer) and Attendance drop-in Clinic led by Senior ISAO
- **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- **Legal intervention**: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

[New] Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A

pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

Working together to improve attendance

The government guidance provides a useful progression framework for schools to use as they consider their own practice, maintain high rates of attendance and respond to declining attendance.

The progression is helpful as it allows attendance policies to successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly. It also allows schools to be pointed to shared resources and services, requiring schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Contextualise

Schools within the Learners' Trust understand that there are many contributing factors to ensuring the opportunity to attend is barrier free for pupils. It is important to consider the variety of circumstances which may be out of individual pupils or family's control, which may be contributing to absence rates. An list of criteria for schools to consider their barriers is available below and will be considered as part of the school's annual attendance audit. In considering the context of the school, it is important that there is an understanding of the internal and external drivers that can affect attendance.

In school drivers can include:

- High turnover of staff – leadership and classroom
- Poor staff attendance – academic and pastoral
- Several changes in governance approaches – e.g. re brokering
- Inconsistencies in quality of teaching and learning and pastoral care
- A lack of clarity within school about roles and responsibilities for addressing attendance challenges
- A lack of knowledge and understanding about individual families
- Judgemental, inconsistent, or inaccessible communications about attendance
- Decisions based on labels, rather than need
- Lack of (inclusivity)

Community drivers include:

- Geography – transport, population density, local interest (e.g. coastal)
- Local housing

- Curriculum relevance
- Employment levels
- Careers opportunities
- Mobility
- Housing
- Levels of education in the community
- Provision from community services – e.g. health, social care, sport, and culture enrichment

Pupils and families' drivers include:

- Systemic / attitudinal issues (e.g. term time holidays)
- Low current attainment, impacting on confidence and motivation and relationships
- Poor reading skills / attainment
- Poor behaviour / learning behaviours / risky behaviour
- Pupils not experiencing success beyond the classroom – e.g. student leadership, sports
- Narrow friendship groups
- Socially isolated families
- Low income and its impact on pupils inside and outside of school
- Misconceptions about school attendance in the family
- Historic experiences within the family

Expect

Schools within the Learners' Trust aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Good attendance enables teachers and support staff to communicate effectively with pupils and families and other agencies. It enables staff to understand any challenges pupils are experiencing beyond school and put support or contingency in place. Knowledge of a pupil and their lived experiences enables schools to play their role in keeping children safe.

There are several areas where schools can make their expectations for good attendance visible including:

The importance of good attendance and punctuality is made clear to all learners, parents and staff by:

For parents:

- Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.
- The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. (**Appendix 1**)

- Information about the importance of good attendance is regularly published to stakeholder through posters and newsletters which are all utilised during induction parents' meetings, parents' consultations and events (**Appendix 5**)

1. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally. This will be done through the school parent-app, Class Dojo.
2. Finally, each stage of the policy will notify parents if their child's attendance falls below acceptable levels.

For staff:

3. The school will communicate information about levels of data through data dashboards and automated check-ins which share absence information on a weekly basis. (helloData, Basecamp)
4. The school will cover the importance of attendance and what the school can do to promote and support good attendance in induction materials
5. Attendance information is considered alongside other academic information in pupil progress meetings
6. Whole school assemblies and briefings all contain information about the importance of attendance

For pupils:

7. Schools provide a structured environment where children are regularly seen by teachers and staff who can observe their wellbeing.
8. Pupil friendly versions of the importance of good attendance will be shared through newsletters, assemblies and other opportunities throughout the curriculum

The school highlights and celebrates attendance across the school community by:

9. Weekly attendance sent to all classes via email
10. Weekly rewards for the class with best attendance
11. Termly attendance update sent to parents via Class Dojo.
12. End of year certificates for 100% attendance

Monitor

It is essential that schools rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

When a pupil is absent from school frequently or for extended periods, it can be an indicator of underlying problems that may put the pupil at risk.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to apply specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed and amended on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Monitoring physical, emotional and mental Well-being: Schools play a critical role in the physical, mental and emotional development of children. Good attendance allows school staff to recognise changes in behaviours, mood, or social interactions that could indicate struggles or concerns.
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available) • Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Escalation between stages can be adjusted on a case-by-case basis however, the data will determine when a pupil enters a new band and new, escalating measures are required.

Listen and understand

It is important that schools use a welcoming, caring approach when low attendance is a concern or a pattern is spotted, enabling an open discussion with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.

The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. That will begin with listening to the pupil and parents to fully understand the issues that may prevent improved attendance.

An example agenda for conversations with pupils and families about attendance are available in **Appendix 5**

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this.

Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any

relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Facilitate support

Schools will work to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school in an informal and supportive manner.

The steps described below should be used as a progression of strategies, ensuring each strategy is utilised before moving on to the next.

When attendance falls between 96-90%

1. Sending weekly positive messages to reinforcing improvements or reminder messages for pupils failing to improve (example messages in **Appendix 6**)
2. Engage staff in school (DRI) to improve attendance by:
   A) The school is to be to do the following
   B)
3. Initial phone call to discuss attendance – (model script in **Appendix 5**)
4. Sending first warning letters to parents following half termly reviews (model letters in **Appendix 7a, b & c**)
5. Sending postcards from staff in school when child is absent (**Appendix 8**)

Formalise support

Persistent and severe absence (PA)

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school).

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading **weekly** check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also

in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Access to Support Services

Schools provide access to key support services like counselling, social and emotional support or additional help with academic learning. Poor attendance may mean that a pupil misses out on essential support that addresses need.

Attendance is everyone's business so in many of these cases school will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies. School should:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.

- Where external support is provided work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

The steps described below should be used as a progression of strategies, ensuring each strategy is utilised before moving on to the next.

When attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence)

1. Using a **nudging strategy** - sending daily messages highlighting the importance of education (model messages and workflow in **Appendix 9**)
2. **Attendance clinic:** Having an attendance clinic with parents to identify any barriers (agenda in **Appendix 10**)
3. **Formal Support:** Engaging with LA attendance teams which may result in:
    a. (>85%) Attendance contracts (the contents of an attendance contract are detailed in **Appendix 11**)
    b. Education supervision orders (made through Family/ High Court)

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

[Updated] Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Attendance prosecution (after 1 term of persistent absence)

- Prosecution in the Magistrates Court (the decision to prosecute rests solely with the LA)

Penalty notices (an alternative to prosecution) – see Appendix 12

- When absence equates to **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period** schools **must** consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case.

