

Shires MAT Attendance Policy 2025-2026

Policy Name: Shires MAT Attendance Policy 2025-26	Policy Reference: MAT-SP21
Owner/Reviewer: Mr Jack Worton, MAT Safeguarding Lead	Review Date:
Approved by: Mr Lee Gray, MAT CEO	Approval Date:
Mr Mike Thake, Chair of Trust Board 	Review Frequency: Annually
	Date of Next Review: Autumn Term 2026
Local Details – Key Contacts, Appendices Reviewed:	Review Date: Sept 2025
Approved by Local Governance Committee	Approval Date: Sept 2025

Version	Date	Details
1.0	July 2023	Policy written for the MAT
2.0	July 2024	Policy reviewed inline with DFE Guidance Changes for Sept 2024

Safeguarding Statement The Shires Multi Academy Trust holds safeguarding at the core of its culture and fully recognises the risks associated with poor attendance. It is therefore policy and procedure that pastoral, safeguarding and attendance teams work in constant liaison through supportive, targeted and relentless intervention to reduce and alleviate any potential concerns, through effective early help and intervention.

Introduction

Our expectation is for all students to have 100% attendance and 100% punctuality to school and all lessons. There is strong statistical evidence to show that students who achieve this are more successful in school, make greater progress and that they are more likely to achieve their academic potential. The table below further highlights the link between attendance and learning:

If attendance over the school year is...	...the student will miss this many days	...and this many lessons
100%	0	0
95%	10	50
90%	19	95
85%	29	145
80%	39	195
75%	49	245
70%	58	290

In addition to the academic reasons for attendance, national research also shows:

- Children with poor attendance make less progress than their peers.
- Children with poor attendance struggle to make strong social connections and friendships
- Children with poor attendance are more at risk of safeguarding issues including bullying.

The Shires Multi Academy Trust (MAT) values achievement of every kind and believes that we all respond well to having high expectations placed upon us.

This policy has been written in line with the following guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Responsibilities

Although the legal responsibility for regular attendance at school rests with parents/carers, we regard the encouragement of good standards of attendance as a partnership with families designed to support the development of each individual student's potential.

If parents/carers have any concerns about their son/daughter's attendance or are concerned that there may be underlying reasons for him/her failing to attend school, then they should contact the attendance officer.

We ask that parents/carers support us by:

- not letting their son/daughter(s) take time off school for minor ailments.
- arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays.
- not taking holidays during term time, (see guidance on this below).
- ensuring that their son/daughter attends punctually at the beginning of every day.
- ringing or emailing by 9:00am on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the student will return (we have a dedicated section of our phone line for this purpose). We ask that this procedure is repeated for any subsequent days' absence.
- sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on the student's return to school after an illness (this is a legal requirement).
- keeping us informed by telephone, letter or email on every subsequent day of absence after the first day.
- letting us know if there is any on-going medical reason that prevents their son/daughter attending school.

Each school will:

- follow up all first day unexplained absences by phone call / email / text as soon as possible.
- continue to monitor the absence of a student who does not subsequently return to school as indicated with no explanation, treating this as a safeguarding concern.
- remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality via letters, newsletters and the school website.
- publish students' attendance rate as part of their school reports.
- inform parents/carers if we have concerns regarding a student's attendance.
- challenge regular lateness.
- refer any serious attendance concerns to the Local Authority and their Education Welfare Service.
- in extreme cases, work with the appropriate authorities and exercise all possible powers we have to enforce attendance including prosecution.
- inform the local authority and discuss arrangements for the education of students who are likely to be absent for 10 days or more.
- communicate with the local authority and alternative education providers to support students with medical needs.
- Implement any early help or further support as necessary
- Utilise expertise across the school to reduce barriers to poor attendance

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Legally schools are required to distinguish and report on authorised and unauthorised student absence.

Lates and Punctuality

We believe that students need to develop good habits and be on time for school and every lesson. Schools will sanction students who are late, without good reason, in line with locally agreed protocols. Persistent lateness can lead to fixed penalty notices for parents/carers.

The DfE provides the following guidance on registration and coding lates:

'Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.'

