# Primary Attendance Policy

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**Person Responsible: Director of Primary**

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## 1. Aims

In all our schools we promote and support good punctuality and attendance and the benefits of both.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- 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.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, 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
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

  - for Priory Rise School - Maria Minett

  - for Merebrook Infant and Emerson Valley Schools - David Giles

The 5 Dimensions Trust Board has responsibility for sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across all schools in the trust.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the deputy headteacher/assistant headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers 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/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### 3.3 Attendance Officer (who may be the Headteacher or Head of School)

The designated senior leader – also known as the attendance officer - 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
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- 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

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Merebrook School is Tracy Hurwood (Head of School) and can be contacted via the school office on 01908 522876 or office@mb5d.com

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Emerson Valley School is Hayley White (Executive Headteacher) and can be contacted via the school office on 01908 507914 or office@evs5d.com

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance at Priory Rise School is Corinne Benham-Smith (Headteacher) and can be contacted via the school office on 01908 502572 office@pr5d.com

### 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1),, and submitting this information to the school office twice a day – at the onset of the morning and afternoon sessions every day.

Class teachers notify school office and attendance officer of any attendance concerns as they arise.

### 3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Notify attendance officer of any attendance concerns as they arise
- Monitor leave of absence requests from families – including reasons for absence and any trends/patterns of absence that may occur and notify attendance officer

### 3.6 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult/s:

- Who have/has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Who have/has day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return. This could be via a phone call or via Arbor
- Explain reasons for absence
- Provide the school with **at least two** emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that may have been made with the school
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance officer (who may be the headteacher or head of school), who can be contacted via the school office.

### 3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Attendance register is taken using the Arbor electronic system.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first morning session and at the start of the afternoon session every day. This marks 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 includes:

- 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 if 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.

See below the particular entry and register times for each primary school in the 5 Dimensions Trust:

**At Merebrook Infant School:** Pupils must arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.40am each day. The register for each session will be taken at 8:40am and will be kept open until 9am.

**At Emerson Valley School:** The school gates are open at 8.40am and children line up to come into school with their class at 8.45am. Pupils must arrive at school between 8.45 and 8.55am each day. The register for each session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15am.

**At Priory Rise School:**

For pupils in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2, gates open at 8.30am. All pupils in these year groups must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day. Any pupils in Reception Years 1 and 2 arriving after this time, must sign in at the school office and will be issued with a late mark. For pupils in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2, the register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.00am.

For pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 gates open at 8.40am. All pupils in these year groups must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day. Any pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 arriving after this time must sign in at the school office and will be issued with a late mark. For pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 the register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am.

**The register for the second session in all schools** will be taken at the start of each afternoon session for all pupils and will be kept open for 10 minutes in each session.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible, in the first instance, on our **Arbor Parent Portal** or **Arbor App**. Parents should provide a clear and detailed reason for a child's absence, i.e. more than merely stating that a child is 'poorly' or 'sick'. Parents should report on their child's absence on every day of their absence.

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.

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

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

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Leave of absence should be requested in advance via the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form that can be downloaded from the school website or collected from the school office.

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence using the same 'Request for Leave of Absence' form, as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 for more details.

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, with an L code
- After the register has closed will be marked with a U code, denoting that the pupil has arrived at school well after the register has closed

The school monitors any pupils who are persistently late. Where there is a pattern of late or unauthorised codes for children, letters are sent to parents, leaders call home to discuss lateness and support is offered to encourage families to ensure that children are on time for school. Should timekeeping not improve parents/carers will be invited into school to have a meeting with the learning mentor and attendance officer (who may be the headteacher/head of school), setting targets and developing an attendance support plan. Should timekeeping still not improve, parents/carers may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

### 4.5 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/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot contact any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send an email asking families to contact the school immediately. If families cannot be contacted, the learning mentor – or other member of designated staff – will make a visit to the family address, or in extreme circumstances contact the police to carry out a welfare check.
- 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 three working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare 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: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 blow) as appropriate.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents are regularly encouraged to access details about their child's attendance and absence levels via their child's attendance record on Arbor.

Attendance data for each child is sent out with their end of year school report.

Where attendance is a concern, families are contacted via letters, notified of attendance concerns and at the end of each term.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

If the headteacher considers there to be 'exceptional circumstances', leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

It is important that parents make any 'exceptional circumstance' requests in plenty of time to enable the school to have time to consider the request and respond appropriately. The governing board

has discussed and agreed the exceptional circumstances under which absences may be authorised. Parents need to be aware that authorisation for these events is at the discretion of the headteacher; it is not guaranteed.

Availability of cheap flights, holidays, parent/carer work commitments, birthday celebrations and special family gatherings are not considered to be exceptional.

The headteacher will consider each request individually. For exceptional circumstance events, one day's absence only will usually be authorised unless the event is some considerable distance away, in which case the headteacher will take into account travelling arrangements.

**Examples of 'Exceptional Circumstances'**

- A visit to another school which the child will soon be joining
- Taking the entrance examination for another school
- Sitting an award bearing music or dance exam or attending a residential visit organised by the Milton Keynes Music Centre. Please note that residential visits occurring in the period during or prior to the assessment period in May will not be authorized
- Taking part in an exceptional sporting event, for example, playing in a county or regional fixture
- Taking part in a theatre performance licensed by a local education authority
- Attending the marriage/civil ceremony of the child's parents or an immediate family member - please ensure that proof of attendance at these occasions is attached when applying for authorised leave of absence
- Attending the funeral of a close family member
- A religious observance
- Compassionate leave, for example, following a close family bereavement

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

### 5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

The school will not consider or grant authorised leave of absence for any holidays or day trips.