- When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:
    - Is support appropriate in this case?
        - If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.
        - If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
    - Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
    - Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
        - If the answer to these questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.
- Derbyshire: see flowchart here
- **[Updated]** A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.
- **[New]** Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- **[New]** A penalty notice of £120 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 five days of a fixed

period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

- **[New]** Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
- Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.
- **[New]** Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

New] Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

- Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.
- Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include: ○ Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
    - Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
    - Requiring the parents to access support services.
    - Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
    - Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months • Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

Appendix 1

Model letter to parents regarding attendance

Dear parents and carers

Recently the government have changed the guidance for schools and local authorities with regards to how attendance is promoted, monitored and enforced. As a school we already work really closely with our families to support them in making sure all our learners attend school and receive their legal entitlement to education.

As part of this work we check carefully when children are absent, send texts to promote improvement and remind families with low attendance about the importance of education, and the impact of missing even a few days of school.

Additionally, we may formally write or invite parents to meetings to help everyone understand the barriers to good attendance and what may happen if attendance doesn't improve.

We appreciate the good responses we have to our attendance improvement work and our aim to work with families as early as possible to avoid having to progress to more formal support. The Local Authority now have a requirement to have Attendance Support Teams who support schools and who mainly get involved when individual families are at risk of legal intervention. This is a new service and we are working to put in place a strong relationship with our attendance team so they can help us make sure all children attend school, every day.

The information on the next pages informs every one of the expectations for attendance in school, what to do if your child is absent and the legal intervention that can happen if attendance doesn't improve after school and the local authority have tried their best to engage families in meeting their responsibility. It also describes what happens if you take an unauthorised holiday out of term time and the fines that will be imposed.

We fully encourage and expect that the vast majority of our families will continue to work with us to avoid getting to such a serious stage, but it is important everyone is aware as we start the new academic year.

As always, if you have any questions around this information, or would like help in removing any barriers to your child's attendance at school, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS ON GOVERNEMENT REGULATIONS

Dear Parents and carers

I am writing to provide you with the most up to date information about school attendance.

Late in the year we'll write out with information around the importance of attendance and the impact of not being at school every day, however, it is important you are made aware of some of the new regulations and processes.

What I would like to make really clear is that the best way to improve attendance is to have an excellent relationship between home and school and supporting ways of helping families when they need it. The below information sounds very formal, and it should be because it is describing the law, but I just wanted everyone to know that the law only describes the 'what' of improving attendance, it is all about 'how' we work together that makes the biggest difference.

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a term time leave request from (available from the school office) and handed in at least 2 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the

reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

What is the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003?

The Act gives powers to local authorities, schools and the police to issue penalty notices to parents or carers for their child's unsatisfactory attendance at school.

Why have penalty notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is very important. This is because missing school can damage children's achievements, disrupt the school's routines and affect yours and other children's learning. It can also leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing out on the opportunities provided in school can have a long-term effect on children's chances in life.

What are my responsibilities as a parent?

You have a legal duty to ensure that your child receives full-time education

Where a child is registered at a school, you must ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. You will be committing an offence, therefore, if your child fails to attend regularly and punctually and the school has not given permission for the absence or late arrival.

Remember - only your child's school can authorise absence or late arrival.

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. It provides the parent the option to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's non-attendance and

avoids court proceedings. It is intended to secure better attendance without taking legal action through the courts. The decision to offer the option of a penalty notice lies with the local authority and takes into consideration the facts of the case and the threshold guidance as outlined in the Government guidance **What are the penalty costs?**

In the first instance, the fine is £160 to be paid within 28 days. The 28 days starts two days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £80.

If a second penalty notice is issued within 3 years of the first the amount to be paid is £160 to be paid within 28 days with no reduction for early payment.

PLEASE BE AWARE when two parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice for the same child both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

Who is counted as the parent responsible for ensuring attendance?

The law defines a parent as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, even if not married, has responsibility as a parent
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person
- Having care of a child or young person means that if the child or young person lives with you and is cared for by you then you will be regarded as the parent irrespective of what your relationship is with the child.

How are they issued?

A penalty notice will normally be sent by first class post to your home address.

When are they used?

Penalty notices can be used in a wide range of situations, including but not limited to circumstances:

1. Where it is clear that parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
2. Where parents take their child on holiday during term-time without the written permission of the headteacher.

Unsatisfactory school attendance

The threshold for when a school should consider requesting the issue of a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period.

At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support or if they should refer the case to the local authority for formal monitoring with a view to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Is a warning given?

A formal written notice to improve will is issued in cases of unsatisfactory school attendance, but there will be certain circumstances where you will not be given a formal written warning. For example, if you have taken your child on holiday in term-time without the authorisation of the headteacher.

What happens if I receive a notice to improve?

The letter will tell you how many school sessions your child has missed and give you a minimum number of school days to improve your child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, a penalty notice may be issued.

We never take such action lightly and would prefer to work with parents or carers to improve attendance without having to enforce it. However, we will use these powers to ensure that your child attends school.

What does the law say regarding holidays in term-time?

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 makes it clear that the headteacher should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents are not entitled to take their children on holiday in term-time. Planned absence can only be taken with the prior written approval of the headteacher.

Each case will be considered on its own merits and the decision of the headteacher is final.

If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the local authority who will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absence for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time but fall below the 5day threshold.

If a penalty notice is issued the following apply:

- Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child for each period of absence

- A penalty notice will be issued without warning
- Taking or allowing your child to take a holiday in term-time without the school's permission is a serious matter. If we find that you have done so, we will not hesitate to issue a penalty notice if requested to do so by the school.

Can I appeal?

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. We can take back a penalty notice but only if:

- It should not have been issued in the first place (for example, if your child was actually at school); or
- It has been issued to the wrong person; or
- It appears to Derbyshire County Council that the notice contains material errors.

If you believe that any of the above circumstances apply, you should contact Derbyshire County Council immediately with evidence to support your view. The contact details will be included in the penalty notice.

How do I pay?

Details of how to pay will be included in the penalty notice. Please remember that there will be no reminder to pay and no opportunity to pay in instalments. Failure to pay within the timescales as specified in the penalty notice will result in prosecution.

What happens if I do not pay?

If you do not pay, the consequences can be very serious. You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the penalty notice in full. After this time, if it has not been paid, Derbyshire County Council is required by law to begin proceedings in the magistrates' court for the original offence of failing to secure the satisfactory attendance of your child at school.

