School Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2026/27

(Bothal Academy)

Date Agreed	Autumn Term 2026
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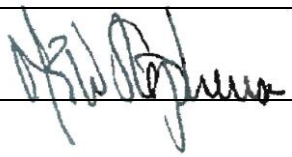
Signed	

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Section 1: Introduction

Why we care about attendance

“Every child has the right to an education.”
(Article 28 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child)

When children walk through our doors each morning, they aren't just attending school—they are laying the foundation for their future. Every day brings unique opportunities that shapes their journey.

Children who miss school, miss out.

Good attendance and punctuality are important for:

- **Building Strong Foundations:** Learning is like building a house. Every day adds a vital brick of knowledge, reading, and problem-solving skills that make future learning easier and more fun. Children who feel more confident with their learning are more likely to achieve their goals now and in the future. Confidence grows the more a child attends.
- **Creating Lifelong Connections:** School is where children learn to navigate the world together. Daily attendance helps children build lasting friendships, develop empathy, and feel a strong sense of belonging. Children develop social skills and build resilience which all contribute to positive mental health.
- **Developing Confidence and Routine:** Regular attendance and good punctuality helps children feel secure. Knowing what to expect each day builds confidence, independence, and healthy habits that last a lifetime. Arriving on time ensures less disruption to learning for all and is an important life skill.
- **Unlocking experiences and memories:** Whether it's a breakthrough in maths, a creative art project, or a moment of laughter on the playground, missed days mean missed opportunities that can’t quite be recreated.

At WISE Academies, we have ambition for all of our pupils and set high expectations of excellent attendance, regardless of age. It is our belief that all pupils can strive to be in school on every session that school is open. We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and, therefore, we recognise that 100% attendance may not always be possible for some children but we believe that with the right support, we can help children to be in school as much as possible. This is why, at all stages of our attendance processes, we will work together with parents, carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. We want to work in partnership to give all children the very best start in life.

This policy is applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance, whilst also remaining compliant with statutory expectations as set out in the DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Encouraging and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community!

At WISE Academies, attendance is one of our top priorities. We are committed to meeting our statutory and moral obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach. By providing an environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, we are building the foundation of securing good attendance. We aim to do this by:

- Promoting and celebrating good attendance and punctuality
- Raising pupils' awareness of the importance of good school attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring every child of compulsory school age has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with pupils and families
- Providing support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff and supporting parents to perform their legal duty
- Regularly informing parents of their child's current attendance and punctuality levels
- Supporting pupils back into school following lengthy or unavoidable absences and providing support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence by monitoring and supporting children whose attendance is a cause for concern and working in partnership with pupils, parents, carers and other agencies (where necessary and appropriate) to resolve any difficulty.
- Providing an orderly, safe and supportive environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Analysing attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- Having a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers and having effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Section 2: What is good attendance, persistent absence and severe absence?

Attendance is so much more to us than a number or a percentage but the number is the starting point for helping us to decide whether a child is attending school regularly enough or whether additional support may need to be offered. We are very much aware that

behind every percentage is a person, with their own background, their own lived experiences and their own challenges (some temporary, some longer term) that may be impacting on their ability to attend school.

Below is a guide to how attendance levels are rated:

If a pupil misses this many days over the full school year…	…their attendance for that year will be:	Rating
0	**100%**	**Excellent**
0.5 – 3.5 days	**98 – 99.9%**	**Very Good**
4 – 7.5 days	**96 – 97.9%**	**Good**
8 - 14.5 days	**92 – 95.9%**	**Requires Improvement**
15 days – 19 days	**90 - 92%**	At risk of being a persistent absentee - **Urgently requires improvement**
19 – 94 days	**50 - 90%**	Persistent Absentee **Urgently requires improvement**
94.5 days or more	**50% and below**	Severe Absentee **Urgently requires improvement**

Persistent Absence / Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school therefore when a child has 90% or lower attendance, they are deemed to be a “Persistent Absentee”. 10% is the equivalent of missing 19 days across the whole year.

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school therefore a child whose attendance is 50% or lower are deemed to be a “Severe Absentee”.

Persistent and Severe Absence have a detrimental impact on those children whose attendance means they fall within these categories. We have a duty of care to all of our pupils and will ensure we support children and their families to improve attendance so that they can be in school as much as possible and benefit from all of the wonderful opportunities that school provides.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Support through a formal attendance contract to establish a clear set of expectations and an individualised plan of support for the child / family.
- Parents will be informed in writing if their child is at risk of becoming a Persistent or Severe Absentee.
- Provide a nominated member of staff to support the pupil and liaise with the family

Attendance Champions for persistently / severely absent pupils and their families:

It is widely recognised that pupils who miss a lot of school are more likely to feel isolated or disengaged from school life and the school community. We want all of our children to feel valued and share a sense of belonging in our school community. Children who are identified as being a Persistent or Severe Absentee will have a nominated member of staff who will notice when they're absent, check in with them regularly, welcome them back to school in order to build a sense of belonging and further reinforce that they are a valued member of our school and that we miss them when they are not in school. The member of staff will also liaise with the pastoral team to pass on relevant information around barriers to attendance. This extra layer of support will run alongside, and not replace, the work that the pastoral team carry out in their duties to ensure improvements in attendance.

Section 3: What the Law says about attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) states that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school, alternative educational provision or otherwise. If a child is registered at a school, parents/carers have primary responsibility for ensuring that their child attends that school regularly. Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils.

Parents of compulsory school-aged children have a legal duty to ensure their child receives suitable education. Should a child fail to attend regularly then legal action may be taken against the parents under section 444 of the Education Act (1996).

The Law defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- those who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e lives with and looks after the child) who may not be a biological parent

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the child, if they hold Parental Responsibility (PR) for the child then that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

The school or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. WISE Academies utilises the support of the Local Authority for carrying out this statutory duty and works in alignment with the Penalty Notices Code of Conduct for the local authority in which the school is based.

A written warning (a Notice to Improve) will usually be issued and a period of formal monitoring or intervention from the relevant local authority attendance team. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence). The exception to this is where term-time absence was due to a holiday that was either taken

without providing advanced warning or where the holiday was not authorised by the school. The school may not authorise a holiday retrospectively.

