



Attendance Policy

Produced by	Suzanne Wilson HCAT Safeguarding Lead
Approved by	Trustees – Full Board Meeting
Date approved	02 July 2024
Review date	July 2025, or sooner if necessary.
Related Trust policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Child Protection • Data Protection • Looked After Children • RSHE • Special Educational Needs & Disability • Supporting Children with Medical Needs
Related national guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education • DfE: Preventing & tackling bullying. • DfE: Promoting & supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges. • DfE: Prevent Duty • DfE: Working together to improve school attendance
Availability	Accessible via the Trust's website, individual school's website and SharePoint

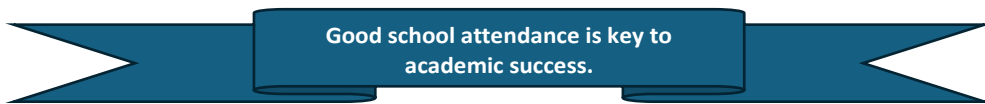
Hull Collaborative Academy Trust (HCAT) Ethos

HCAT's strapline is 'Children First'. This is central to the organisation's vision, ethos and culture and informs every decision we make. We are fully committed to ensuring pupils within the trust receive the highest quality education and acquire the necessary skills and characteristics to enable them to be happy and successful in life. We do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

HCAT sees attendance as more than just been physically present, but also playing an active part in the entire school community and Trust.

Our Trust believes the foundations of securing good attendance is that our schools are calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environments where all our pupils will want to be and ready to learn. We understand that there at times there can be barriers to good school attendance, and these can be complex in nature, but by building strong respectful relationships with both children and families, we are confident that all obstacles can be overcome.



Aims of the policy

Our policy recognises that high levels of school attendance are significant to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. It is an assumption so widely understood but insufficiently stated that children and young people need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind and achieving less in both primary and secondary school.

The overall aim of the attendance policy is to:

- High expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Keep children safe and ensure their welfare needs are met in accordance with safeguarding practice.
- Provide a stable environment in which our children can learn.
- Support parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children who are of compulsory school age and registered at the academy, attend school regularly.
- Maximise educational opportunities for all our pupils, ensuring there is a consistent and fair approach with equal opportunities for all.
- Encourage good habits of school attendance with a vision on early intervention by supporting families with children in the Early Years Foundation stage.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the necessary support to attend school.

Pupil expectations

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school on time.
- Attend school ready to learn.

Parent/carer expectations

One of the most important ways parents/carers can support the education of their child, including their social and emotional development is by ensuring they attend every day.

We ask families to work with us by:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly, on time and ready to learn.
- Informs the school on every day of absence. (See Annex I)
- Working with the school to improve their child's punctuality and/or absence.
- Avoiding general medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- Contacting a member of school staff if there are concerns or worries about their child's attendance.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance about any barriers to learning.

Staff responsibilities

- To understand that attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- To follow this policy and promote good school attendance.
- Being available for parents/carers who are concerned or worried about their child's attendance.
- Listening and supporting children and families if attendance becomes a concern.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date.
- Informing the school Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer of any concerns.

Attendance Champion responsibilities

The school Attendance Champion is an appointed member of the senior leadership team with the responsibility for:

- Taking an overall strategic role to promote the vision of good school attendance.
- To analyse attendance data and identify area of intervention and improvement.
- Monitoring attendance and assessing the impact of interventions.
- To use both local and national data to benchmark attendance.
- To support the Attendance Officer through statutory intervention in cases of persistent, or severely poor attendance.
- Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures.
- Creating, and when necessary, delivering targeted interventions and support to pupils and families.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Attendance Officers responsibilities

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Maintaining accurate attendance data.
- Following up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with first-day absence calls, or if necessary, home visits.
- Ensure that registers are taken twice daily: both at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Supporting pupils and families, plus if necessary, working with external services, to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance register.