Cases will usually be dealt with by using a process called the single justice procedure (SJP), which allows the case to heard without the need for you to attend the Magistrates Court however you still have the right to request that your case be heard in open court even you wish to plead guilty. If you wish to plead not guilty to the offence the Court will schedule a trial and you will be required to attend.

If proven, this can attract a range of fines of up to £2500, and may include other remedies such as parenting orders, community sentences, or imprisonment, depending on the circumstances. A guilty verdict will also mean that you will have a criminal record.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay but my child still fails to attend school?

If your child's attendance at school does not improve a second penalty notice or escalation to prosecution may occur. You cannot be prosecuted for the period included in the existing penalty notice, however, you can be prosecuted for any further periods of non-attendance, depending on the circumstances.

1 The law states that education must be "efficient, full-time and suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have either by regular

attendance at school or otherwise (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)"

2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-tohttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendanceimprove-school-attendance

Appendix 1a

Absence Management Flowchart

Prior to the start of the day 1. Ensure nudging strategy text messages are scheduled to go to families for 7:30
8:45 2. Attendance lead (or other designated person) to be at the main entrance to the school to welcome pupils and identify any pupils who are late (8:45)
9:00 3. Pupil arrives late (after 9:00) 4. Discussion with child to promote attendance and punctuality and ascertain reasons (posters/ resources) 5. Pupil signs in and selects dinner (Electronic signing-in system at the main entrance)
9:15 6. Create late and absence reports from MIS and Class Dojo 7. Send text messages for absent pupils (Appendix 10) 8. Send text messages for late pupils (Appendix 10) **9:30** 9. Call parents of targeted pupils 10. Refer any relevant information to EWO via email 11. Update any relevant information on CPOMS
Friday Afternoon 12. Update the attendance monitoring spreadsheet (see weekly attendance review) 13. Update the automated check in in Basecamp 14. Send positive and reminder texts (Appendix 10)

Appendix 1b

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Absence Procedure Flowchart</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Child is absent after the close of the register</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Has a reason been provided via Parent Mail or telephone? (9:10 am)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Yes</td><td colspan="3">No</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Is the reason valid?</td><td colspan="3">Unmonitored pupil: Parent Mail Message (9:10am)

Monitored pupil: Parent Mail Message (9:10am) and phone call

See Appendix 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td colspan="2">Response</td><td>No response</td></tr>
<tr><td>Authorised absence</td><td>Unauthorised absence</td><td colspan="2">Is the reason valid?</td><td>Unauthorised absence</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Parents informed via Parent Mail
(App 6)</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td>Parents informed via Parent Mail
(App 6)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Authorised absence</td><td>Unauthorised absence</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Parents informed via Parent Mail
(App 6)</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Appendix 2

Leave of Absence Requests	
Leave of absence request form requested from the school office and filled out by parents (via ParentMail)	
Criteria considered by Attendance Leader or other designated person	
Criteria	**Yes/No**
Does the request avoid any preparation for tests/examinations? Y2 and Y6 from February to the end of June are vital test preparation times.	Yes/No
Does the parent's workplace have restrictive holiday arrangements? Has the claim been supported by a letter from employer? (This must be on letter headed paper/ official documentation)	Yes/No
Does the request avoid the times of the year/term appropriate for maintaining good standards? (e.g. The beginning of the year is vital for setting expectations)	Yes/No
Is the child's attendance at or above the Local Authority average for the previous school year or 3 terms?	Yes/No
Is the reason given by a parent for requesting leave of absence in term time likely to discriminate or provide a barrier for the child?	Yes/No
Is the holiday part of a programme of treatment or a once in a lifetime opportunity?	Yes/No
Is the child's rate of progress and/or attainment average or above in reading, writing and mathematics?	Yes/No
Is the child and parents' attitude towards school positive and do they have aspiration for high standards of attainment?	Yes/No

Is homework complete, are parents' evenings attended, do they have a positive relationship with school? (This will be looked at in school)				Yes/No
Decision Making Options				
Request **is** deemed as	Request **is** deemed as	Request **is not** deemed	Request **is not** deemed	If attendance
exceptional and attendance is at or above 96%	exceptional and attendance is below 96%	as exceptional **but** attendance is above 96% or request is for **less** than 5 consecutive days.	as exceptional and/or attendance is below 96% and/or request is for **more** than 5 consecutive school days.	is above 96% but there is opportunity for it to drop below, response letter (2) and check before the holiday is taken.
Response letter (1) sent out immediately granting request.	Response letter (2) sent out immediately denying request but no FPN.	Response letter (2) sent out immediately denying request but no FPN.	Response letter (3) sent out immediately denying request and FPN will be requested.	Make FPN referral after child has returned to school.
Information is updated on CPOMs				

Appendix 2a Requests for a holiday in term time Information for parents/carers

Dear Parents/Carers

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that Headteacher's should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a holiday in term time only in 'exceptional circumstances.' If you consider that your reason for requesting a holiday during term time is exceptional you will need to complete the attached forms and return it to the school office.

An exceptional reason would be, for example, that the parent's workplace have restrictive holiday arrangements or the holiday forms part of a programme of treatment or a once in a lifetime opportunity.

A response will be sent to you within five working days of receipt. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance by the school, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

PLEASE NOTE: If your request for leave of absence has not been authorised and you take your child out of school during term-time, you may be subject to a fixed penalty notice issued by the Educational Welfare Service.

All holiday requests must be completed on the attached form and this should be returned to school at least 14 days before the start of the leave. Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The circumstances of each individual request will be considered.
To help us make our decision there are several things we look at. We use the criteria from the DfE and a rounded view of the child's education to date.

The criteria we use for making the decision for referral to the Educational Welfare Service are on the following page.

Yours sincerely,

Application by parent/carer for child's leave of absence from school during term time

NB: If you go ahead with the leave of absence when unauthorised, you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice issued through the Local Authority. This will be £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days.

Name of Child(ren)	Year Group/ Class

Leave of Absence	Year Group/ Class		
Application Date			
Start Date		End Date	
Number of school days missed			
Reason for requesting leave of absence			

A letter from an employer, on letter headed paper, MUST be attached to this request form if the absence is due to work commitments.