The National Legislative Framework states that:

Schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

The threshold for a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions (10 half 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 met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term)

A first Penalty Notice is £160 per parent per child which will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. If a Penalty Notice is issued for a second time to the same parent for the same pupil, there will be no discounted rate and the flat rate of £160 will apply. A third notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. If a third or subsequent offence is committed then this matter will be escalated to the Local Authority for alternative action which will include consideration of prosecution or another form of attendance legal intervention / order of the court.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling 10-week period
- The child's overall attendance percentage for the current academic year
- Reasons for absence
- Whether there have been any previous concerns around the pupils' attendance
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded / suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason (refer to DfE guidance on suspensions)

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If the decision is made to pursue a prosecution, then the possible outcomes could be:

- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- School Attendance Order (where a child is not registered in a school or otherwise)
- Fixed Penalty Notice
- Prosecution – max £2500 fine and/or a community order or up to 3 months imprisonment

Section 4: Definition of Authorised and Unauthorised absence

We want our pupils to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We also recognise that there may be other exceptional circumstances which may prevent a child from attending school. In all cases, we expect parents to report an absence and explain the reason for the absence.

It is always the Headteacher's decision whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

All absences, whether authorised or unauthorised impact on the pupil's attendance percentage.

Authorised absences are those absences where the reason provided by parents / carers is deemed to be acceptable, genuine, valid and unavoidable and therefore are approved. Some examples of valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance
- Funeral of a close relative
- Traveling family absence
- Suspension

Illness / medical and dental appointments:

There are many low-level illnesses which do not require absence from school. The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school at the following link: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

We encourage parents to download the Healthier Together app (NHS) which provides helpful resources, advice and guidance on childhood illnesses and appropriate support. Further information can be found at the following website: https://healthiertogether.nhs.uk/

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of school for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. If a medical appointment requires early collection, the pupil will not be allowed to leave the school site without parental supervision.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, the length / frequency of the absence (refer to NHS guidelines) or if the absence was deemed to be avoidable. We will not routinely request medical evidence. However, the school may request further supporting medical information / evidence under the following circumstances:

- the child is frequently absent due to illness
- the authenticity of the illness is in doubt
- the school need to gain a better understanding of the nature of the illness and impact on the child. This will ensure the school can offer the most appropriate support

Medical information / evidence, could include:

- Appointment card / text
- Doctor's note (if appropriate)
- Prescription
- Communication between the school and the lead medical professional (only with parental consent and only where appropriate to ensure the correct level of support for the child)

The school may also request the support of other agencies such as Healthier Together and/or the School Nurse if illness is cited as the reason for repeated absence in order to ensure the appropriate level of support is provided and to support the school to better understand the nature of the illness and impact on the child whilst in school.

Religious observance:

Where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. Only the day that is exclusively set aside for the religious observance will be authorised. Any subsequent days will be recorded as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Funeral:

Attending the funeral of a close family member – this is for individual families to determine. In some situations, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times. We will always agree with parents a suitable approach and any support that may be offered within school.

Travelling family absence:

The school may authorise the absence of a mobile child who has no fixed abode, who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. The DfE defines 'no fixed abode' as either:

- a child who has no settled, permanent place where they can live full time or
- a child who has such a place but does not live there for substantial periods. Occasional or short-term travel is unlikely to be sufficient.

All cases will be discussed on an individual basis to determine whether the absence will be authorised or not. Parents should provide the school with notice as far in advance as possible. To support the continuity of the child's education when their parent is travelling for occupational purposes, the child is expected to attend a school in the location of where their parent is travelling to. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and would be expected to attend that school. Both schools will communicate with each other around attendance, wellbeing and learning. Refer to *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)* for further information.

If a school has reason to doubt the authenticity of the absence, they may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

If a pupil's attendance falls below an acceptable level, then consideration may be given to attendance enforcement via the Local Authority.

Suspensions:

Where a pupil has been prevented by the Headteacher from entering the school premises due to behaviour.

Unauthorised absences are those absences which are either unexplained, avoidable or where the reason provided is not deemed to be valid and/or appropriate and/or acceptable. Absences may also be recorded as unauthorised when the length of absence is viewed as being longer than would be expected (refer to NHS guidelines on illnesses). Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence due to illness, the school may require supporting medical evidence in order to best support the child and to support decision-making around whether or not to authorise absences.

Some examples of absences that will not be authorised are:

- Absences that have not been properly explained
- Stating the child is unwell but the child is not at home
- Pupils who arrive too late to get a mark without a valid reason
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences due to parents needing to be at home for deliveries or work to be carried out
- Leave of absence without exceptional circumstances
- Recreational trips e.g holidays in term-time
- If a pupil is kept away from school for longer than was agreed

Please refer to Annex A for list of authorised and unauthorised absence codes that the school may use.

Section 5: Support First Approach – Understanding the Barriers to Attendance

At WISE Academies, we are proud of our **pastoral support and the good relationships** we have built up with our school community. As such, we aim to only use legal intervention as a last resort when other avenues of support have been exhausted and attendance has not improved, and/or where parents / carers have not engaged with the support offered. The only exception to this is where support is not appropriate e.g. in the instance of a holiday in term-time not being authorised.

We pride ourselves on the support that we are able to offer to our pupils and their families. We encourage parents, carers and pupils to let us know if there are any matters impacting on attendance.

Where absences intensify, so should the support, which may require school to work in conjunction with relevant partner agencies.

The school will:

- Do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend
- Build relationships with all pupils and families to encourage regular school attendance by listening and understanding the barriers to good attendance and working in partnership with families to resolve them
- Make available the best provision we can for those pupils experiencing barriers to good attendance
- Be 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
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence
- Use resources (school based and external services, with consent) to ensure families are supported appropriately
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences

We follow the statutory framework as follows:

Expect 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.
Monitor 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.
Listen and understand When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate Support Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise Support 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.
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 pupils' right to an education.

Where we continue to be concerned about a child's attendance, and where parents do not make use of the support that is being offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions.