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. (Working together to improve school attendance)

Late arrival before the register has closed will be marked as Code L and will count as present. A student arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with Code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Authorised Absence

A student's absence will be treated as authorised if he/she is unable to attend school due to illness, medical, dental treatment, the death of a close family member or where permission has been granted by the headteacher. Other authorised circumstances such as student study leave, work experience and educational visits will be entered by the school.

Parents/carers should note that, ideally, all medical and dental appointments should be arranged for after school so that students do not miss any lessons. Where this proves to be impossible then students should bring an appointment card to school and follow procedures in the relevant school's appendix in order to be granted leave of absence during the day. The student should then sign out at reception before leaving the school. In order that we might be sure of the whereabouts and safety of our students we ask that parents/carers ring the relevant school by 9:00am on the morning of the first day of absence to notify us of the situation as described above.

On return to school, written communication by the parents/carers is required to confirm the reason for absence and the dates involved. We ask that this is sent to the school office via email or in person.

In cases of long-term absence or where a student's attendance is causing concern, doctor's notes or other medical evidence will be requested and recorded.

Unauthorised Absence

If an absence cannot be authorised or a reason for absence is not forthcoming, the absence will be treated as unauthorised and parents/carers will be contacted by the school in order to seek a valid reason. It is at the school's discretion as to whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Extended Periods of Absence (including Holidays)

Please note, under recent amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations, 2006, headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All applications are assessed on an individual basis by each headteacher. In such exceptional circumstances, headteachers determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted. The government has not defined the 'exceptional circumstances' referred to in the amended regulations. It is for the headteacher to decide what is considered as exceptional circumstances. However, under these amendments, family holidays do **NOT** qualify as exceptional circumstances. However, leave to attend a high-level sporting commitment or to travel with the family due to the illness of a close family member may be deemed as exceptional circumstances. The schools' term dates are published a year in advance and are made available on their websites in the expectation that parents/carers will ensure that holidays are taken during school holiday times.

Formal Action / Penalty Notices for absences including: (Holidays, Lateness after registers close and any other unauthorised absence.

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised 57 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).

The strongest factor in underperformance at SATS, GCSE and A Level is irregular or poor attendance and it is our belief that we would be failing in our responsibility if we sanctioned time off school in all but the most exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers are therefore asked to respect these new regulations under which we must now work, and that if there is a need to take your son/daughter out of school during term time, it must be made very clear in the request how the circumstances are exceptional. In such circumstances, requests for the school to authorise absence should be made by writing to the headteacher in advance, not in retrospect.

Applications for leave of absence, which are made and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against parents/carers, by Penalty Notice, if the student is absent from school during that period.

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case? If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged

with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked. If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.

- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment? If the answer to those questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices:

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be 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 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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

The payment must be paid directly to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice. 61

- If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made. 199. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.
- The penalty notice system is not a money making scheme and local authorities should not have income targets. Any revenues collected through the system must be ringfenced for attendance.
- Monies collected should first be used for administration of the penalty notice system and prosecution. Any surplus left after this should be spent on attendance support. In practice, support means any other activity to improve attendance short of a penalty notice or prosecution in line with this guidance. This revenue should not be considered part of wider local authority funding and relied upon to fund the core attendance expectations of the local authority or be pooled in wider legal services budgets or allocated outside the local authority's attendance functions. Any remaining surplus at the end of the year must be paid to the Secretary of State

Work and absence

Every lesson missed is an opportunity missed. Although every effort is made to support students in catching up with work missed, simply cannot be made up, so students inevitably lose out and their progress will be affected.

- Students who have permission to be absent from school (see above) are expected to get work in advance from teachers and make up any written work missed as soon as they can.
- Students who are off school for an extended length of time may obtain work to complete during their absence. This may be obtained by contacting the relevant pastoral leader.
- Students who are absent without notice (e.g. due to illness) are expected to complete all work missed. We ask that parents/carers also monitor this, to ensure all work is completed.

Request for leave of absence

If medical or dental appointments have to be made in school time, an appointment card or a letter from parents/carers should be shown to the Attendance Officer at least 48 hours prior to the day concerned and a pass will be issued.