Daily routine for following up absences

- Attendance registers are taken twice daily, both the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. On each occasion, the register will remain open for no longer than 30 minutes. Any pupil who arrives after registration but before the register closes will be marked as on-site, but late. Any pupil arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- If a pupil is absent, and no explanation for their absence has been received, the school will make a first day absence call to the parent/carer listed on the pupil's record, including, if necessary, the nominated emergency contact.
- Should the school be unable to make contact, a home visit may be undertaken on safeguarding grounds to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts. If no response is received, a calling card will be posted asking for the parent/carer to contact the school as soon as possible.
- If required, contact may be made with any other agency currently working with the pupil and/or family (eg Social Worker, Early Help worker, Virtual Head of School for Children Looked After, Youth Offending Team etc).

Procedures for power or network failure

In the event of the school network fails, manual attendance registers will be used for both morning and afternoon registration. Completed registers will be returned to the school office and uploaded to the system once the problem has been resolved.

Types of absence

Any absence affects the pattern of pupil's schooling and regular absence will hinder their learning. Ensuring regular attendance is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence must be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Each half day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for genuine reason, such as illness, or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absences can lead to the ultimately lead to the school referring to the Local Authority Attendance Support Team, and possible legal proceedings.

Persistent absence is when a pupil misses 10% or more school across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absences. When a pupil is defined as persistently absent, the school will work with parents, the pupil, Local Authority Attendance Support Team, plus any other identified agencies to formulate a targeted support plan with an aim of removing any barriers to attendance and reengage the pupil.

Severely absent is when a pupil has missed 50% or more schooling. In these circumstances, we recognise that pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and will therefore need more intensive support from a range of agencies.

Punctuality

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents/carers of pupils who are

developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting to with the Attendance Officer, and if necessary, the Attendance Champion. The purpose of the meeting will be to gain a better understanding of why this is happening, plus consider what additional support can be offered to help the child arrive on time.

- Pupils must be in class at the beginning of the school day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.
- Any pupil who arrives after registration but before the register closes will be marked as on-site, but late – Code L. Any pupil arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence – Code U.
- Due to site security, any pupil arriving after the register has closed will have to enter via main reception where their attendance will be recorded accordingly by Office staff. If necessary, pupil will be escorted to their class.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised coded of 'M'. Proof of the appointment may be required prior to the appointment or on arrival at school.

We advise parents/carer that where possible all doctors and dental appointments be made outside of school hours or alternatively during school holidays. However, there is an acceptance that not all appointments can be pre-planned, especially ones for medical specialist or hospital treatment. Therefore, in these circumstances, we may ask parents/carers to provide a copy of the appointment letter.



Barrier to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child all working together. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We may use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, Early Help or the relevant Local Authority Attendance Support Team. Any external agencies supporting the pupil or family may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

We recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. However, our high expectations of attendance remain, and we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We will always discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