Full name, address and date of birth of parent(s)/Carer(s) applying for leave of absence

Parent 1 Name: Date of Birth: Address: Signature:	**Parent 2** Name: Date of Birth: Address: Signature:

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Date received			
% Attendance Last year			
% Attendance this year			
Attainment (NRSS scores)	Reading	Writing	Maths

Appendix 2b

Application for Leave of Absence - Authorised

Dear TBC,

Further to your recent application for a leave of absence for your child, we have considered the information supplied and I would like to inform you that the above request **has been authorised**.

Name of Child(ren)	Year Group/ Class

Leave of Absence dates	Year Group/ Class
Application Date	
Start Date	
End Date	
Number of school days missed	

I wish to advise you that in authorising the leave of absence, the school would be concerned if your child's future attendance should fall below 96%. Such a fall in attendance could impact future requests for leave of absence.

If you have any concerns regarding this matter please contact school at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2c

Application for Leave of Absence

Dear TBC,

Further to your recent application for leave of absence from, we would like to inform you that the above request **has not been authorised**.

Name of Child(ren)	Year Group/ Class

Leave of Absence dates	Year Group/ Class
Application Date	
Start Date	
End Date	
Number of school days missed	

The reason for this decision is that TBC

We wish to advise you that on this occasion we have made the decision not to refer the case to the Local Authority to request the issue of a fixed penalty notice, as your child's attendance is above 96%.

If you have any concerns regarding this matter please contact school at your earliest convenience.

Appendix 2d

Yours sincerely

Application for Leave of Absence

Dear TBC,

Further to your recent application for leave of absence from, we would like to inform you that the above request **has not been authorised**.

Name of Child(ren)	Year Group/ Class

Leave of Absence dates	Year Group/ Class
Application Date	
Start Date	
End Date	
Number of school days missed	

The reason for this decision is that TBC

We wish to advise you that should you go ahead with this leave of absence despite this warning we will request the Local Authority to consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. From 1st September 2024 Fixed Penalty Notices are £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days.

Appendix 2e

PLEASE BE AWARE when two parents/carers are issued with a penalty notice for the same child both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will

apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

If you have any concerns regarding this matter please contact school at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2e Absence from School

Dear

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and we are committed to building strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

As you will be aware, TBC was absent from school for 7 school days between TBC and TBC and you informed school that TBC was absent due to illness.

Having considered available information relating to TBC's absence, it is my belief that TBC was absent from school due to a family holiday. In view of this, in accordance with Government regulation, I must mark the register for A with a 'G' which means 'unauthorised absence for a holiday during term-time'.

Additional details of evidence supporting this view

TBC

If this is not the case, please arrange an appointment to meet with me to discuss the matter further and, where possible, provide evidence to support your position. Unless I hear from you in the next 5 school days, I will refer the case to the Local Authority and you may be issued with a penalty notice for unauthorised absence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3a

Setting up the attendance monitoring spreadsheet
1. Open the BLANK template in the desktop version of Excel
2. In helloData 1. Load the helloData 'Whole School Attendance' dashboard 2. In the 'pupils' box click on '...' and choose 'export data' and choose 'data with current layout' 3. Open the downloaded file 4. Cut (CTRL+X) the URN column from Column C to Column A 5. Copy (CTRL+C) all the data for the first three columns (URN, Pupil Name and Year) 6. Paste (CTRL+V) into the 'MASTER' sheet in the attendance monitoring spreadsheet (Cell A3) 7. In the 'Weeks' tab ensure the dates align with your school holidays 8. Save a copy of the file in your school cloud share

Appendix 4a

Weekly Attendance Review

1. Using the tracker spreadsheet ensures that each pupil identified in the bands below has the correct policy actions applied ○ 96 – 90%% (Facilitate Support) ○ 85% – 89% (Formalise Support) ○ >85% (Enforce)
   ○ 10 session's absence in 10 weeks (Penalty notice)
2. **Update the spreadsheet tracker by:**
   9. Loading the HelloData attendance dashboard
   10. In the 'pupils' box (bottom right) click on '...' and choose 'export data' and choose 'data with current layout'
   11. Open the downloaded file, click in the very top left corner (selecting all the data), copy (CTRL+C)
   12. Open the monitoring spreadsheet, select the correct week, click on the very top left corner and then paste (CTRL V) the selection into the correct week (tab) in your school's version of the spreadsheet tracker
   13. Click on the 'Master' tab, select the correct week using the drop down in the top left
   14. Order the attendance column A-Z using the drop down filter option
   15. Add notes and dates of actions to each absence below 95% making a judgement on case history
   16. Where an action has been taken and has not had the desired impact after a few weeks, (after consultation with the HT or LM) move the child onto the next stage of the policy by adding the new date in the next column's red box
   17. Run and add notes in column z for any pupils identified in the severe absence report (see appendix 4b)
   18. Take the appropriate actions using the school's MIS (you can filter out the date using the drop down filter for each column)
   19. Email the correct individual (HT/ LM) of any actions which need further

attention (arranging meetings, referrals etc) 20. Update CPOMS with any policy actions taken for each pupil
3. In the Basecamp automated check in (Operational/ How is attendance Improving?): ○ Open the automated check in ○ Copy the previous week's entry and paste into the current week ○ Copy and paste (cmd + shift + 5) the attendance and absence % images from helloData into the check in ○ Update any significant information ○ List the new actions/ uncompleted actions tagging in (@name) Directly Responsible Individuals

