



Attendance Policy

Approved Date	September 2024
Review Date	July 2025



Attendance Policy (Alderman Jacobs School)

Aims

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

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a child's good attendance as part of our safeguarding duties.

Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

Alderman Jacobs School is responsible for all children's attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. For children who might need extra support to maintain their attendance e.g. Young Carers, we signpost families to appropriate places to reduce the impact that their needs and personal circumstances have on their attendance at school. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked, and we work together with Social Care to identify where children need extra support. We will work with families in many different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this is important for this work.

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance. However, if this is unsuccessful, legal sanctions will be considered where appropriate.**



The Local Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is responsible for:

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

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance (at AJS, this is the Headteacher's role)

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Fry, Headteacher, and can be contacted via office@ajs.education

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the Headteacher as to when the Local Authority should issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mr Isley. Mr Isley will support any family where there are barriers in getting a child into school. Parents can contact the school to ask to meet with Mr Isley and he is happy to meet parents at school or at home.

Mr Isley can be contacted via risley@ajs.education.

Classteachers

Classteacher are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by 8:55am. The register should be completed digitally using the school Management Information System (MIS).

School Staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, who can be contacted via the school office

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

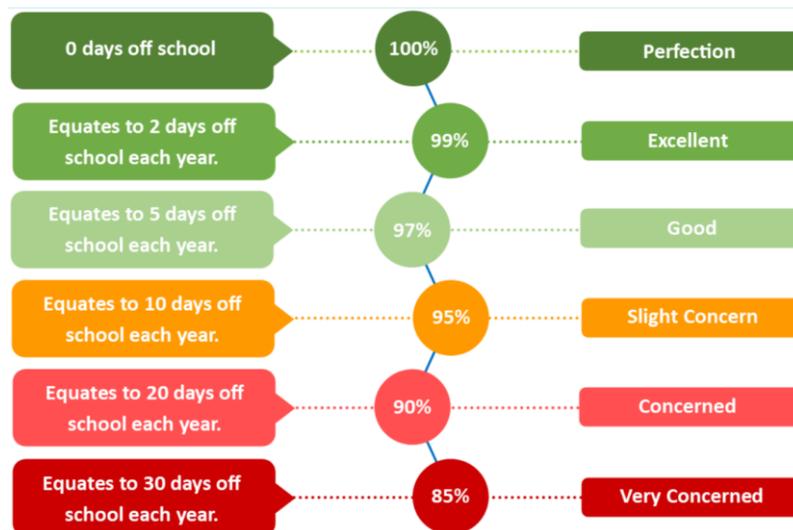
School Attendance

Why regular attendance is so important:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.



Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have a regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Home visits may be carried out by the school if we have concerns or have not had contact from families regarding a child's absence.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

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

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

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

The school day starts at 8:45 and ends at 3:05 in Early Years/Key Stage 1 and 3:10 in Key Stage 2.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:25. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:10 pm and will be kept open until 1:20 pm

Definitions of Leave

We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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

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

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via phone 01733 202403 and leaving details on the school's pupil absence voicemail. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical information. If your child's attendance is below 95%, their absence through illness may not be authorised without medical information. We will not ask for medical information unnecessarily. This information might be a letter from a GP, an appointment letter or a screenshot of a prescription.

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

Unauthorised leave:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carers, such as:

- Shopping, routine eye check ups at the opticians, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

How an absence is coded/recorded is always at the Headteacher's discretion (See Appendix 1 for DFE Attendance Codes).

Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for Headteachers agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term-Time Leave Request Form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

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

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

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as religious observance, the funeral of an immediate family member, serious illness of an immediate family, a child with a military parent leaving for or returning from an operational tour. The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least **4 weeks** before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our school website or school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

Strategies and Sanctions (see Appendix 3: Attendance 'Road Map')

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

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below an acceptable level.

- Home visit from Attendance Officer
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community

If attendance does not improve after the strategies above have been tried, the following steps will be taken:

Step One. Telephone call advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness, and offering support.

Step Two. Send a letter to offer support and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child.

Step Three. Send an invitation to attend a meeting to enter into an Attendance Contract. This is a supportive meeting, entered into voluntarily to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed.

Step Four. Should the Attendance Contract fail to improve attendance, or should there be no engagement with interventions and support despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for children of statutory school age. (See Appendix 2 for more information about Penalty Notices and Notices to Improve.)

- At Step 3 or 4, school might also consider using a Notice to Improve letter, a strategy used in partnership with the Local Authority to set targets for improved attendance. This is a final attempt to improve attendance when parents/carers are failing to engage with support being offered by school, before referring parents for legal sanctions.
- Following use of an Attendance Contract and/or Notice to Improve, if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for legal sanctions.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance/lateness.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.
- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Reporting pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with unauthorised term-term leave absences (10 consecutive sessions of 'G' codes) to the Local Authority for issuing of a legal sanction to parents/carers.
- Report pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us.

Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt the lesson, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as their progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness

- The school gates are open from 8:35 until 8:55. Adults are on the playground to welcome the children into school from 8.40am. The school day starts at 8:45 and we expect your child to be in class at that time.
- Once the classroom doors are closed all children entering late will need to enter via the main door and be signed in. The Attendance Officer will be monitoring lateness on the playground and will ask parents and older children the reason for lateness. Registers are marked by 8:55 and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- At 9:25 the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that will indicate that your child is in the school building, but will be marked with a 'U' code which is recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- If your child has a persistent late record of five or more 'lates' in any month you will be notified by letter in order to try to resolve the problem, and equally if you are experiencing problems getting your child to school you should approach us for help. Children who have 8 'lates' in eight weeks will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a penalty notice.

Following up unexplained absence

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

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

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This is done via parent-teacher evenings and the annual report.

Strategies for promoting good attendance

We will be focussing upon the following strategies in classrooms and across the school

Nurture Positive Relationships:

- Understanding our children's interests, anxieties, and home lives enables staff to tailor our approach and build trust. Regular one-on-one chats with class teachers, TAs and senior staff are a core part of this approach.
- Create a welcoming environment: We will foster an inclusive classroom where everyone feels valued and respected. We will use humour, praise effort, and celebrate individual achievements (using Marvellous Me to communicate this with parents).
- Open communication: We will establish clear lines of communication with parents/carers, regularly update them on progress, and listen to their concerns.

Make Learning Engaging and Relevant:

- We will embrace research based teaching strategies and interactive activities to cater for all children.
- We will connect teaching and learning to real-world applications: We will show children how what they learn applies to their lives and future careers and raise aspirations.
- Embrace technology across the curriculum to build on strengths developed at home.

Address Barriers to Attendance:

- Early intervention: We will identify students facing attendance issues early and proactively address the underlying causes. This could be anxiety, learning difficulties, bullying, or even lack of proper equipment.
- Flexible learning options: In some cases we will consider offering blended learning or virtual options for children facing temporary challenges like health issues or difficult family circumstances.
- Support services and agencies: Collaborate with school counsellors, social workers, and community resources to ensure students have access to the support they need.

Celebrate Attendance and Effort:

- Recognition and rewards: We will implement positive reinforcement systems that acknowledge good attendance and academic effort, including stickers/ certificates, privileges, or even public recognition in assemblies.
- Inter Class and House Team competitions: attendance-based class challenges to motivate students and boost overall attendance e.g. the big attendance teddy!
- Focus on progress and improvements: We will highlight individual progress and celebrate small wins. Recognising effort for those facing struggles

Collaborate and Communicate:

- School-wide initiative: We will work together with colleagues to implement a holistic school-wide approach to attendance. This could involve attendance campaigns, joint interventions, and consistent messaging to families.

- Community partnerships: We will engage with local community organisations, Local Authority agencies and specialist staff who can offer support services and/ or mentorship programmes for pupils facing attendance challenges.
- Data-driven approach: We will track attendance data, analyse trends, and identify specific groups or causes of absences. This allows for targeted interventions and strategies to address specific needs.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Pastoral and Welfare support staff will track and monitor pupils with complex barriers and liaise with leaders and class teachers. Home visits, parent meetings and Early Help Assessments will be opened as appropriate.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

As above with SENDCo also supporting with strategies and care plans.

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

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

An individual support plan will be written to support any child returning from a lengthy absence. This plan will be regularly monitored and communicated to parents.

Attendance monitoring

We use attendance data from our MIS system, FFT Attendance tracker and DfE comparisons to help monitor attendance each week. The Attendance Officer creates a weekly report and shares with teaching staff outlining the % attendance in each class and year group. The Headteacher meets weekly with the Attendance Officer to identify trends and children causing concern.

Monitoring attendance

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

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

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

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

Analysing attendance and using attendance data

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and

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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

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

Elective Home Education

It is a parent's right to be able to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home if they wish to. There are legal responsibilities parents/carers must fulfil if they wish to educate their child at home, which are monitored by the Local Authority. Please speak to the Headteacher in the first instance if you are considering this option.

Links with other policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Penalty Notices and Notices to Improve

Penalty Notices

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

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

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

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

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

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

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Notice to improve

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

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

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far

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

Appendix 2: attendance codes

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

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

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In police detention ● Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or ● Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 3 – Attendance Road Map

Attendance Roadmap

In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024) we offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. We will offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all. We will assess data to identify absence trends & use preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand & support to remove barriers. Where needed, we will formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts & as a last resort we will consider intensifying support &/or enforce legal sanctions.