What if my child is reluctant to attend school?

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend, in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

Attendance and Mental Health, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that our expectations for these children remain high and they are still expected to attend school regularly. We believe we can support children to strive for high levels of attendance to help them succeed. In many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to full-time education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

We will support any pupil who is experiencing a barrier to attendance by:

- understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with 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
- facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue
- work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed
- work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed

- work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day

- establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

- consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability.

- regularly review need and interventions with the pupil and their parents.

If any parent is worried about their child's mental health or feels their child requires additional support, we encourage them to talk to us and we will discuss the best possible support available. We regularly promote opportunities for our pupils to speak out if they are ever worried about anything themselves.

Online mental health and support can be found at: NHS Children and young adults mental health support. Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency, parents should dial 999.

Section 6: Parental Responsibility

The Law defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- those who have day to day responsibility for the child (i.e lives with and looks after the child) who may not be a biological parent

It is the responsibility of all parents to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day, on time
- Call the school before 9.15am on the day of absence to provide the reason for absence and the expected date of return. Where length of absence is unknown then it is expected that parents will update school on each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and keep school updated with any changes in contact details
- Ensure that non-urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. In the event of an appointment in school time being unavoidable then the parent must inform the school in advance of the appointment and the pupil should attend school before the appointment and return to school after the appointment where possible and where medical advice allows
- Provide supporting evidence of the reason for absence (if requested by the school)
- Inform the school in advance of any known reasons for absence. It is the Headteacher's decision whether or not to authorise an absence. Requests for leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances

- Where a child has to be collected during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by an appropriate adult and by arrangement with the office staff. Children cannot be allowed to meet parents/carers off school property
- Actively work with school staff, Attendance Officer and relevant multi-agency staff to resolve any issue that may impact on attendance.

Section 7: Recording, monitoring and reporting of attendance and punctuality

The Attendance Register

Pupils are entered onto the school's Admissions Register (the school roll) at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend. At the same time, they are also entered onto the Attendance Register.

WISE Academies maintain an electronic attendance register using the Arbor Management Information System. All pupils, regardless of age, are entered onto the register which we use to record attendance and absence information, twice a day, for all pupils. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence if a case is referred to the Local Authority and/or Magistrates Court for legal proceedings in relation to poor attendance.

We will take our attendance register once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session of each school day, typically at the start. It will mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will use the appropriate attendance codes as outlined by the DfE (2026) – see appendix A

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not. The decision to authorise or not is at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- 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.

A pupil may only be marked as present if they are in school at the time the register is taken. This is known as the statutory registration period which is a 30-minute period of time at the start of the morning session and the start of the afternoon session. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:40am and will close at 9:10am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00pm and will close at 1.30pm. Our Nursery children enter school at 8:30am, at this time an informal register will be taken for their morning session. The formal register will be taken between 8:40am - 9:10am. In our 2 Year Old Provision, the afternoon learners arrive at 12:15pm, at this time an informal register will be taken for their session. The formal register will be taken during 1:00pm - 1:30pm for all classes.

Lateness and punctuality

My child arriving…	**…is the same as missing…**	**…which equates to missing…**
5 minutes late every day	25 minutes every week	3 school days in a year
10 minutes late every day	50 minutes every week	6 school days in a year
15 minutes late every day	75 minutes every week	9 school days in a year
20 minutes late every day	100 minutes every week	12 school days in a year

It is the duty of parents to ensure that their child(ren) attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and reduces classroom disruption for all pupils.

A pupil who arrives late:

- after but before the register closes at 9.10am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L). This is the same as being present.
- after the register has closed (after 9.10am) will be marked with a U code which is counted in data as an unauthorised absence. However, if the reason for lateness after the register has closed is for a valid reason, such as a medical appointment, then the absence will be coded appropriately as authorised (but will still impact on the overall percentage of attendance for that pupil).

Late pupils must report to the school office with the adult who brought them to school so that their attendance can be recorded and the reason for lateness provided. Punctuality is monitored on a daily basis. Where pupils are regularly late or where patterns of poor punctuality arise, parents / carers will be invited to discuss this with either the Headteacher, Senior Attendance Champion or another member of staff as designated by the Headteacher. All parties will discuss the reason for the lateness and agree a plan for supporting an improvement. Monitoring will be ongoing until punctuality is no longer a concern.

School staff will work with parents/carers to address the issues affecting a punctual arrival and offer appropriate support.

What if my child is sent home from school ill?

If a pupil needs to be sent home from school due to illness, this will always be in agreement between an appropriately authorised member of school staff and the parent who the child lives with. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the

school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out appropriately. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without an authorised person e.g. parent/carer, family member or family friend whom the parent has previously notified the school about and nominated as safe to collect.

Attendance / Punctuality monitoring

Attendance is rigorously monitored and data reports are generated regularly using Arbor to allow for the timely response to any concerns that may arise. Early intervention is key to ensuring attendance does not deteriorate further and become detrimental to a child's development and wellbeing. Each week, the attendance of all pupils is logged on our Pupil Attendance Tracker which allows us to closely monitor for improvements or concerns. We use this data to target interventions, offer support in a timely manner and take action when necessary.

The system also allows key staff to monitor cohorts of children to ensure that interventions are targeted appropriately so that all children have fair access to the curriculum and the educational opportunities available to them.

The school will:

- Monitor absences daily
- Monitor and analyse attendance data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Input the weekly and overall attendance of all pupils in their Pupil Attendance Tracker on a weekly basis.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and who may need additional support with their attendance. We use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. This may involve a multi-agency approach where appropriate to help address any factors that impact on attendance
- Consider historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence as a comparison to gauge whether current strategies and systems are effective.
- Make use of DfE tools and comparison reports to gauge how well the school is performing

Procedures for following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil who we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will take necessary steps to identify the safe whereabouts of the child.

The school will:-

- Call or text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to identify the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may request that a home visit is carried out by a nominated member(s) of the school staff team.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it into the register as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer and/or visit the home 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 the Local Authority. Other agencies may also be contacted in an attempt to locate the child.