Appendix 4b

Log into Integris – go to Reports > Attendance > Analysis Reports

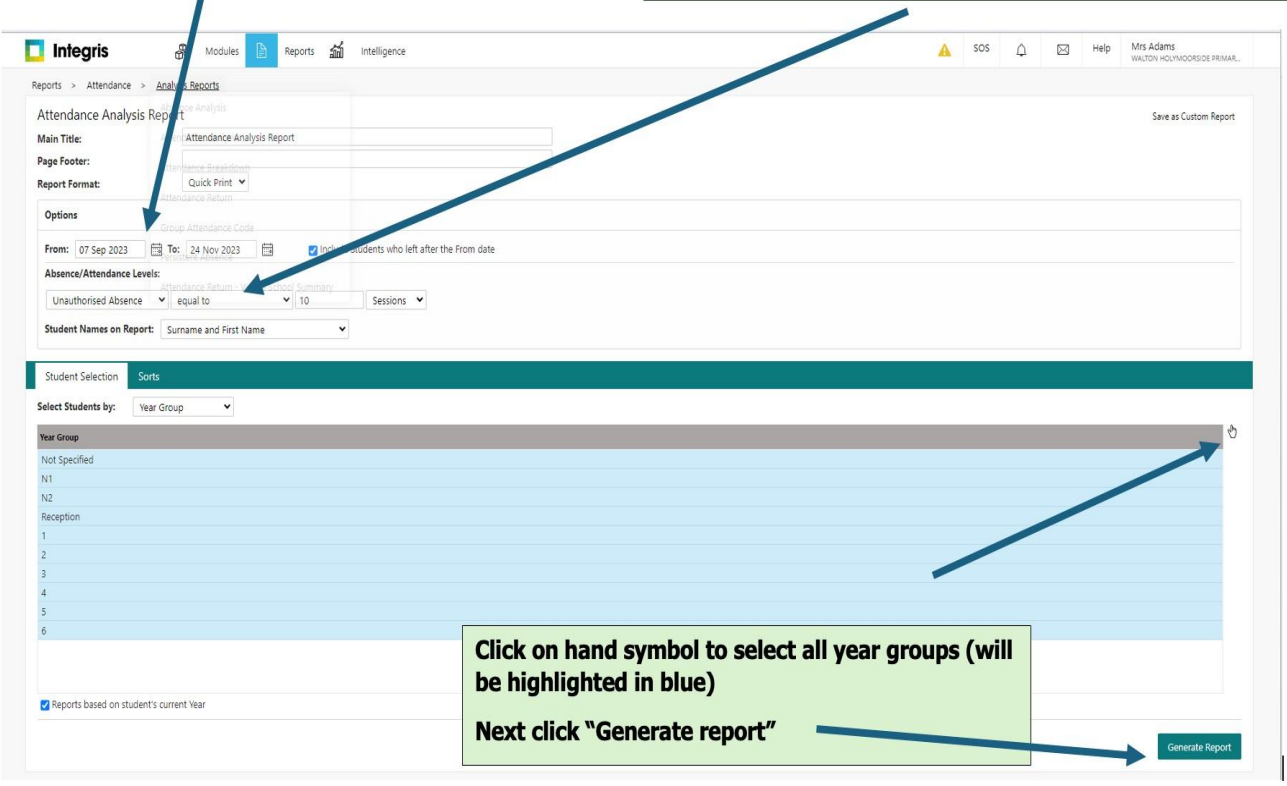
Select date range (10 week period)

Click dropdown and select "Unauthorised Absences".

Click next dropdown and select "Equal to"

Click into next box and insert "10"

Click next dropdown and select "Sessions"



Click on hand symbol to select all year groups (will be highlighted in blue)

Next click "Generate report"

NB: Amend 'equal to' to 'equal to or greater than'.

Appendix 4c

Termly Attendance Review
1. Access information (this can all be found in HelloData/ Dashboard/ Attendance Whole School) on attendance to date for the current academic year for: • The school cohort as a whole • Individual year groups • Individual pupils • Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds • Persistent absence • Severe absence ○ This can all be found in HelloData/ Dashboard/ Attendance Whole School • Run a report for pupils who have missed 10 or more session in the last 10 weeks (see image in appendix4b)
~~2.~~ Using the tracker spreadsheet and HelloData dashboard custom attendance range (bottom left), ensure that each pupil identified in the bands below has had the policy actions applied and that they are having an impact. a. 96 – 90%% b. 85% – 89% c. >85% d. 10 session's absence in 10 weeks

3. Using the dashboard on HelloData, consider other trends in information that shows the school's provision may not be aligned with the policy
    a. Importance of good attendance being made clear to all learners, parents and staff
    b. Headteacher can talk with authority about standards
    c. The recording and monitoring of information does not increase workload
    d. Automated communications are used sensitively
    e. Families have clear and reliable ways to communicate with key staff

4. For any pupils who require bringing in line with policy requirements, add each pupil to imminent tasks in basecamp and assign the attendance lead as DRI

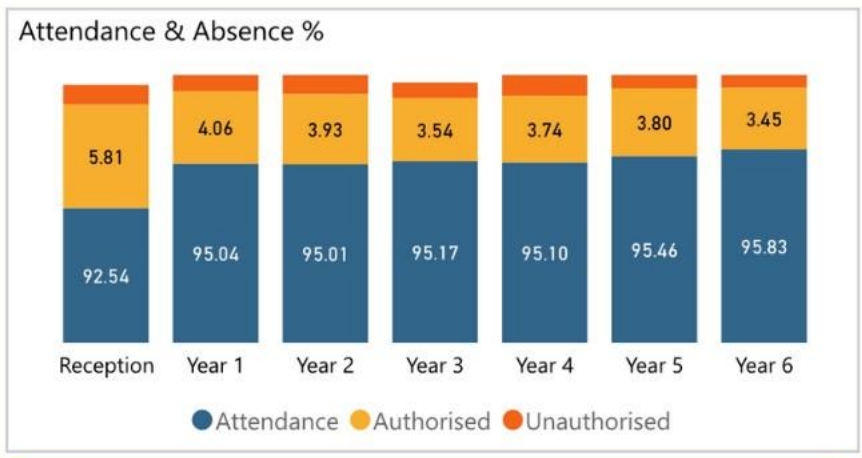
5. Ensure any notifications to the LA for Penalty Notices are actioned appropriately (10 sessions in a rolling 10-week period) and record relevant details on CPOMS

Appendix 5 Attendance Posters

ATTENDANCE

Expected
96%+

Whole School
96.1%



Congratulations this week to Dragonflies, they have the best attendance in the school this week and they will have juice, biscuits and an extra playtime to celebrate!

Also, Ants will receive an extra playtime as they had no lates – well done everyone! 😀

Our new attendance reward scheme will continue and every child who achieves above 96% attendance, on a weekly basis, will be entered into a half-termly draw.