Parent/carers who would like to request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should write a letter to the headteacher in advance.

Part-time timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package:

- A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution.
- Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.
- A review must take place every two weeks.
- There must be documented evidence of parent/carer agreement to the part-time timetable, effectively agreeing to supervise the student when not in school

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

Schools must inform the Local Authority, through the secure portal, of the initial arrangements for part-time timetables for all students and upon each review where the arrangements continue.

Students attending Off-site Provision-eg Alternative Provision, MET, work experience etc

All students who attend an off-site provision are members of the student community (and often vulnerable) and schools must ensure they are safeguarded at all times. Therefore, schools will:

- always make a daily phone call to the off-site provider to check if a student is present or absent;
- follow the same protocols as with other student absences by also contacting the parents/carers, in addition to any contact that the off-site provider may also make to pursue the reason for absence; and
- prioritise a home visit (where contact cannot be established with the parent/carer) to ensure the student is safe and well by the end of day 2.

Elective Home Education and Deregistration

The 1996 Education Act states that, *'it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate full-time education for their children of compulsory school age'*. Parents/carers can carry out this duty by ensuring their child attends school or parents/carers may decide to take on the duty to educate their child/children themselves and educate them at home – this is called Elective Home Education.

We respect the right of parents/carers to educate their child at home, however, are aware that sometimes this is a response to dissatisfaction with school or other difficulty. We encourage parents/carers to discuss concerns with appropriate school leaders in order to allow the opportunity to find solutions and provide support.

On receipt of a written request to home educate, school leaders must complete all actions in line with the latest Worcestershire guidance, including documenting any meetings/interventions after elective home education has been discussed. The letter and learner profile (including risk assessment) and, where possible, the elective home education checklist must be sent to the Local Authority, through the secure portal, within 5 working days of the request being made.

In addition, an appropriate member of school staff will contact a family 3 weeks after the decision to home educate to offer further support or to enable the speedy process of readmission if a return is requested.

The numbers of students moving to home education is closely monitored by school leaders, MAT leaders and by Trustees. Schools must keep detailed records regarding elective home education and this is scrutinised regularly to ensure all legal processes and best practice guidelines are met.

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll only under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties. Students must not be deleted from the school roll without authorisation from the headteacher.

Where students have moved out of area, students are only deleted from the register when the school is satisfied that the student has been added to the register of a new provider. In cases where this cannot be established, schools must follow the 'de-rolling checklist' provided by the Local Authority.

If, having completed the checks, the student's whereabouts have not been determined, the school may remove the student from roll after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence. The school should then immediately:

- Upload the student's CTF file to the LA data base entering the appropriate code
- Inform the Local Authority using the secure portal

Schools must keep detailed records of the actions taken as part of the de-rolling checklist.

After a permanent exclusion, schools must ensure that a student's name is removed from the school admissions register if 15 school days have passed since the parents/carers were notified of the governing board's decision to not reinstate the students and no application has been made for an independent review panel; or the parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.

Where an application for an independent review panel has been made within 15 school days, the school must wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the governing board has completed any reconsideration that the panel has recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing a pupil's name from the register. Schools must inform the Local Authority immediately of the decision to permanently exclude a student in order to secure suitable sixth day provision.

Children Missing Education

- We ask all parents/carers to provide us with more than one emergency contact number. This gives us additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- The Attendance Officer prioritises phone calls and home visits for key students.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) follows appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries-e.g. discussions with neighbours, relatives, landlords etc to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.
- There may be occasion where we have been unable to contact parents/carers after 2 days, have no information as to the whereabouts of the student, there is no answer at the home address and neighbours do not know of their whereabouts. In that case, the DSL or Attendance Officer will request the police do a safe and well check on the second or third day of absence. We inform social services, through the Worcestershire Family Front Door, to let them know we have requested a police safe and well check.
- We inform the local authority of any student who has missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- When appropriate, the DSL will make a referral to social services and/or police.

Safeguarding students attending alternative provision

As part of each school's offsite/alternative provision protocols, schools make daily contact with providers to ensure students have arrived at their placement. Absences are then pursued to fulfil safeguarding duties.