- If attendance continues to be of concern, without valid explanation, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead deems this to meet the risk of harm threshold then a referral will be made to Children's Social Care. If a child is already open to a Social Worker then the school will alert the allocated Social Worker to any absence.
- In any instance where the absence is ongoing without explanation and the school cannot be fully satisfied that the child is safe, or where there is concern about the welfare or protection of a child, then the school may request the Police to undertake a welfare visit to the home.
- School has a duty to report irregular attendance and children missing from education (CME), to the Local Authority.

Using data to improve attendance

Attendance is so much more to us than a number or a percentage but the number is the starting point for helping us to decide whether a child is attending school regularly enough or whether additional support may need to be offered. We are very much aware that behind every percentage is a person, with their own background, their own lived experiences and their own challenges (some temporary, some longer term) that may be impacting on their ability to attend school.

It is important that school leaders and governors understand the school's overall attendance data to ensure that they are directing resources and interventions where they are needed.

Any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised, affects the pattern of a child's schooling. Regular absences may seriously affect their learning.

Pupil-level absence data is collected every day and shared automatically via the school's Management Information System with the Department for Education (DfE). Local Authority's also have access to this information.

School-level data is collected every day and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The school-level absence data is published alongside national statistics. The school compares attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the Local Governing Board. The Trust shares the data for all schools with the Board of Trustees and Regional Hub Boards.

School staff, the Trust central team, local governors and trustees scrutinise the data in order to make informed decisions about school procedures and in order to ensure effective evaluation of practice across all schools.

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to school and trust leaders, class teachers and pastoral staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide regular updates to parents and carers
- Provide regular updates to Governors and Trustees
- Provide regular updates to the Local Authority

Statutory returns:

All schools must submit a monthly return to their Local Authority where:

- a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent for a continuous period of ten school days (unauthorised absence – codes G, N, O and U) and/or
- a pupil of compulsory school age is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (authorised illness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 or more consecutive or cumulative school days for illness.

Reporting to parents/carers and addressing irregular attendance

WISE Academies work hard to regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. It is hoped that any problems affecting attendance can be resolved swiftly. Communicating attendance levels, the importance of attendance and the implications of poor attendance with parents is vital to achieve this. The Department for Education (DfE) expects all schools to communicate attendance to parents regularly.

Attendance of all pupils is closely monitored and discussed on a weekly basis with the Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion and/or Child & Family Welfare Officer / Attendance Officer (Lyndsay Cribbins). We will notify parents, at an early stage in order to allow for discussion of any support that may be offered to prevent further decline and to allow parents/carers to take the necessary steps to improve attendance without the need for further action. This may be verbal and/or in writing. Consideration will be given as to whether referrals to outside agencies may be required. Mitigating circumstances such as serious medical conditions will be taken into consideration when making decisions about the pursuit of further action for irregular or non-attendance.

We will communicate information about attendance with parents and pupils, using a variety of means, as appropriate for the situation.

This may include:-

- Telephone call
- Text message, email, Parent App
- Verbal discussion which may include a home visit or a meeting in school
- Letter / Newsletter
- Pupil admission / induction meetings
- Assemblies
- Pupil report
- Parents' evenings
- Meetings
- Periodically reminding parents of the Academy's procedures for notification of absences through the Academy website or social media.

Attendance Contracts / Attendance Support Plans

An Attendance Contract or Attendance Support Plan is a formal written agreement drawn up between the parent and school to agree how all parties will work together to improve attendance. This is usually offered where attendance continues to fall and a pupil is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (see section 2). It is a supportive tool intended to ensure that pupils and their families are getting the help they need to improve the pupils' attendance at school. A parent can request a meeting at any time during the year.

Whilst this is a voluntary contract, we strongly encourage families who are offered this to work together with the school.

Arbor Parent App

The Arbor Parent App is the mobile version of the Arbor Parent Portal, for use on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Parents can download the Parent App for free from either the Play store for Android phones or the App Store for IOS.

Parents may access the app at any time to monitor their own child's attendance.

Section 8: Seeking approval for term-time absence (including holidays and other planned absence)

Any absence from school will potentially have a detrimental effect on a child's learning and progress. The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term-time.

Unplanned absence

We acknowledge that there may be some situations which mean a child is unable to attend school and that it is not always possible to have prior notification e.g. illness.

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before 9.15am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office.

All unplanned absences will be considered on an individual basis. It is the Headteacher's discretion whether the absence will be authorised or not.

Planned absence

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the planned absence, and using the school's leave of absence request form which can be obtained from the school office or Appendix C of this policy. The school will issue a written response to indicate the decision made.

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. However, we encourage parents/carers to make non-urgent medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents / carers will be asked to show a copy of the appointment text / card to the school office.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible, in writing.

Granting Leave of Absence

Authorisation will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. "Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and

recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance" (DfE 2026). Parents and Carers should plan holidays and other avoidable absences around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

It is the parent's responsibility, when submitting the request, to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances upon which the school will make their decision.

The school considers all requests for leave of absence on an individual basis and will take into account the reason for absence, the specific circumstances and context behind the request, child's attendance levels and the length of absence being requested. The Headteacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made. If the Headteacher authorises the leave of absence, it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those which are absolutely unavoidable such as serious illness, attending the funeral of a close relative, an emergency situation that results in the family having to leave the area. This list is not exhaustive.

Where additional days of absence are tagged onto the beginning or end of a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, school staff may request to see confirmation of travel dates / holiday booking.

Although some absences may be unauthorised, it is better that staff know that children are safe, rather than missing. We ask that all requests for leave of absence are submitted in writing, using the appropriate form as outlined above.

Section 9: Absence as a Safeguarding Matter

WISE Academies places safeguarding of all pupils at the top of our priorities. Regular absence from school is often considered to be a symptom of a wider issue. We have a duty of care and a responsibility to follow up all absences that are either unexplained and/or of concern. This may include unusual or repeated patterns of absence. Where we have not been able to locate the safe whereabouts of a child, using our internal procedures, then we will fulfil our statutory responsibilities and draw on other statutory agencies to support us to locate the child quickly. This may involve the Police and / or Children's Services.

The DfE (2026) states that:

"If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment".