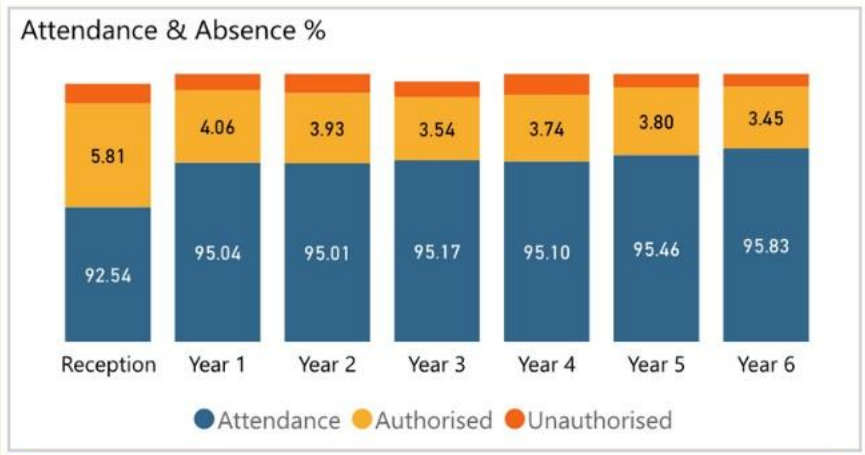
This week 82 out of 109 children achieved this figure. Well done to all these children 🏆

Appendix 5 Attendance Newsletter

ATTENDANCE

Expected
96%+

Whole School
96.1%



Congratulations this week to Dragonflies, they have the best attendance in the school this week and they will have juice, biscuits and an extra playtime to celebrate!

Also, Ants will receive an extra playtime as they had no lates – well done everyone! 😀

Our new attendance reward scheme will continue and every child who achieves above 96% attendance, on a weekly basis, will be entered into a half-termly draw.

This week 82 out of 109 children achieved this figure. Well done to all these children 🏆

Appendix 5

Student Success Discussion		
Date:	**Name**:	**Teacher**:
Main Concerns:		**Attendance %**:

Health and wellbeing:	
Friendship & Peers:	
Behaviour:	
Lateness:	
Teaching & learning:	
Other:	

The SUCCESS plan
1. 2. 3. 4. Attendance will continue to be monitored

Student (Signed)	
Staff (Signed)	

Appendix 6

Weekly reminder/ Positive Text Message formats Monitoring

Research shows that if messages are personalised, the message is more readily received by parents. Using mail merge in Parentmail can ensure the messages is personalised.

Send a reinforcing text: Dear [parent's name], we are asking for you to ensure [child's name] attendance improve to be in line good attendance and this week it has! [child's name] is taking the right steps for success! Thank you for your support – keep up the good work! ☺

Send a reminder text: Dear [parent's name], as you know we are asking for [child's name] attendance to improve to be in line with good attendance but this week hasn't shown any improvement. Please help [child's name] to a brighter future and ensure they attend every day. If you think there is anything we can do to help, please don't hesitate to get tin touch.

Lateness

Send a text re lateness: Dear [parent's name], please be aware that [child's name] was late for school this morning. It will help [child's name] education to be in school on time (8:45). Please contact school if we can help in any way.

Absence

Send a text re absence – Unmonitored pupil: Dear [parent's name], [child's name] is absent from school today and we have had no reason provided. Please send a reason through Parentmail or contact school at your earliest opportunity.

Send a text re absence – Monitored pupil: Dear [parent's name], [child's name] is absent from school today and we have had no reason provided.

We are concerned about [child's name] level of attendance. Please send a reason through Parentmail or contact school at your earliest opportunity.

Appendix 7

Attendance – First Warning Letter A

Dear

I am writing to you about your child's education. Your child's attendance is lower than we would expect. It may be that your child has had an illness or acceptable reasons for being absent from school and if this is the case, please use this letter as information and a reminder to maintain high levels of attendance throughout the year.

Pupil Name:	DOB:	Year Group:
Attendance Period	From:	To:
Attendance Percentage		

The above table and enclosed copy of your child's attendance record are for your information and you will note from the information that your child's attendance at school is becoming a serious concern. **The national expectation for attendance is at least 96%.**

Regular attendance is essential for children to make good educational progress and to develop attendance patterns which would help them later on. This letter is to highlight the issue and ask you for support in improving your child's attendance. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss any support we might offer as a school and may contact you to do so.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If the reasons given for your child's irregular attendance at school are unsatisfactory and/or unexplained, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the law.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice with a potential fine of up to £160 fine per child;
- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2,500 and/imprisonment.

We will review your child's case in two weeks' time and hope that their attendance has improved. It is important that you contact the school on the first day of your child's absence and keep the school updated if any absence is to continue for more than one day.

Please do not hesitate to contact school on the telephone number at the foot of this letter if you wish to know more about the available support or if you wish for further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7b

Attendance – First Warning Letter B

Dear

I am writing to you about your child's attendance which is lower than we would expect at this point in the year. We realise your child has acceptable reasons for being absent from school so please use this letter as information to highlight the importance of how good attendance will help your child.

Pupil Name:	DOB:	Year Group:
Attendance Period	From:	To:
Attendance Percentage		

The above table and enclosed copy of your child's attendance record are for your information. For comparison the national expectation for attendance is at least 96%.

This letter is to highlight the issue and ask you for support in improving your child's attendance. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss any support we might offer as a school and may contact you to do so.

We will review your child's attendance at the end of the half term.

Please do not hesitate to contact school on the telephone number at the foot of this letter if you wish to know more about the available support or if you wish for further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7c

Attendance – First Warning Letter C

ABSENCES MATTER AND YOU CAN HELP

Dear Parent/ Guardian of **TBC**

- **TBC** has missed more school than their classmates.
- **TBC** has been absent **TBC** days so far this year.
- Students fall behind when they miss school – whether students are absent for excused or unexcused reasons.
- **You** can have a big effect on **TBC's** absences this year and we appreciate your help.

TBC HAS MISSED MORE SCHOOL THAN THEIR CLASSMATES

TBC								
Typical classmate								
Number of Days	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15

If the reasons given for your child's irregular attendance at school are unsatisfactory and/or unexplained, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the law.

Please do not hesitate to contact school on the telephone number at the foot of this letter if you wish to know more about the available support or if you wish for further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 8

Sending postcards from staff in school

Research shows that if the parents of primary aged pupils received personalised information about the academic content their child missed while absent, the strategy reduced absences by 8.3%.

The results showed that the following elements are most effective:

1. If the postcard is designed and implemented by schools and teachers rather than 3rd parties, it is more effective in reducing absences.
2. The teachers' annotations with personalised academic and absence information are a unique feature of the intervention

An example format for postcards is available TBC (Canva)

Each week, the attendance leader in school will identify pupils using the data provided in the attendance monitoring spreadsheet and use mail merge from Integris to add contact details to a postcards, print them on card and deliver the card to class teachers. Teacher will write a quick personalised message based on the guidelines above and return to the front office for posting.