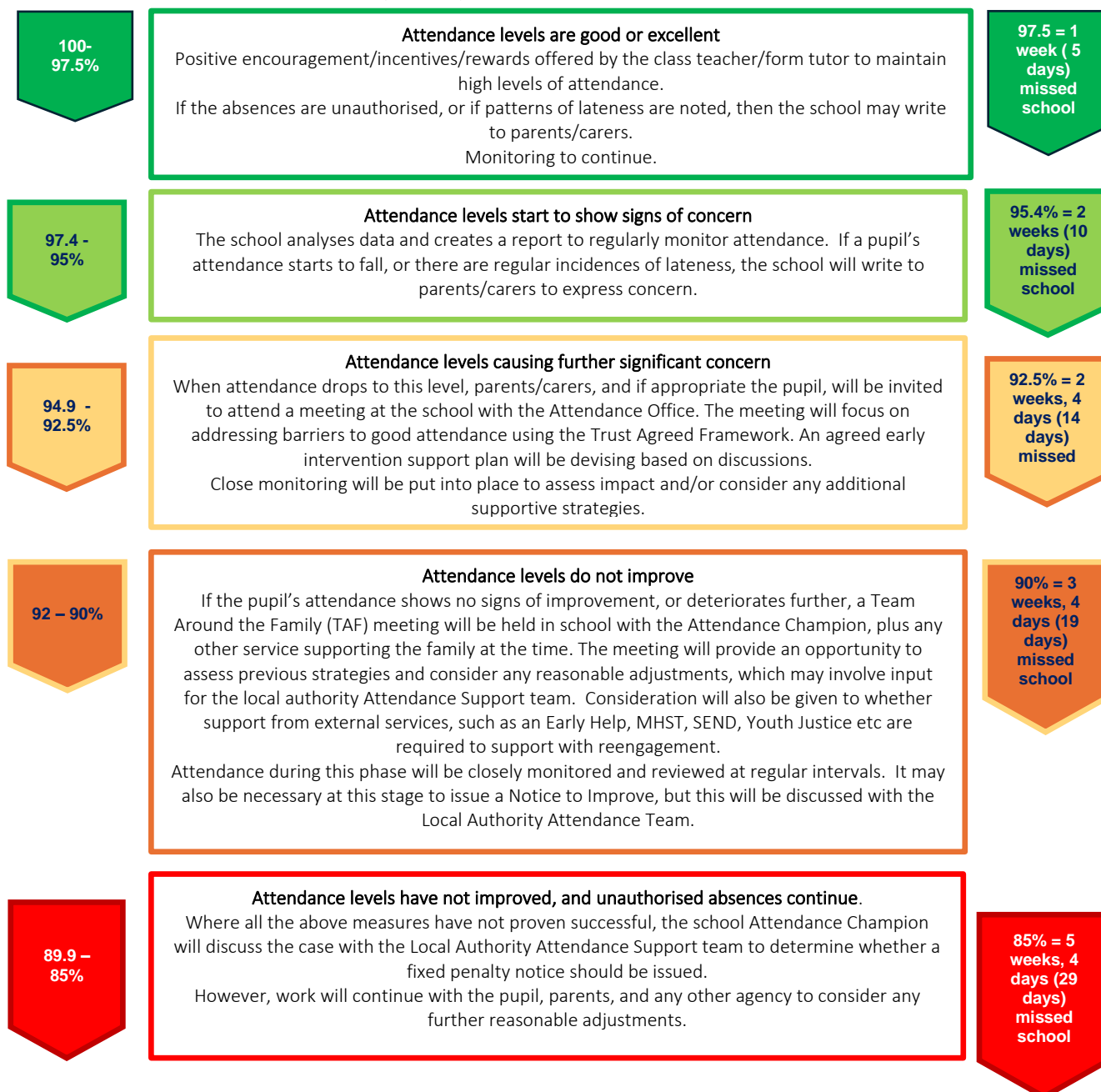
Intervention strategies

Attendance is a key priority for all our schools which is actively monitored to ensure we are providing the right support at the right time for any pupil who may be encountering barriers to good attendance.

We treat every pupil individually and understand that each case may take a different route depending on the barriers, needs of the family and any other circumstances which may be impacting on regular attendance.

Our approaches are supportive and use legal interventions as a last resort.

Below is the basis of our intervention pathway.



Legal intervention

Our schools will endeavour to work with families to prevent any legal action being taken. We will always ensure that sufficient time is given to allow any strategy the opportunity to be successful. However, in situation where no improvements are made, despite best efforts, or there is a lack of engagement, the school will consider using legal interventions before proceeding to penalty notices or prosecutions.

Attendance Contracts	Attendance Contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence. There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.
Notice to improve	A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. Notice to Improve are issued in line with processes set out in the Local Code of Conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.
Penalty Notice	Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. The threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. 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) or can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week). The 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). Only two penalty notices can be issued to same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period. *
Attendance Prosecution	Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents.

*The first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days but reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within 3 years of the date of issues of the first. In these circumstances alternative action may be taken, including other attendance legal interventions, or prosecution.

Granting leave of absence

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, such as participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad, attending an interview, study leave or a time-limited part time timetable. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The Trust does not consider absence for the purposes of family holidays, or other leisure activity to be an exceptional circumstance, but the final decision remains with the Headteacher.

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

Children who are absent due to illness

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, earaches, headache we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the absence procedures. It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In most cases, a parent's explanation of their child's illness can be accepted without question or concern. The school will mark the absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has genuine concerns, or reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. In these circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, which may include a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The school will never ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

All schools must notify their respective local authority of any compulsory school aged child who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for continuous period of sickness in a school year. This requirement will assist the local authority in formulating provision to ensure continuity of education for the child who cannot attend because of health needs.