Where a child is open to Children's Social Care and/or the Youth Offending Team, we have a duty to keep the Social Worker and/or Youth Offending Officer informed of any concerns surrounding a child's absence.

Further information on safeguarding is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and also within our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found on our school website.

Section 10: Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten consecutive school days after a leave of absence or is absent from school for reasons statistically recorded as unauthorised absence for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil's name can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to locate the child or establish the circumstances of the child's absence from school, including that there are no reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or another unavoidable cause then the grounds for removal from roll does not apply and the school must follow their usual absence procedures.

When the child is removed from the school roll, the pupil's details will be transferred to the national Lost Pupils' Database.

To enable effective CME processes, all schools must make a 'new pupil return' or a 'deletion return' to the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register (except during standard transition points unless the local authority requests it, as set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The law also allows local authority officers to access the attendance and admission registers of all types of school to carry out their functions under the Education Act. Officers are permitted to take digital or physical extracts.

At WISE Academies, we recognise that some of our pupils may be at risk of becoming CME. We treat this as a safeguarding matter until we are satisfied that the safety and wellbeing of the pupil is sound.

In many instances, children become CME simply because a parent / carer has failed to notify school of a relocation and the school has been unable to locate the family using their own search mechanisms.

We urge all parents and carers to:

- keep the school fully informed of any changes to contact details
- notify the school, at the earliest opportunity, of any pending house moves or relocation to a different area which could mean your child is absent from school
- alert school to any potential difficulties with securing a new school place

When the whereabouts and circumstances of a child is unclear or unknown, and therefore the child is deemed to be "missing", in line with the duty under section 10 of

the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school, working closely with the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries to locate the child / family.

This may include:

- making contact with the parent using the last known contact details, including home visits to the last known address
- checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved.
- If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).
- checking local databases within the local authority;
- checking Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
- following local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- checking with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
  - checking with agencies known to be involved with the family;
  - checking with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
  - checking with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
  - checking with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
  - in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS).

All checks will be recorded on the school's CPOMS system.

Section 11: Attendance of pupils not yet of statutory school age (including playgroup and nursery)

It is widely recognised that children benefit most from their educational experiences when they have secured healthy and regular attendance patterns from an early age. Nationally, all schools are encouraged to set high expectations for all pupils and to promote the value of good school attendance and punctuality from a young age, even before they reach statutory school age. A child reaches statutory school age from the first day of term after their 5th birthday.

Although many children in WISE Academies are not yet of statutory school age, it is expected that all children, from Reception upwards, attend school full time after any initial staggering or settling in period at the start of September. School staff are trained in age-appropriate child development stages in order to offer appropriate support to any child who may be struggling with the full school day. With appropriate support and close partnership with the child's parents / main carers, we strive to enable all children to attend school as fully as possible from the outset. We believe that this supports their social and academic learning and is more likely to result in a smooth transition once they reach statutory school age. In circumstances where it is evident that the child is not coping with a full day, school staff and parents will meet to discuss a plan of support. Each circumstance will be considered on an individual basis and may include a short period of time on reduced hours with a planned, gradual increase (refer to partial timetables policy).

Schools have a duty to report the attendance of all pupils, including 4-year-olds, via their school census. The DfE states that schools must use the national attendance and absence codes, in order to monitor their attendance and form good attendance habits. This ensures that targeted support can be offered where needed, in a timely manner and this is the process followed in all WISE Academies. The exception to this is where Reception children, on a staggered intake, who are not yet of compulsory school age, will be recorded using an X code (see appendix A) which bears no impact on their attendance.

Playgroup, 2 year old provision and Nursery attendance

Whilst those in playgroup and nursery are not expected to attend full time, schools do monitor their attendance and absence patterns so as to quickly identify any possible issues to be able to offer targeted support at an early stage. Where parents have made the decision to register their child in our early years educational provision, we expect them to attend every session that they are timetabled to attend, unless exceptional circumstances such as illness prevent them from attending.

Section 12: Strategies for promoting attendance

We recognise that some children face challenges which means they can never reach 100% attendance. We therefore celebrate not only excellent attendance, but also improved attendance. We have a range of rewards throughout the year that are accessible to all pupils.

Whilst we continually promote attendance across our whole school community over the whole year, we dedicate two weeks of the year as specific “Attendance Weeks” where we heighten the focus on attendance-related matters and use fun activities to further promote the importance of attendance for everyone across the whole school.

We celebrate class attendance via our attendance game, “Winopoly” where every pupil is in with a chance to win.

We also use the following strategies / rewards to promote attendance and punctuality:

- Attendance Weeks once a term to celebrate attendance to school and raise priority
- 100% attendance awards and trips
- Class awards for improved attendance
- Attendance stickers awarded in planners for each 100% attendance week
- Attendance non-school uniform days

Section 13: Policy monitoring and review arrangements

National statutory and non-statutory guidance and legislation, will be monitored throughout the year by the Trust. This policy will be reviewed when guidance from the Local Authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Governing Board and Board of Trustees.

Section 14: Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour & Discipline
- Partial Timetables
- Arrivals and Departures

Section 15: Underpinning legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are underpinned from the following legislation and statutory guidance setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Children Act 1989 / 2004
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Sentencing Act 2026
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Equality Act 2010
- Children Missing Education (CME) guidance 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Elective Home Education guidance 2019 (updated 2024)
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities 2025
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England 2026
- Behaviour in Schools guidance 2024
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (under review)
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs 2023
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance 2023

Section 16: Sharing information and the Arbor Privacy Statement

All attendance processes at WISE Academies, are compliant with GDPR and Information-Sharing legislation. We share information on a need-to-know basis in line with this legislation. It is mandatory for all schools in England to share attendance information direct from the schools Management Information System (Arbor) with the Department for Education, Local Authority, and statutory partner agencies when required for the purposes of safeguarding a pupil.