In these agreed circumstances, up to 3 days may be granted, at the discretion of the headteacher. Current and previous absences may be considered as part of this request. The school will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context around each request.

### 5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons 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

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a Trust, we promote and reward positive, high attendance in all our schools.

All school deploy a number of strategies for rewarding and improving attendance. These may include:

- celebrating good attendance in weekly assemblies, in school newsletters, on school websites and on school displays
- children work towards achieving the class attendance award each week – where the highest attending class from the previous week receives a negotiated ‘class treat’ (maximum 20 minutes)
- regularly explaining the importance of good attendance in whole school assemblies and in class discussions
- at the end of each term 100% attendees receive a 100% attendance certificate
- at the end of each school year 100% attendees receive a 100% attendance certificate for the whole school year
- regular promotion of the effects of positive attendance in school newsletters
- class teachers talking to parents and children about the importance of positive attendance and punctulaity

## 7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

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

### 7.1 Attendance Contracts

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

### 7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

### 7.3 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.

A notice 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.

It 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, or prosecution considered, 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

### 7.4 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), 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, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send the local authority 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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### 8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of any specific barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, the school will implement reasonable adjustments and/or interventions that are timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted. These barriers may include being disadvantaged, being known (or previously known) to children's social care, being a young carer, we will:

- inform the local authority.
- Work closely with families and the pupil – including a home visit if necessary - to understand what these barriers might be
- After discussions with parents, make reasonable adjustments to the pupil's school day

- Continue to liaise with the child (if appropriate) and parents, to review progress and the effectiveness of the adjustments that have been put in place
- Consider a referral to the Milton Keynes SEND team, the Mental Health Support Team in Schools (MHST) and/or complete an Early Help Referral
- Offer a part-time timetable as a way of bringing the child back into school
- If the child is not attending school at all, a home visit will be made once per week.

### 8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND

Where pupils are absent from school due to mental or physical ill health, or their SEND, the school will:

- Involve either the SENCO or a member of the medical team as appropriate in working with parents (and the child) to understand the needs of and barriers to attendance. This will be a home visit if necessary.
- Consider a referral to the Milton Keynes SEND team, the Mental Health Support Team in Schools (MHST) and/or complete an Early Help Referral
- Consider a part-time timetable to promote a successful return to school
- Where the child is not at school due to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), follow the Milton Keynes guidance for EBSA, which is published on the Local Offer Page
- Review the progress and support on offer with parents. The regularity of this will depend on the success of adjustments and the progress of the pupil
- Ensure that reviews are recorded appropriately in the child's Support Plan, where appropriate
- Where a child is not in school at all, contact will be made each week, this may be a home visit or a telephone call, depending on the circumstances.

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

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

Where a pupil is returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable absence, the school will:

- Speak with the pupil and family of the child to ascertain whether any reasonable adjustments will be necessary in the pupil's return
- Consider a reduced timetable (no longer than 6 weeks) to integrate them back into the school community successfully
- Review the progress and adjustments on offer with parents. The regularity of this will depend on the success of the adjustments and the progress of the pupil.

## 9 Monitoring attendance

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

School learning mentors in their roles as part of the school attendance teams, monitor school attendance daily (including punctuality) and makes regular telephone calls to families where pupils are demonstrating attendance that may be causing a concern. The learning mentors regularly meet with the headteacher in attendance review meetings to discuss any pupils whose attendance is a

concern. Where this is the case, phone calls are made and letters are sent out to families to notify and to encourage improved attendance, following regular planned attendance review meetings.

Should the school not see improved attendance following these notifications, families are invited into school for an attendance meeting with the headteacher and learning mentor, where targets for improved attendance are set and a plan is put in place. This is then reviewed at an agreed later date.

Attendance 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.

### 9.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

### 9.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### 9.3 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 (see section 5.2, above)

## 10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

## 11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND policy

## 11. Summary

It is the expectation that all children attend school for every planned session in the school year.

We hope that our Trust approach to attendance in the primary schools is clear and that it sets out for parents the Trust position on leave of absence and the importance that the school places on good attendance and punctuality.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending a place other than the school** | | |
| **K** | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| **V** | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| **P** | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **W** | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| **B** | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – leave of absence** | | |
| **C1** | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **J1** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective |

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |
| **Y4** | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| **Y5** | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>• In police detention<br>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>• 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 2: Application for Leave of Absence

### The importance of regular school attendance

Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life.

Children who frequently miss school often fall behind. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results.

### Your responsibilities as a parent

All children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and it is the duty of parents and carers to ensure that they are supported to do so.

### Holidays during term time

Schools are not allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. All holidays will be marked as unauthorised and could be subject to a **first** penalty notice of up to £80 if paid in 21 days, or £160 if paid in 28 days.

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

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

Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher, and ***holidays are not considered exceptional*.** Requests for leave must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has informed schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

If you would like to request authorised leave for your child for an exceptional circumstance please complete the form below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Child's Name | Class: |
| Date of Requested Leave: | Total Number of school days: |
| Reason for request: | |

Signed: _____ Parent/Carer Date: _____

**For Office Use Only**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of days absence in this school year & reason: | | |
| Attendance rate in previous school year: | | Date application received: |
| Authorised:<br>YES/NO/INPART | Reason if unauthorised: | |

Signed: _____ Headteacher/Head of School

Date: _____

***This form will be returned to you indicating whether or not the absence has been authorised***