Name of Policy	Attendance Policy
Responsible Body	Trust
Responsible Person	CEO
Review Committee	Quality of Education
Last review date	Autumn 2024
Next review date	Autumn 2025
Revisions at last review	New Trust policy to align with newly published DfE statutory guidance, [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#)

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1.   Introduction

Highfield Middle School recognises that students will only benefit fully from their education if they attend school regularly and on time. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Attendance will be maximised through an effective partnership between students, their parents/carers and the school.

Cheviot Learning Trust will ensure that this partnership and associated actions are undertaken rigorously; monitoring and evaluating action and impact through regular analysis of data and review of practice.

2.   Scope

This policy is effective for all schools within Cheviot Learning Trust.

3.   Principles

To manage and improve attendance effectively we will:
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, students and parents understand
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
- Be particularly mindful of students absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support

4.   Aims and Objectives

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the headteacher at our school works together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all students are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and Highfield Middle School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. We recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of our Trust and school ethos and culture.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicating these regularly to students and parents through all available channels
- Providing an environment for students in which they feel valued and safe
- Promoting a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance; including through rewarding and incentivising good attendance
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support with their attendance and putting effective strategies in place; offering tiered/graduated support in order to improve the attendance of identified students
- Monitoring the impact of any intervention(s) and making adjustments where necessary in discussion with the student, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family
- Working in partnership with students and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place
- Prioritising attendance in strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting students with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
- Making referrals to services and organisations that can provide support to address and overcome barriers outside of the school's control
- Communicating attendance expectations broadly and on an individual basis with families, providing opportunities to meet with families to understand barriers to attendance and explaining the help that is available to avoid the need for legal intervention or consequences
- Working closely with the Local Authority to address Persistent and Severe Absenteeism where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with by:
  - Putting formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract or an education supervision order

- ○ Issuing a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour
- ○ Intensifying support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance)
- ○ Prosecuting parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support
- Setting targets for improvement to improve the attendance of individual students, cohorts and the whole school
- Showing understanding of our community's religious and cultural beliefs and the significance of religious observance to our students

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

5.   Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures.

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Children missing education

- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Elective Home Education](#)

In addition, this policy aligns with the Northumberland County Council Education Welfare Team local code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for school absence, 2024.

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 The Board of Trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the trust has a clear attendance policy based on the most recent
- statutory guidance
- Ensuring that trust leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensuring that trust leaders provide high quality training in relation to attendance procedures specific to each individuals roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring that records of this training are maintained
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust's policies and
- ethos
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Holding trust leaders to account for the implementation of this policy

6.2 The Executive Team

The executive team is responsible for:
- Designing an attendance strategy with the aim of improving attendance across all schools within the trust
- Ensuring that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Monitoring school compliance with statutory duties and trust strategy
- Making sure that the attendance strategy is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance
- Ensuring each school has a designated attendance champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities

- Ensuring that headteachers and the designated attendance champion receive training and professional development to deploy attendance systems effectively
- Monitoring attendance figures for individual schools: regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

6.3   The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:
- Establishing a culture where high attendance is expected and accepted as the norm
- Expecting good attendance and punctuality from all students and ensuring that all students understand the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring school compliance with statutory duties and consistency in the implementation of trust strategy
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance
- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training and professional development to deploy attendance systems effectively
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual students and the student body as a whole
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of attendance to identify, report and support students whose attendance is, or has become, a concern
- Sharing good practice in relation to attendance management across the trust's family of schools and the wider sector (where appropriate)
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends
- Reporting attendance figures to the school governing board and the trust, recognising areas of strength and areas for further improvement
- Ensuring that the attendance policy is easily accessible to staff, pupils, and
- parents, including being published on the school's website
- Providing a copy of the attendance policy to parents with any initial information when students join the school and reminding parents of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated
- Liaising with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the trust or local authority and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent
- Providing appropriate support for all students, particularly those for whom regular attendance can be more challenging e.g. students with medical

conditions, mental health problems and special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

- Ensuring the trust's attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognising the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance (Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Ensuring that the local authority is notified of any student who is regularly absent from the school (where absences amount to more than 10 or more days, either consecutively or irregularly and have been unauthorised)
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record
- Ensuring that all appropriate staff are aware of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's services and other statutory safeguarding partners
- Developing and implementing strategies to support students to return successfully to school after lengthy or unavoidable periods of absence
- Overseeing any arrangements where students are not attending the school on a full-time basis
- Considering parental requests for term time absences and replying in a timely
- fashion

6.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader/attendance champion is responsible for:
- Implementing the attendance policy with the headteacher
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

6.5 The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:
- Ensuring that all attendance and absence data is recorded accurately

- Tracking and following up on absence and poor punctuality
- Providing appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice
- Carrying out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable students
- Identifying any absences that are not explained for each session and contacting parents to understand why and when the student will return
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement
- Identifying students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals
- Undertaking home visits in line with safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe
- Implementing children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

6.6   School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:
- Take calls from parents/carers [and pupils] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers [and pupils] to the attendance officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