Arbor Privacy Statement

The WISE Academies Data Protection Policy and Information-sharing Protocol can be found on the **WISE Academies Trust website**

Appendix A - Attendance and Absence Codes

For full details and further explanation of codes please refer to p81 – 97 of the statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*

Attending the Academy (Count as present)		
Code	**Definition**	**Further information**
/	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 Academy		
Code	**Definition**	**Further information**
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved / arranged by the school (not sport or work experience). The school is satisfied that the provider is suitably qualified with the necessary skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely e.g. transition visit to secondary school Classified as present.
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered. WISE Academies uses D code where the pupil is at the other provision. On days where the pupil is expected to attend WISE Academies then either a present mark or an absence code (where applicable) will be used. Classified as not a possible attendance.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Arranged by the Local Authority. Classified as present.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded and be an approved educational activity.

		Classified as present.
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Classified as present.
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement. Classified as present.
Authorised absence		
Code	**Definition**	**Further information**
C	Absence for an exceptional circumstance	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances (holiday or other recreational activity is **not** deemed to be an exceptional circumstance).
C1	Absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Where a LA or Justice of the Peace have issued a licence or where a pupil does not need a licence because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act.
C2	Part-time Timetable	Only for pupils of compulsory school age.
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded	Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (including time spent in hospital).
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer or for admission to another educational establishment.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Absent to attend an appointment.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to.

S	Study leave	e.g. Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a mobile child i.e has no fixed abode and the parent is required to travel around due to work purposes.

Unauthorised absence

Code	Definition	Further information
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided. An N code must be changed within 5 days).
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence or the reason has not been established.
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed but before the session had ended.

Classified as not a possible attendance

Code	Definition	Further information
Q	Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements	e.g. where a local authority has a legal duty to provide home to school travel arrangements but have not done so.
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil is not required to attend school	X will be used where the pupil is not expected to attend as part of their timetable. Where the pupil is expected to attend but does not, the Academy must use the appropriate absence code, not X.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The school is not within walking distance and the usual transport provided by school or LA is not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Where this has been caused by a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Where this is unavoidable and where the school considers it is not practicable to accommodate

		the class / pupil in those parts of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	e.g. adverse weather.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Police detention, youth detention or detained under a sentence of detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Where the pupil is well enough to attend but there are government rules or guidance in place to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend school (including restrictions on travel to and from school for this reason).
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Only to be used in emergency situation e.g. Bail conditions or the pupil is legally required to attend court.

Administrative Codes (code not collected for statistical purposes)

Code	Definition	Further information
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.

Appendix B - Escalation to Local Authority

At WISE Academies, we have a statutory duty under the Education Act (1996) to report attendance concerns to the Local Authority when parents fail to meet their legal obligations of ensuring that their child attends the school at which their child is registered to attend.

We value the importance of working together with all of our families to ensure that the pupils in our care are provided with the best opportunities available to them. We therefore place very high importance on school attendance. We recognise that there are some factors which may impact on a child attending school and will support in any way that we can. In most instances the matter can be resolved swiftly and without the need for further action.

However, there are some situations where support alone is not enough to ensure a child's attendance is maintained at the expected level (this may include where parents fail to engage with the support being offered) and we therefore have no option but to report the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of further action which may include: no further action, a Fixed Penalty Notice, a court order and/or prosecution of parents. **We do so as a last resort.**

In all instances where there is an identified risk of harm to a child caused by poor school attendance, which includes the unknown whereabouts of a pupil after all relevant checks have been carried out, then school will treat this as a safeguarding matter and will refer appropriately through the Local Authority safeguarding and child protection processes.

After receiving a referral for irregular school attendance, the Local Authority Attendance Team will consider each case on an individual basis and will decide on the appropriate next steps. A Notice to Improve may be issued along with a period of formal monitoring. If attendance does not improve and the parent does not engage with advice / support then the case will be referred to the relevant Department for further action which may include: a Fixed Penalty Notice, a court order and/or prosecution of parents.

Where appropriate, the case may be allocated to an Officer who will contact the parents to commence an initial investigation around all aspects of the child's attendance, including any mitigating factors. Advice and support will be offered.

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and Amendment 2013 and 2024, every aspect relating to the pupil's attendance, needs and home circumstances will be considered before the issuing of a penalty notice. No penalty notice will be issued without the issue of a relevant warning notice unless the absence is due to unauthorised leave of absence in term-time where support is not required (e.g. holiday).

A first Penalty Notice is £160 per parent per child which will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. If a Penalty Notice is issued for a second time to the same parent for the same pupil, there will be no discounted rate and the flat rate of £160 will apply. A third notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. If a third or subsequent offence is committed then this matter will be escalated by the Local Authority who will consider alternative action such as consideration of prosecution or another form of attendance legal intervention / order of the court.

The Local Authority will ensure this process is closely monitored and that recipients pay the relevant fine. In cases where the penalty is not paid within the defined period, action will be undertaken through the courts as required by legislation.

Please see our staged approach to referrals to the Local Authority overleaf. Please note that supportive interventions are offered, where appropriate, at every stage of the process. It is always our ambition that by working together with pupils and parents we will see a pupil's attendance improve to acceptable levels, therefore meaning enforcement action would not be necessary.

Stage 1 – Inform parents, School Monitoring and Interventions

Daily monitoring of absences, follow up of all unexplained absences or patterns of concern. Discussions with parents and pupils as appropriate. Home visits.

Weekly monitoring via Pupil Attendance Tracker

Parents informed of attendance concern

Internal monitoring considered for children under 96% (if appropriate)

Rewards and whole school promotion of attendance

If attendance drops, progress to Stage 2

Stage 2 – Formalised Action Plan / Meeting with parents (may include Trust Attendance Lead and/or LA Attendance Officer if applicable)

Parents invited to school for a formal planning meeting e.g. Attendance Contract / Attendance Support Plan to discuss attendance and possible further supportive interventions.

Action Plan agreed – all parties to sign.

If attendance improves, go back to Stage 1

If attendance drops, progress to Stage 3

NB: An Attendance Contract, Individual Attendance Plan or Formal Attendance Meeting, may be offered at any %, at the discretion of the Senior Attendance Champion, if there is a minimum of 1 unauthorised absence.

Stage 3 – Referral to Local Authority Attendance Team (if not already involved at Stage 2)

After Stage 1 and Stage 2 have not been successful, and after all sources of support have been offered, the school will make a referral to their relevant Local Authority Attendance Team:

Referral criteria: 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-week rolling period

School will inform parents of the referral in writing using the LA template letter.