Attendance administration

In line with guidance, all schools keep registers for 3 years. Registers are recorded digitally using the MIS. We only use codes that are in line with current DfE guidance (see appendix 4).

All staff have a responsibility to record registers accurately. Only attendance officers have the access rights to amend registers and have a responsibility to record absence accurately and honestly in line with the coding guidance above.

Monitoring

Staff at each school monitor attendance and punctuality; this includes designated members of SLT team, Attendance Officer(s); pastoral leaders and the form tutor. There are other staff (e.g. school nurse, family support worker) who may monitor attendance as part of their work with individual students and families.

The processes and responsibilities for monitoring are outlined in the appendix for each school.

Notifications to the Local Authority

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers must ensure their children of compulsory school age receive appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability and aptitude. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parent/carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Further information can be found at [Legal Measures Information for Parents and Carers - Worcestershire Children First Education Services](#)

A school will intervene at a higher level if:

- A student's attendance declines below 90% unless appropriate medical evidence is provided to excuse absence
- A student's attendance declines rapidly and there is little evidence of parental/carer engagement.
- A student's attendance declines rapidly and parents/carers refuse to accept their responsibility for ensuring that their son/daughter attends the school every day and on time
- Parents/Carers condone their son/daughter's absence or truancy
- Parents/Carers remove their son/daughter from school for unauthorised absence – including for family holidays.

5

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be 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 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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The local authority's code of conduct states that:

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in cases of:

- An excluded child is found in a public place during the school hours of the first five days of exclusion
- Overt truancy is detected (including being caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally condoned absence is evidenced
- Unauthorised leave of absence has been taken (unauthorised family holidays)
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

We are obliged to refer any issues to the Local Authority who will decide whether to issue a Penalty Notice.

The use of a Penalty Notice allows a parent/carer to discharge their liability for an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 by the payment of a

fine. If the fine remains unpaid at the end of the 28-day payment period, the matter will automatically proceed to court for prosecution of the original offence unless the notice is withdrawn and the parent/carer will be notified in writing.

- Begin court proceedings when the school and Local Authority have exhausted all possible strategies
- It is hoped that the working partnership between the school, the parent/carer and the student will lead to positive outcomes with regard to any attendance and/or punctuality issues and avoid the need to begin legal proceedings. However, it should be noted, that if there is not an appropriate improvement in attendance and that if recourse has to be taken to legal action, this may result in a parental/carer fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop your child missing school. The court may also impose a Parenting Order. Please see the following website for further details:
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/schoolslearninganddevelopment/yourchildswelfareatschool/dg_066966

Support for Attendance Issues

All schools in the MAT seek to be proactive when dealing with attendance issues and aim to provide high quality teaching, curriculum flexibility, mentoring and multi-agency working. If a student's absence gives cause for concern, a school leader will, where appropriate, instigate a support package and use its own internal and external early help services.

Rewards and sanctions

All schools have a variety of rewards for attendance and punctuality. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure students with medical conditions are not disadvantaged.

Students who are late (either to school or to lessons/tutor sessions throughout the day) will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour protocols if appropriate to the behaviour policy.

Students who abscond from lessons and/or leave the school site without permission at any time during the school day will be sanctioned in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Protocols for each school.



A Simple Guide to the New Attendance Codes

What they are, when to use them, and their statistical meaning

Yellow Box	Attending an approved educational activity (present for statistical purposes)	Orange Box	Authorised absence	Blue Box	Attendance not possible (doesn't affect attendance score)
K	Attending educational provision arranged by LA, other than at school where they're a registered pupil. Note: Schools must also record the nature of the provision, eg home tutoring or attending courses at college				
C1	Absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance				
C2	Absent with leave, of compulsory school age and temporary reduced timetable does not require them to attend				
J1	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institute				
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements by LA to facilitate their attendance				
Y1	Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available				
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency				
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use				
Y4	Whole school closed when school was due to meet for a session, but session has been cancelled				
Y5	Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention				
Y6	Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to incidence or transmission of infection or disease				
Y7	Unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause Note: Schools must record the nature of the unavoidable cause				

Notes:

- The new codes come into effect on 19 August 2024
- These codes have been introduced to improve the consistency and accuracy of recording attendance
- For codes K and Y7 you'll need to enter a note detailing the reason alongside the code, as the DfE has asked that this information be available on request

Growing Together

Attendance Appendix: Webheath Academy Primary School

Aims:

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

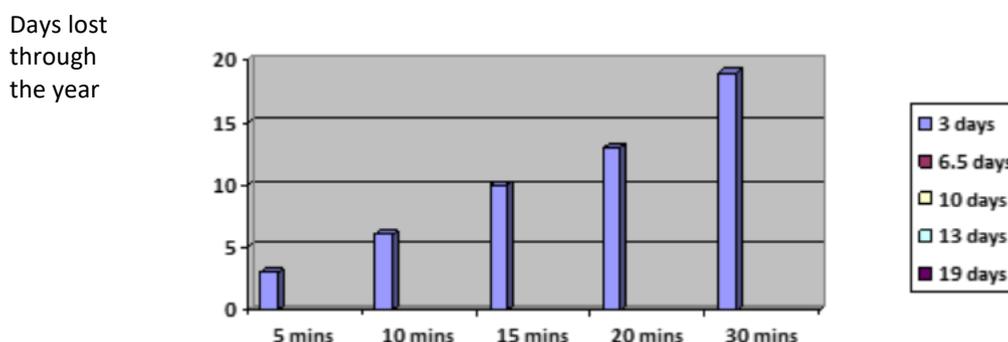
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To minimise the disruption caused by late arrivals or non-attendance to the quality of the education and provisions for all pupils

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Punctuality:

Lessons begin promptly at **8.55am**. Arriving after this time can affect your child's progress. It also disrupts the classroom when lessons have already begun. Therefore, not only must children attend school regularly, but they must not be late.

The following graph clearly illustrates how being late can add up to a loss of learning:



As you can see, if your child is late for just 5 minutes every day, that can add up to over three days lost each year and arriving 15 minutes late each day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year: for that reason it is imperative that your child is punctual.

To reduce congestion at the beginning of the school day and help all of our children arrive on time, we do open our school gates at **8.35am**. Children are collected from the school playground at **8:45am** by staff and gates are closed at **8:50am**.

For Years 1-6, the school day finishes at **3.15pm**. Reception children can be collected from **3.05pm**.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am. A "Late" mark will be entered from 8.55am until 9.15am, from 9.15am onwards an "Unauthorised" mark will be made.

Attendance Register Procedures:

- The attendance register will be taken on Arbor at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is: Present, Attending an approved off-site educational activity, Absent, Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Codes for these marks can be found in the Shires MAT Attendance policy.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – **by 9am** or as soon as practically possible by leaving a message on the school absence line or sending an email to the office.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness and/or the child's attendance record.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide 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.

Medical or dental appointments

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

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence (unless concerns about the child's attendance have been raised as in unplanned absence section); advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Advance notification of appointments should be made to the office only, either by telephone or email.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

We will email or call parents/carers on the first day for absences not reported. If we do not receive a response, we follow this up with an email or phone call on day 2. If absence continues the following day, we will follow the Safeguarding Policy for missing children.

Reporting to parents

Attendance reports are issued to parents annually as part of pupils end of year Reports. Parents are able to access attendance records for their children via Arbor, our management information system via logging in on the app or online.

Whole School Positive Attendance Approach

A whole school approach is taken to encourage high levels of attendance and punctuality. Whole class 'on time' attendance is celebrated within classrooms and staff encourage attendance through discussion and positive anticipation of the events throughout the week and month with classroom calendars. Weekly assemblies identify and celebrate classes with the top 3 'on time' attendance. The attendance cup is awarded to class with the highest attendance and punctuality. Termly, a class is presented with the attendance award for the highest level of 'on time' attendance and this is displayed and referenced throughout the year. Individual children who demonstrate high levels of attendance receive acknowledgement face to face and via an attendance celebration letter to parents at the end of term. Positive improvement letters are sent to children who have improved attendance following interventions as laid out below.