Children who are absent from school

Children are best protected by regularly attending school where they will be safe from harm and where there are professionals to monitor their well-being.

Our school has clear procedures for managing unauthorised absences, which helps identify any possible emerging patterns of abuse or neglect, including all forms of exploitation.

Where we have concerns that a child is missing from education, we will follow the local authority protocols and refer to the respective Attendance Support Team who will make reasonable efforts to establish the pupil's whereabouts. The pupil will not be removed from our school rolls until notified by the Local Authority that it is appropriate to do so.

Pupils with a Social Worker

Social workers and Virtual School Heads have certain duties set out by the Government with regards to the attendance of pupils with a social worker.

To facilitate effective working, we will inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from the school or if we have concerns regarding a child's absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have clear line of sight for the attendance of pupils with a Social Worker and will take swift action where attendance of any such pupil, is a concern.

Part-time timetables

All compulsory aged children are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and special educational needs. Only in an exceptional circumstance, where it is the pupil's best interest, would a part-time timetable be considered. This intervention should not be used as an approach to manage pupil's behaviour.

If a part time timetable is authorised, the school must notify both the Trust's Safeguarding Lead, plus the respective Local Authority. A period when the child is not in school, must be recorded as an authorised absence (Code C2).

All schools will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead has been consulted, a risk assessment carried out and suitably robust arrangements are in place to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of any pupil on a part time timetable.

All part time timetables are regularly reviewed, and are only used for limited periods, after which the pupil is expected to return to full time.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)

The school will ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made for pupils with additional needs (defined as those with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'). This may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is provided, as well as providing auxiliary aids and equipment, or tailored services. The school recognises that some pupils with additional needs may need support to attend regularly and that, for some pupils, they may have more absence due to their disability, for example due to attending medical appointments. The school will ensure that pupils are not penalised for absence related to their additional needs and will support access support from external agencies where appropriate.

Alternative Provision

Schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Where this is the case, they will have reciprocal arrangements in place with the alternative provider to ascertain attendance information. This should be provided daily. All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up by the home school in a swift and timely manner.

The school will use the appropriate code (B) to indicate that the child is accessing alternative provision, thus demonstrating the school has confirmed that the education is supervised, and appropriate measures are in place to safeguard children.

Bullying/Harassment

Our schools do not condone bullying or harassment by pupils, members of staff or parents. If any form of this behaviour occurs, it will be dealt with as a very serious matter. No one should feel they cannot attend school for fear of being bullied or harassed.

Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation

Children who go missing or are persistently absent from school may be an indicator of exploitation, especially if other key factors are also present.

Some other potential signs of criminal or sexual exploitation are:

- missing from home and /or being found out-of-area
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- leaving home / care without explanation
- suspicion of physical or sexual assault / unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results / performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

At HCAT we monitor absenteeism daily to ascertain pupil's whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. We will work endlessly with all statutory and non-statutory agencies, including parents/carer to protect any child at risk or at possibly risk of this form of abuse.

If a class teacher or tutor is concerned about a child who is regularly absent and presents with any of the signs listed above, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, as per the school's Child Protection policy.

Young carers

The school recognises that pupils who are Young Carers may have caring responsibilities that impact on their punctuality and/or attendance. Where this is the case, the school will work with the pupil and family to encourage them to access appropriate support, including direct support from Young Carers and any other support the pupil and family may need; the school will also provide support in school where appropriate.

Religious observance

HCAT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends. In these circumstances, the school will only authorise the day of the observation using Code R and the authorisation of any additional days will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Signing Out

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedures for releasing children when parents/carers have made a request, or the child is too ill to remain in school. The child(ren) can only be released to a parent or authorised person. When the authorised person arrives, the school office is responsible for ensuring the completion of the 'signing out' book. The school office will then input the appropriate absent code on the electronic register, if appropriate. However, if a child leaves the school site, with an authorised adult, after either the morning or afternoon register has been taken, the original mark will remain, and the signing in/out book will be referred to in the event of an evacuation to ensure all pupils can be accounted for.