Appendix 9 Nudging Strategy

Sending parents of students who are persistently absent personalised letters or texts can help improve attendance, according to a new evidence review published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

'Nudge *Theory*' is growing in use across a range of public sector areas, for example health. This theory proposes that positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions, are more effective as ways to influence the behaviour and decision making of groups and individuals.

So far, this intervention has shown an effect size of 0.4 in terms of improving attendance. This suggests that this approach is worth pursuing.

- Pupils with poor attendance in the previous and current year are selected for the strategy. **Their attendance would typically be between 78.4% and 91.8% attendance**.
- Parents of these pupils have been receiving a daily morning text messages at 7:30 am during the half term.
- The texts come in two parts: good morning we're looking forward to seeing you in school today and a link between good attendance and higher attainment. *The texts go directly to mobile phones.*

A full set of text messages is contained below:

Monday – week 2

- Good morning! It's a week 2 at school. Some wise words for you to start the week: 'Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.' (John Dewey)
- There is a clear link between low attendance at school and lower grades.

Tuesday – week 2

- Bonjour! According to an old French proverb, 'No person is too old to learn.' Come and learn today.
- Only 3% of pupils with attendance of less than 50% achieve 5+ GCSEs at grade 4 or above.

Wednesday – week 2

- Happy Wednesday! 'An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.' (Benjamin Franklin) Invest in your knowledge by coming to school today.
- Only 33% of pupils with attendance between 80-85% achieve well in school

Thursday – week 2

- Molweni ekuseni! Nelson Mandela said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.' Arm yourself with the most powerful weapon: education. Attend school every day.
- 73% of pupils with attendance of 95% achieve well in school

Friday – week 2

- Zaoshang hao! Happy Friday! 'You cannot open a book without learning something.' (Confucius) Come to school and enjoy reading this today.
- Over 80% of pupils with 100% attendance achieve well in school

Monday – week 3

- Dzien dobry! Ready for another week at school? It's a week A. The Polish say, 'Skill is better than strength.' Learn some skills at school today.

- 264 million children around the world receive no education. Make sure you receive yours today.

Tuesday – week 3

- Buongiorno! Leonardo da Vinci, the great Italian painter, knew the importance of education. He said, 'Learning never exhausts the mind.' Energise your mind at school today.
- In the African countries of Ivory Coast, Somalia, Sudan, Gabon or Cameroon, no education is free – you have to pay to attend primary school.

Wednesday – week 3

- Kalimera! The Greek philosopher Plato said, 'If a man neglects education, he walks lame to the end of his life.' Don't neglect your education. Attend school today.
- In Guinea in Africa, you have to pay to go to school. For you, an education is free.

Thursday – week 3

- Assalamu alaikum! 'There are many problems, but I think there is a solution to all these problems; it's just one, and it's education.' (Malala Yousafzai) Be part of the solution. Come to school today.
- The Taliban banned girls in Pakistan from attending school. Malala Yousafzai ignored this ban. Today, she studies at the University of Oxford.

Friday – week 3

- It's Friday again! Remember, 'Education is the passport to the future…' (Malcolm X). Get a new stamp in your passport to the future at school today.
- You are lucky to live in a country where education is free up to the age of 18. Make the most of it.

Monday – week 4

- Ohayo gozaimasu! The Japanese say, 'There are no national frontiers to learning.' Keep your frontiers open. Come to school today.
- Pupils with 5+ GCSEs at grade 4 or above earn on average £5000 a year MORE than those who don't.

Tuesday – week 4

- Happy Tuesday! An American author said, 'As long as I am learning, I figure I'm OK – it's a decent day.' Have a decent day by learning at school today!
- If your attendance is 90% every year at school, you miss four months of school. That's roughly half a year of school.

Wednesday – week 4

- Bom día! 'Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world.' (Paulo Freire). Learn to be part of the change you want to see. Attend school today.
- The links between attendance and achievement are strong. Higher attendance = higher achievement.

Thursday – week 4

- Buenos días! 'I am always doing that which I cannot do in order that I may learn how to do it.' (Pablo Picasso). Come and learn how to do something you don't yet know how to do. Come to school today.
- Education extends your life. On average, a person with a university degree lives 9 years longer than someone who did not achieve at school.

Friday – week 4

- Happy Friday! Barack Obama believes 'The future belongs to young people with an education and the imagination to create.' Develop your education, imagination and creativity at school today.

- Studies show that 17 missed school days = 1 grade less across your subjects.

Appendix 10

Invite to discuss your TBC's school attendance

Dear Parent,

We review children's attendance on a regular basis and as you are aware we have previously highlighted concerns regarding your child's attendance. Currently **TBC's** attendance is very low at **TBC%.**

We would like to work with you to see this improved over the rest of the school year and as such would like you to attend the following meeting, when an action plan will be put into place for **TBC**.

Date: TBC

Time: TBC

Venue: School

The meeting will be informal and supportive (with biscuits!) and we are hoping to gain an understanding of any support you may require in order to improve **TBC's** attendance.

We look forward to your attendance as this will ensure we can address any concerns and provide an appropriate level of support to help **TBC** access their education on a regular basis.

Kind regards

Appendix 10 (continued) School Attendance Clinic **Record**

Student Name:		**Date**:	
In attendance (family):			

In attendance (school):	
Introductions	
Setting the context	• Attendance currently TBC**%** which is, significantly, below the expected level and might lead to family being prosecuted. • Impact of low attendance on social, emotional and academic development. • Parents not always responding to texts / parent mail messages. • Lack of medical evidence to support absence
Removing Barriers	**Health and wellbeing:**
	Friendship & Peers:
	Behaviour:
	Lateness:
	Teaching & learning:
	Other:
Target:	96% (within the monitoring period)
Actions to be taken by school	• Make an Early Morning Telephone Call to assist with lates / attendance. • Child to attend Breakfast Club: This will provide them with a soft start and support family with morning routine. • Monitor attendance: School will monitor for the commencing 15 school days.(TBC to TBC)

Actions to be taken by parent(s)	• Provide medical evidence for **any** illness • Communicate with School on a **daily** basis and at an appropriate time (before 08:40) – to report any absence • Ensure child attends school on time and for every session.
Signature (Parents)	
Signature (Pupil)	
Signature (School)	
Review Date:	

Appendix 11 Contents of an attendance contract

144. All attendance contracts should contain: • Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.

- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

145. The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and should be tailored to the needs of the individual parent and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly
- Requiring the parent to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered
- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the pupil at school level (e.g. being on report)

146. The support provided to help the parent satisfy those requirements may include:

- Provision of a lead practitioner to support the family
- Signposting or referrals to wider local authority or health services that might support the family (e.g. housing needs, drug and alcohol support)
- Signposting or referrals to voluntary and community sector programmes or support (e.g. foodbanks or community support groups)

- Formal interventions such as family group conferencing, peer mentoring or literacy classes
- Support and advisory services (e.g. benefit support)
- Formal parenting programmes (e.g. a course with a specified number of sessions)

147. Attendance contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual attendance contract should set out the duration it will be in place, and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed.