Attendance monitoring

The Deputy Head is the DSL responsible for attendance who regularly monitors trends in attendance. Webheath work alongside the Worcestershire Attendance (Education Engagement) team. The

school attendance officers and Deputy Headteacher discuss pupil attendance and punctuality on a regular basis and meet weekly.

Our expectation of attendance for all pupils is 100%. If a pupil's attendance goes below 95%, this is monitored and we may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this, particularly if this is linked to unauthorized absences (including term time leave of absence for holidays).

Where attendance is poor, Webheath Academy Primary School will take the following action with parents/carers:

- Contact via Arbor and/or via telephone
- Contact via letter
- Meeting with Head, Deputy Head, pastoral lead, teacher or attendance officer
- Refer to Worcestershire Attendance Team (Education Engagement)
- Attendance Contract
- Refer to Governors
- Legal Action

If, after contacting parents, a pupil's attendance does not improve, we will insist on a meeting with the Head teacher or Deputy Head to resolve. The head or deputy may allocate this responsibility to an appropriate staff member. We will use the Local authority support to meet with parents. Further legal action may be taken if the level of absence continues.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Persistent Absence

The definition of persistently absence (PA) pupil as set out by the DfE for 2015-2016 is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

Half Term	10%
Half term 1	7 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 3	20 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 4 (autumn and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half term 1 - 5	31 or more sessions
Half term 1 – 6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

As a school, we collect attendance data on our management information system, Arbor. As per legal requirements, this data is shared with the local authority and nationally. Internally, we check this data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence across the school and at an individual level with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as PA. The school office staff, pastoral lead and Senior Leaders will then monitor these pupils and work with families to improve attendance. This data is then monitored by our Safeguarding Governor on his half termly visits and data is shared termly with the Governors in an anonymous way. This data is also shared with the Trustees to ensure the school are keeping PA to its lowest levels. Attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of pupil premium or are vulnerable are a focus of this monitoring. From this, the school keep a record of identified children.

The identified children are the focus of action and intervention and are discussed at meetings with attendance officers, designated attendance DSL and Worcestershire Attendance team where appropriate. These identified children become a daily or weekly focus to ensure improvement. The school are committed to

working with parents to help solve attendance issues and ensure regular attendance. As parents/carers have accepted a place at our school, it is an expectation that parents/carers will be committed to ensure attendance is as high as possible and pupils are always punctual.

Support

Using attendance patterns and trends, plans are made where necessary to deliver intervention to improve attendance and punctuality for specific children. This may include:

- First day call
- Identification of key adult to support and monitor attendance
- Pastoral call to speak to child
- Home visits
- Meeting and review with parent/child to identify cause of attendance/punctuality issue and identify actions to improve
- Support on arrival in enabling child to successfully access the classroom
- Short term alteration of entrance and exit points for child
- Incentives for attendance eg special classroom roles, sticker charts, improvement awards
- Parenting support – both internal and signposting to external agencies for development of routines, behaviour management etc
- Transport advice

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Deputy Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and seeks advice from the local authority regarding the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Deputy Headteacher has a responsibility for attendance at the school and acts alongside the office staff as an attendance officer. Contact can be made initially via the school office.

The office staff (Attendance Officers)

The office staff act as attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Follows policy to ensure implementation
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Deputy Headteacher
- Works with education attendance team to tackle persistent absence
- Manages and maintains correspondences
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Office staff are expected to check absence lines, emails and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Office staff are expected to contact parents when absence has not been reported as per the policy guidelines.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. Teachers record absence as an N code and attendance and correct codes are added by the school office. Class teachers are responsible for working with parents to ensure improved attendance for identified pupils. Class teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about patterns of absence to the Deputy Headteacher, office staff and on CPOMS when it is considered a Safeguarding issue.

Penalty Notices

Webheath Academy Primary School works in partnership with parents, the Local Authority and the Worcestershire Attendance Team to improve attendance. Penalty notices are not issued automatically and each case is considered individually.

The school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate on a case-by-case basis, in line with national guidance and Worcestershire Local Authority procedures. When making this decision, the school will take into account:

- The level, pattern and persistence of unauthorised absence
- Whether the national threshold for unauthorised absence has been met
- The circumstances of the family and the child, including any vulnerabilities or medical needs
- The support already offered and the level of parental engagement
- Whether issuing a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance or whether further support would be more appropriate

Where attendance concerns arise, the school's initial focus will always be on support and early intervention.