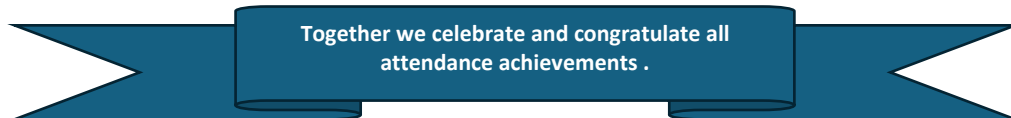
NB: If there is a change to the regular authorised adult, for any reason, please notify the staff by informing them as soon as possible either at the door in the morning or via a phone call to the school office.

Promoting good attendance

We celebrate good attendance throughout the year in various ways, this encourages commitment to learning.

Examples include:

- Celebration assemblies
- Attendance displays
- Individual, or class rewards for excellent or improved attendance
- Certificates
- Letters to parents, and/or pupils.



Whole school monitoring

Any pupils with high levels of unauthorised absences, regular days off or long period of absence will be investigated by the school's Attendance Champion.

Our internal monitoring may also identify one or more specific groups of pupils at the school who have levels of absence higher than both local and national average for that group, which will result in the school taking appropriate action. The internal monitoring system will focus on, amongst others, the following groups:

- Looked after children
- Free school meals eligibility
- Gender
- Young Carers
- Persistent Absentees
- Pupils with a social worker
- Years groups
- First language
- SEND

Absences are monitored regularly by the School Attendance Champion to identify any emerging patterns, trends or concerns which require swift interventions.

Decision to Home Educate

Where a parent/carer expresses their intention to remove their child from school with a view to educating at home, the schools, along with other key professionals will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. Ideally, we aim for this to take place before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child.

This process is particularly important where a pupil has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care plan local authorities will need to review the plan, working closely with parents and carers.

Parents must inform the school in writing that they intend to educate their child at home. Once the letter of notification, written by the parent/carer, to home educate has been received, the school will immediately notify the Local Authority (LA). The pupil's name will not be removed from the school's register until authorisation has been granted by the LA.

We will never seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, we will follow the relevant legislation and have regard to the statutory guidance. If a pupil has a poor attendance record, the school will seek to address the issues behind the barrier and use the other interventions, if appropriate.

Reviewing and monitoring

Good school attendance is built upon a culture of support, guidance, and respectful challenge. Trustee and Trust Leaders will ensure that all schools fulfil the expectation outlined within this policy, and in accordance with statutory national guidance.

Whole trust attendance data will be regular monitored by Trust Leaders, and information will be presented and discussed at the Trust's School Improvement Committees termly. Furthermore, individual school will share data at their respective Local Tier Board meetings, which will be presented in a format which clearly shows trends, plus also actions being taken.

Trustees will ensure that all staff receive adequate training, which includes, as a minimum, understanding the importance of good school attendance, the role everyone plays to promote and encourage good attendance, plus how the school will work with partners to remove barriers to good attendance.

Attendance codes & description, as per Working together to improve school attendance

Code	Description
∧	Present at school (/ = morning session \ = afternoon session).
B	Attending another approved educational activity.
C	Leave of absence of exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in regulated performance and undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable.
D	Dual registered at another school.
E	Suspended or permanently exclude and no alternative provision made.
G	Holiday not granted by school.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence for purpose of attending an interview either for employment or admission to another educational institution.
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.
L	Late arrival before the register closed.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.
P	Participating in a sporting activity.
Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements.
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for public examination.
T	Parent travelling for occupational purpose.
U	Arrived in school after the register closed.
V	Attending an educational visit or trip.
W	Attending work experience
X	Non-compulsory school aged pupil not required to attend school.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register.
#	Planned whole school closure.

Key

Present
Authorised
Unauthorised
Administrative codes

Table of changes

Date	Change or inclusion
September 2022	The following sections have added or changed following the publication of the DfE Working together to improve school attendance: Sept 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for following up absences. • Promoting good attendance • Part-time timetables • Decision to Home Educate.
September 2023	The following sections have added or changed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who are absent from school • Pupils with a social worker • Special Educational Needs & Disability • Young Carers
July 2024	Several changes have been made to the policy to reflect DfE statutory guidance, and Local Authority Code of Conduct.