If attendance improves, go back to Stage 1

If attendance drops, liaise with the Local Authority for next steps. Consider referrals to other services as appropriate.

Safeguarding links to poor attendance are considered throughout every stage and appropriate referrals will be made to child protection agencies if absence is deemed to be linked to a safeguarding issue.

Stages can be bypassed at any time if escalation is required more quickly, to effect positive change for the child.

Appendix C - Procedures for requesting leave of planned absence during term-time

See section 8 of the policy.

Leave of absence will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. “Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance” (DfE 2026). Parents and Carers should plan holidays and other avoidable absences around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

It is the parent’s responsibility, when submitting the request, to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances upon which the school will make their decision.

The school considers all requests for leave of absence on an individual basis and will take into account the reason for absence, the specific circumstances and context behind the request, child’s attendance levels and the length of absence being requested. The Headteacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made. If the Headteacher authorises the leave of absence, it is expected that the child’s attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

Step 1 – parent / carer requests leave of absence in term-time (in writing using the appropriate form) at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned absence:

Parent / carer completes and signs the request for leave of absence form and returns it to the school office. Any request should be made as soon as the absence is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The form can be requested from the school office (go to Step 2).

If the absence is taken without completion of the form, the absence will not be authorised (go straight to Step 4) and the form cannot be submitted retrospectively after the absence has taken place

Where additional days of absence are tagged onto the beginning or end of a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, school staff may request to see confirmation of travel dates / holiday booking etc.

Step 2 – school make decision:

School will consider each request on its individual merit including the reason why the leave has been requested. Parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Headteacher and/or Senior Attendance Champion for further discussion.

Step 3 – school inform parent in writing of their decision:

School will inform each parent / carer, in writing, of the decision e.g. request granted therefore no further action or request not authorised therefore referral to the Local Authority (if the national threshold is met).

Step 4 – absence not granted but pupil is absent:

If a pupil is absent for 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) – this could be consecutive or not consecutive sessions - within a 10-school week rolling period then the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If the child’s absence is unexplained then the school will take all necessary steps to establish the safe whereabouts of the child in line with statutory safeguarding and child protection procedures

FORM TO REQUEST LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM-TIME

Important information for Parents and Carers:

Please use this form to request any leave of planned absence and to notify the school of the reason.

After reading this information, should you wish to continue with your request, please complete all sections of this form (**one form per child**) and return to the school office, **at least 2 weeks in advance of the absence**. Information submitted after the absence cannot be considered retrospectively and therefore will not be authorised. In the event that a form is not submitted, the absence will be unauthorised.

Any absence from school will potentially have a detrimental effect on your child's learning and progress. Authorisation will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. **"Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance" (DfE 2026).** Parents and Carers should plan holidays and other avoidable absences around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term-time. The Law does however allow Headteachers to consider individual requests to authorise leave of absence when they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parent's responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made. If the Headteacher authorises the leave of absence, it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

With effect from 19.08.2024, the new National legislative framework states that:
The threshold for a Penalty Notice is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The absences do not need to be consecutive and can be a combination of holiday and/or any other form of unauthorised absence, such as arriving late after the register has closed. The 10-week period may also span different terms or school years.

A first Penalty Notice is £160 per parent per child which will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. If a Penalty Notice is issued for a second time to the same parent for the same pupil, there will be no discounted rate and the flat rate of £160 will apply. A third notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. If a third or subsequent offence is committed then this matter will be escalated by the Local Authority for alternative action which will include consideration of prosecution or another form of attendance legal intervention / order of the court.

Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Where additional days of absence are tagged onto the beginning or end of a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, school staff may request to see confirmation of travel dates / holiday booking etc

If the child's absence is unexplained then the school will take all necessary steps to establish the safe whereabouts of the child in line with statutory safeguarding and child protection procedures. This may include telephone calls, home visits and/or contact with other agencies, where appropriate.

Please read the important information for parents/carers overleaf before submitting this form.		
Name of Pupil:	**Date of Birth:**	**Year / Class:**
Address of pupil:	**Reason for Absence:**	
Why should this request be considered as an exceptional circumstance?		
First school day of absence (date):	**Last school day of absence (date):**	
Date the child will return to school:	**Number of school days requested (do not include weekends or school holidays):**	
Where will the pupil be living/staying for the duration of the absence?	**Full name of each parent(s) / carer(s) who are accompanying the child:**	
Do you have any supporting evidence / documents to support this application? YES / NO If yes, please attach it together with this form when submitted. Any evidence submitted at a later date will not be considered.		
Where both parents have Parental Responsibility, have both parents explicitly consented to the leave of absence being taken during term time (please answer yes or no)? If no, please explain why.		
Name & Date of Birth of Parent 1:	**Name & Date of Birth of Parent 2:**	
Address if different to pupil:	**Address if different to pupil:**	
Telephone Number:	**Telephone Number:**	
Signed:	**Signed:**	
Date of request:	**Date of request:**	

FOR SCHOOL USE:			
Date request received:	**Attendance 2026/27: %**	**Attendance 2025/26: %**	**Attendance 2024/25: %**
Have there been any previous requests made for term-time absence in a rolling 3 year period? **YES / NO**	**Has the request for leave been authorised?**		**YES / NO**
	If yes, how many sessions (half days)?		
Has the parent (s) been informed in writing of the decision and any further outcome?			**YES / NO**
Head Teacher's Signature:	**Date signed by Head Teacher:**		

Appendix D - Roles and Responsibilities

In the same way that safeguarding is everyone's business, so too is attendance. The following table highlights the main roles and responsibilities (linked to attendance) of each person:

Parents/Carers

- Ensure their child attends school every day, on time
- Call the school before 9.15am on the day of absence to provide the reason for absence and the expected date of return. Where length of absence is unknown then it is expected that parents will update school on each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child and keep school updated with any changes in contact details
- Ensure that non-urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. In the event of an appointment in school time being unavoidable then the parent must inform the school in advance of the appointment and the pupil should attend school before the appointment and return to school after the appointment where possible and where medical advice allows
- Provide supporting evidence of the reason for absence (if requested by the school)
- Inform the school in advance of any known reasons for absence. It is the Headteacher's decision whether or not to authorise an absence. Requests for leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
- Where a child has to be collected during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by an appropriate adult and by arrangement with the office staff. Children cannot be allowed to meet parents/carers off school property
- Actively work with school staff, Attendance Officer and relevant multi-agency staff to resolve any issue that may impact on attendance.