This may include meetings with parents/carers, involvement of the Education Welfare Officer, and implementation of targeted attendance support plans and attendance contracts.

If, after support has been offered, attendance does not improve and unauthorised absence continues, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action, which may include the issuing of a penalty notice. The decision to issue a penalty notice rests with the Local Authority.

Links with other policies

Our policy for attendance is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy, Friendship and Anti-Bullying Policy and our Positive Behaviour Policy

Request for leave during term time application form (New Version from February 2026)
Webheath Academy Primary School

Child(ren)'s name		Date of Birth:	Class
		Date of Birth:	
		Date of Birth:	
<u>For Office Use Only</u>			
Level of attendance during last academic year, current academic year			
Level of attendance during last academic year, current academic year			
Level of attendance during last academic year, current academic year			
Child(ren) will/will not* be sitting examination/SATS during this year. (*delete as appropriate). Other relevant information e.g. out of school learning planned/presentation day			
Parent/Carer to complete - To: The Headteacher of Webheath Academy Primary School			
Dates for which leave of absence is requested			
From (first day of absence):	To (last day of absence)	Number of School Days:	
Please state reason for leave (include any exceptional circumstances you wish to be considered) <i>Please continue overleaf if required.</i>			
Please print full legal name, each parent to sign and full address for each parent.			
1 st Parent/Carer Print Full Legal Name: Signature			
Full Address.....			
2 nd Parent/Carer Print Full Legal Name: Signature			
Full Address.....			
Date.....			
I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows: Full Names and School attended:			
After consideration, the Headteacher will write to you to confirm whether the absence will be authorised or not.			
<u>For Office Use Only</u>			
Number of school days applied for:		Absence request agreed / Not agreed	
Reason:			
Signed (Headteacher):		Date:.....	
Notification of decision letter sent to parent/carer:		Date:	

Please note, with effect from 19th August 2024 the Government has made changes to penalty notice fines for school non-attendance. In line with Worcestershire County Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine, per parent, per child of £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for a first-time absence.

If a second period of unauthorised absence occurs within a 3-year timescale, this may be subject to a penalty notice fine, per parent, per child, of £160 to be paid within 28 days.

Failure to make payment of penalty notices issued may lead to court proceedings.

The third period of unauthorised leave of absence incurred within 3 years of the first penalty notice issued; a further penalty notice will not be issued. If suitable, the matter will be presented to the Magistrates' Court under S4441 Education Act 1996. Cases found guilty in the magistrates Court could result in a fine up to £1,000 per parent, per child, and will also hold a criminal record for failing to secure regular attendance.

The School's Policy

The school considers that all absences from school will disrupt a child's continuity of learning. As a consequence, it believes that absences should be kept to a minimum in order to maximise your child's potential.

What the Law says

Regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday or other leave. Leave during term time should be seen as an exception to the norm. So, what are the exceptional circumstances?

It is the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term-time absence will be considered on an individual basis. For example, the Headteacher will not accept as an exceptional circumstance the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term-time, or a family member has booked an activity without checking the dates.

An exceptional circumstance is much more likely to be a one-off, unique situation such as a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill and the leave proposed is likely to facilitate the last such family occasion; or there may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the Headteacher might consider that immediate leave might enable the child concerned to deal better with the situation.

The Headteacher will also look very carefully at the child's previous attendance record, and should he or she have concerns, for example, should the child's average attendance be below 95%, it is highly unlikely that the Headteacher will agree to authorise any further absence.

Other factors will include the likely impact on the child's previous education, particularly in terms of continuity of learning; there is a strong link between the amount of absence in a school and the qualifications that its pupils achieve, whether the holiday falls during a year in which the child is due to take a pupil examination or to be involved in Government tests (e.g. SATs).

Applying for Leave of Absence for Holidays during Term Time

Applications should be made using the reverse side of this form **at least** 4 weeks in advance of the proposed leave. (Parents are advised to apply for leave of absence **before** they confirm their arrangements.)