6.7   The school governing board

The school governing board is responsible for:
- Monitoring school attendance against national data (and other Trust schools)
- Monitoring the attendance of groups, particularly disadvantaged students and those with SEND
- Providing challenge and support to school leaders in order to improve attendance for all groups

6.8   School staff

School staff are responsible for:
- Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school
- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance

- Implementing the trust's policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently
- Where applicable, ensuring that the registers are taken as directed and that they are accurate and up to-date
- Using available data to mentor and support students to improve their attendance
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns
- Using CPOMs to report safeguarding concerns which may also have a link to attendance
- Emphasising to students the importance of punctuality and good attendance
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy
- Emphasising the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Applying rewards and sanctions consistently

6.9 Parents/Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose child is registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that, whenever possible, their child attends and stays at school every day that it is open.

Parents are responsible for:
- Ensuring that their children are punctual and that they attend the school each day it is open, dressed in full uniform
- Instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- Informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9:15am providing the school with an explanation for the absence
- Providing, where possible, contact details for at least two adults
- Informing the school of any changes to their contact details
- Booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible#
- Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and doing so in advance using the correct form
- Actively supporting the work of the school
- Taking an active interest in their child's education, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings
- Working in partnership with the school, where applicable, to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engaging with the support offered by the school to prevent the need for more formal support

- Proactively engaging with formal support and external agencies where it is needed to prevent the need for legal intervention
- Treating staff with respect

6.10   Students

Students are expected to:
- Attend school every day, on time
- Report to the school office if they arrive after registration
- Engage positively with staff to improve their attendance
- Report any difficulties they are having in attending school
- Treat staff with respect

7.   Recording attendance

7.1   Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:
- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:
- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Key Information

Start of the school day	8:55am
End of the school day	3:35pm
School attendance officer	Angela Robinson

In the event that your child will not be in school for the start of the school day for any reason (absence or lateness), please notify the school as soon as possible (including the reason for absence), and no later than 9:00 am on the day of the absence/lateness.

Either by telephone on 01661 833922
Email info@hms.cheviotlt.co.uk
Or message via MCAS

Pupils are expected to attend the school for the full duration of the school day. If you know your child will need to leave school early for any reason, please notify the school as soon as possible (including the reason for leaving early).

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:25am
The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:45pm

7.2   Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible.

Either by telephone on 01661 833922
Email info@hms.cheviotlt.co.uk
Or message via MCAS

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

7.3   Planned absence

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

Details should be sent via Email info@hms.cheviotlt.co.uk

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

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

7.4   Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

We will speak with parents where issues of ongoing lateness arise. Parents should note that if a pupil arrives more than 30 minutes late, this may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and as such may lead to further action and possibly the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

7.5   Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:
- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police or children's services

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate.

Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school will always report the absence to the local authority. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via written reports.

8.   Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1   Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:
- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events that are unavoidable.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. This should be in the form of an email addressed for the attention of the headteacher.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):
- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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

8.2 Sanctions

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

Penalty notices

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:
- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The Trust/school will report attendance concerns to the local authority according to the thresholds they have established. Information regarding this is available at https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/Looked%20after%20children/A-guide-to-non-school-attendance.pdf

9.   Strategies for promoting attendance

Regular assemblies that focus on attendance

1/2 termly rewards for the classes with the highest attendance

Weekly house points to reward those with 100% weekly attendance.

Agreed strategies with other local schools

"100 Club" prize draw 4 times annually

10. Attendance monitoring

We regularly monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality data), and systematically analyse it. This includes identifying and monitoring patterns in attendance across schools in the trust.

10.1 Monitoring attendance

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

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

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

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

10.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:
- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the school governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

10.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

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

11. Links with other policies/guidance

This policy links to the following policies:
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Appendix A: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		

Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: · In police detention · Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		· Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

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

Appendix B: School Process

The Department for Education has published the school expectations for managing school attendance, below is a guide for when schools could send formal communication to parents/carers. All methods of communication should be recorded for tracking purposes.

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.	**Send Letter 1 – setting out the school's expectations**
Monitor – 95% Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort levels) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.	**Send Letter 2 – Attendance concern**
Listen and understand When a pattern is spotted, discuss it with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree on how all partners can work together to resolve them.	**Send Letter 3 – Medical information request**
Facilitate support Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include early help or a whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.	**Engage with parents to discuss any potential barriers preventing regular attendance**

Formalise support – 92 % 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.	**Send Letter 4 & 5 – Invitation to discuss an attendance contract**
Enforce – 90% Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. Where prosecution has already been successfully granted and improvement is not made, schools can refer to the children's services for attendance that falls below 50%. Schools should contact their local authority attendance team for further support. In cases where there is little or no engagement and parents are repeatedly contacting the school to report illness/medical requirements, schools should consider sending the letter to the GP/Medical Professional.	**Start a legal monitoring process with the local authority** **Consider re-sending Letter 3 – medical information request if no response at stage 3**
Celebrate Schools should celebrate attendance regularly at the end of each half term. You should consider sending both the	**Use a celebration letter or end-of-term improvement letter**

celebration messages out to those who have achieved 100% and to those who have improved.	