Pupils

Whilst it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school, it is extremely important for pupils to understand the importance of attendance and how they can each play a part in securing healthy patterns of attendance for themselves. Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
- Behave appropriately and treat others with respect. We strive to ensure that our school environment is a safe and happy place in which all children can enjoy their experience of school and therefore have aspirations for maintaining their own high levels of attendance.

Academy Staff & Attendance Champions

Every member of staff in the Academy and the Trust has some responsibility that is linked to attendance, whether that be: the leadership and governance aspects; the administrative processes; the provision of support to families in need of help; the provision of an exciting curriculum, fun lessons and effective behaviour management which enhance children's desire to come to school; the provision of a positive, safe and clean environment for all; providing our pupils with substantial meals; and most importantly, developing and building good relationships upon which a happy school is based.

Some staff will be assigned the role of an Attendance Champion who:

- Supporting pupils (nominated by the Headteacher) whose attendance is causing concern
- Building a rapport with the pupil and the pupil's family to build a sense of belonging
- Working alongside the school's Attendance Leads to address barriers to attendance
- Working with pupils in school to promote the importance of excellent attendance

The Local Governing Board / Board of Trustees

- Appointing a link governor / trustee for attendance
- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Ensuring that effective practice is shared across the Trust schools
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

- Appointing a Senior Attendance Champion who will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring and analysing school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Knowing which pupils are absent each day, including those children who are Looked After or subject to Child Protection, Child in Need or Team Around the Child procedures
- Communicating with parents about their child's attendance, especially where there is concern in attendance and ensuring that relevant help is provided to support improvement
- Working in partnership with key agencies if attendance / punctuality is of concern
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Drawing on the functions of the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Making decisions around the nature of absences and whether an absence should be authorised or not.

The Senior Attendance Champion

This is a named member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, responsible for:-

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision and whole school strategy for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis in order to ensure that procedures are effective and that targeted interventions can be used appropriately to improve attendance
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Maintaining regular contact with pupils and families during periods of absence – this role may be delegated to another nominated member of staff at the Headteacher's discretion.
- Ensuring all staff in school are trained in attendance and understand their responsibilities
- Supporting and leading (where appropriate) on Early Help Plans and/or Attendance Contracts where poor attendance is a significant factor
- Reporting to the Local Authority when attendance of an individual pupil causes concern and where the support offered has not resulted in an improvement.

The Senior Attendance Champion at our school is Adam Judson who can be contacted via 01670 812360.

The Attendance Officer [Lyndsay Cribbins]

- Working closely with the Senior Attendance Champion to monitor and analyse attendance data
- Having an oversight of data analysis in order to ensure that procedures are effective and that targeted interventions can be used appropriately to improve attendance

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and/or the Headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent and severe absence
- Supporting the school to implement interventions and supporting families and pupils to improve attendance. This may include liaising with other agencies as appropriate
- Working with pupils in school (where appropriate) to promote good attendance and help address any problems that may affect attendance
- Maintaining regular contact with children and families during periods of absence
- Supporting and leading (where appropriate) on Early Help Plans and/or Attendance Contracts where poor attendance is a significant factor
- Agreeing with the Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion when to refer to the Local Authority for issue of fixed-penalty notices and/or an escalated level of support or intervention from the Local Authority.

Class Teachers

- Taking the register twice a day to record attendance and absence. The register is taken at the start of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session, each day.
- To respond promptly to any issue raised that may impact on the attendance of any pupil in their class.
- To provide a welcoming classroom environment and an enriched and exciting curriculum.
- To initiate conversations with parents around the link between their child's attendance and attainment as well as other areas of school life such as friendships, social development and behaviour.

School Office Manager and Office Team

- Accurately preparing, managing and co-ordinating the use of the Arbor Management Information System for recording pupil attendance and absence
- Recording the reasons for absence using the appropriate codes and seeking advice from either the Headteacher, Senior Attendance Champion or Trust Attendance Lead (before the code is recorded) if there is any doubt as to which code is most appropriate
- Monitoring and tracking attendance patterns for all children and preparing relevant attendance reports when necessary
- Contacting all parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason for any unexplained absence
- Raising an immediate alert to the Senior Attendance Champion and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead if any absence is deemed to be of concern e.g. unusual pattern of absence, child is open to a Social Worker or involved with Early Help / Family Support interventions or absence is linked to a possible safeguarding issue
- Transfer calls from parents to the relevant member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Supporting the School's Lead for Attendance to manage the administration of attendance communication with all parents/carers e.g. texts, emails, letters, or any App currently used by the school to support communication
- Support the School Attendance Lead where requested, to update weekly attendance data for all pupils into the school's Pupil Attendance Tracker

Trust Attendance Lead

- Supporting and advising schools with any attendance-related matters
- Monitoring, analysing and tracking data of all schools in the Trust and working closely with the CEO, Regional Education Directors and Hub Leads, Headteachers, Senior Attendance Champions, Attendance Officers, Child & Family Welfare Officers and Office Managers where attendance patterns may be a concern
- Providing schools with relevant updates in policy, guidance and local/national best practice as they arise
- Liaising with Local Authority Attendance Teams to keep up to date with developments
- Arranging half-termly network meetings with those staff with key responsibilities for attendance
- Co-ordinating the Trust approach to improving attendance and reporting Trust-level attendance data to the CEO, Trustees and Regional Boards

- Updating the School Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Supporting schools to ensure their staff have access to relevant training in attendance matters
- Ensuring the CEO and Trust Hub Leads are kept up to date with developments and any areas of concern
- Researching appropriate resources and/or developing appropriate resources for schools to adopt in their approach to improving school attendance.