148. Once the requirements and support elements of the attendance contract have been agreed, the school and/or local authority and the parent should write up the contract together and sign it. The attendance contract should be written in language that the parent can easily understand (including a translation where necessary). All parties, including other partners working with the family, should be given a copy.

Appendix 12

Guidance for requesting the issue of a penalty notice for unsatisfactory school attendance
Pre-legal/preventative work
• All unauthorised absence should be dealt with immediately using internal school support systems.
• Undertake standard school procedures including class teacher involvement, first day calling processes and letters home.
• If there is no satisfactory improvement, then a key worker should be allocated to engage with the child and parent/carer on a case work basis.
• Evidence must be available to demonstrate that the parent/carer has been offered on-going support and an Early Help Assessment has been undertaken. Refusal to consent to an EHA can form part of the evidence of lack of parental engagement.
• Where possible, the views of child and the parent/carer should be obtained to identify and remove all reasonable barriers to support the child's attendance
• It is good practice for the key worker to attempt at least 1 home visit made by appointment as part of the early help preventative support work undertaken. This should help the worker understand the lived experience of the child and support can be adapted to take account of any specific needs.
• Once a case is opened, please ensure that other members of staff who may have contact with the child/family are aware and asked to record any contact on a central log as this may be required as evidence for court.
• Evidence and record all support - letters / texts/ telephone contacts / home visits / meetings in school

- It is vital that the correct addresses are obtained prior to sending any legal letters, all changes to addresses should also be noted, dated and the LA informed immediately. Reported GDPR breaches will show the school as the primary source of information.

Review of pre-legal work:
• Ensure the parent/carer is made aware of their legal responsibilities and the possible consequences of non-school attendance and that this is evidenced. This could be in a meeting (minutes taken) or preferably by letter. See ***parental responsibility letter*** at this point the family should be give a clear timescale in which to make an improvement with the understanding that legal action will begin if there is no significant improvement.
• Then review the child's attendance in accordance with the timescale for improvement given to the parent/carer and determine whether a **penalty notice warning letter** should be sent or if further preventative work is required
• Please be mindful of any upcoming leave of absence (holiday) requests as only one legal intervention can be undertaken for any single period of evidence.

Issuing a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
1. Consider the length of the monitoring period you wish to state in the penalty notice warning letter. The minimum is 20 school days the maximum is 30 days.

2. Send an individual ***penalty notice warning letter*** to each parent/carer liable for the child's attendance together with an attendance printout and penalty notice advice leaflet included with this guidance.
3. Ensure the parent/carer is named and the letter is dated and addressed to their current address. The address MUST be verified prior to sending any legal letters to avoid data breaches.
4. Record whether the letter is posted by first class post or hand
delivered
5. Monitor the child's attendance over the stipulated number of days

Legal Consideration:
1. Where attendance is at or below 90% during this period a request for a penalty notice fine can be made unless information is received to show that legal action is not in the best interests of the child/family. If this is the case a penalty notice should not be requested and the family should be offered further support and/or signposted to other agencies.

Requesting the Issue of a Penalty Notice Fine:
1. Check with your LA procedures for making this request and submitting all relevant evidence

Local Authority Considerations:
1. The LA will consider the issue of penalty notices in relation to the information provided and notify schools of the outcome.

Appendix 1 Attendance – Notice to Improve

Dear

I am writing to you about your child's education. Your child's attendance is lower than we would expect.

Pupil Name:	DOB:	Year Group:
Attendance Period	From:	To:
Unauthorised Days absent		

The above table shows that your child has had **unauthorised absence** for **10** or more sessions (morning or afternoon) in a 10 week period. The national expectation for attendance is at least 96%.

We are sending this communication asking you to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

Regular attendance is essential for children to make good educational progress and to develop attendance patterns which would help them later on. This letter is to highlight the issue and ask you for support in improving your child's attendance. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss any support we might offer as a school and may contact you to do so.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If the reasons given for your child's irregular attendance at school are unsatisfactory and/or unexplained, then the school may recommend that the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the law.

This may result in:

1. Penalty notices for unauthorised absences charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
2. Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a threeyear period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
3. Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.
4. Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

We will review your child's case in two weeks' time and hope that their attendance has improved.

Please do not hesitate to contact school on the telephone number at the foot of this letter if you wish to know more about the available support or if you wish for further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 14 Attendance – Final Warning Letter

Dear

I am again writing to you about your child's education. Unfortunately, there has been no improvement in their attendance

Pupil Name:	DOB:	Year Group:
Attendance Period	From:	To:
Attendance Percentage		

The above table and enclosed copy of your child's attendance record are for your information and you will note from the information that your child has not attended school regularly. This level of attendance is below what is expected. Since my last letter to you your child has not attended regularly.

Regular attendance is essential for children to make good educational progress and to develop attendance patterns which would help them later on.

If your child's absence has been as a result of a medical condition or if your child is receiving medical treatment, you should ask your doctor to provide a medical certificate and return to school with fourteen (14) days.

You should be aware that if you fail to either:

- Return the medical certificate fully completed within fourteen (14) school
- days, or
- Satisfactorily explain the absences by , or
- Effect a significant improvement in your child's school attendance to normal levels of attendance

it is the intention of the Local Authority to proceed with legal action against you under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Under Section 444 a person is guilty of an offence for failing to secure regular school attendance of their child, if their child is of compulsory school age and is a registered pupil at a school. Legal action against you may result in either: • A Penalty Notice with a potential fine of up to £160 fine per child;

- Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2,500 and/imprisonment.

Non-attendance at school is an important issue and will be treated seriously by the Local Authority. I hope that your child's attendance improves significantly so that legal action is unnecessary. Both the school and the Educational Welfare Leader are still prepared to offer you support in order to improve your child's attendance and I strongly advise you contact one or both of them without further delay.

Yours sincerely