

Attendance policy



Dorset
Studio School

LAND & ENVIRONMENT

Attendance Policy - Dorset Studio School

Date of Issue:	September 2025
Policy applies to:	All staff, parents/carers and pupils attending Dorset Studio School.
Policy Version Number:	3
Purpose of the document:	To set out clear procedures for encouraging good school attendance.
Summary of the main points:	The document provides: The roles and responsibilities, attendance expectations and procedures.
Approved by:	DSS Governing Body
Reviewer:	Jason Malone
Summary of amendments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes made to reflect new DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (applies from 19/8/24) 2. Local Governing Body changed to School Governance Committee 3. Attendance dropping below 90% will trigger intervention 4. New codes added 5. Expansion of legal intervention section
Next review due:	September 2026

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Statement of intent

Dorset Studio School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment in our schools, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

1. Legal Framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour & Rewards Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

2.3. The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Attendance Lead role.
- Ensuring all Parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.

2.4. Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

2.5. The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents/carers with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to Parents/carers and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

2.6. Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

2.7. Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

3.1. The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

3.2. Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

3.3. Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

3.4. Unauthorised absence:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

3.5. Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason (attendance less than 90%).

3.6. Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

4. Attendance expectations

- 4.1. Dorset Studio School has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers and pupils.
- 4.2. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- 4.3. The school day starts at 9:00am and pupils will be expected to arrive on the school site no earlier than 8:45am and no later than 9:00am. Pupils will have a morning break at 11:00am which will last until 11:15am and a lunch break at 1:15pm, which will last until 2:00pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.
- 4.4. Registers will be taken as follows through the school day:
 - The morning register will be marked at 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom when the register is taken. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
 - The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
 - The afternoon register will be marked at 12:15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
 - The afternoon register will close at 12:30pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

5. Absence Procedures

- 5.1 Parents/carers are required to contact the school office via telephone or email before 8:45am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

- 5.2 Where a pupil is absent, and their parent/carer has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent/carer by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. If a parent/carer cannot be reached by telephone, the school administrative staff will also try to contact the parent/carer by a ParentPay message or email.
- 5.3 The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- 5.4 Where a pupil is absent for more than 3 school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent/carer will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).
- 5.5 The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.
- 5.6 In the case of persistent absences (or when attendance is close to 90%), arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the pupil's key stage Pastoral Lead in the first instance. The Pastoral Lead and parents/carers will discuss the reasons for absences and next steps to improve attendance. The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis of any child missing out on education.
- 5.7 If a pupil's attendance remains consistently below 90 percent, the Attendance Lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent/carer.
- 5.8 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance Register

6.1. The school uses Arbor to record and monitor attendance to ensure that attendance can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

6.2. Teaching staff will take the attendance register at the start of each lesson. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

6.3. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#) will be used:

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

6.4. The '#' code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

6.5. Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

6.6. All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

6.7. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

7.1. Parents/carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Principal – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Principal, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Principal's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for legitimate absence by parents/carers.

7.2. Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents/carers to complete a Leave of Absence form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. This leave of absence form will also include the child's current attendance (this will be completed by the school).

Any legitimate requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Requests for leave will never be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason (i.e. the child's attendance is already below 90% and deemed persistent absence).

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised. After a leave of absence form is completed, the Principal will meet with the parent/carer to discuss the reason for the leave of absence and whether this has been authorised or will be an unauthorised absence.

7.3. Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

7.4. Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Principal to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Principal will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 94 percent. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Principal will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

7.5. Religious observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance. The school will only accept requests from parents/carers for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

7.6. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent/carer belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent/carer will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND and health related absences

- 8.1. The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult. In line with the SEND Policy and Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.
- 8.2. Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health through support from the pastoral support team.
- 8.3. If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:
 - Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
 - Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
 - Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
 - Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.
- 8.4. The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

8.5. To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Consider a reduced timetable.
- Consider whether a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Consider implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Consider temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Consider phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.
- Consider a check-in and/or sensory work at the beginning of the school day.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

9.1. Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the school, LA or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

9.2. The use of the 'Y' codes for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

10. Truancy

10.1. Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

10.2. All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

10.3. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

10.4. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

10.5. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents/carers of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

11. Missing children

11.1. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission agreed between both the school and parents/carers.

11.2. If the pupil cannot be located on the school site, parents/carers will be informed, and the police will be notified.

12. Attendance intervention

12.1. To ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Lead, supported by the SLT, will follow the steps outlined in the Attendance Toolkit (see summary at Appendix 1).

12.2. The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

12.3. The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Acknowledging outstanding attendance (99% or higher) on half termly attendance letters to all parents/carers

- Celebration of 100% attendance at our termly Celebration Assembly
- Activities for “100 Club” pupils at the end of the school year

13. Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

- 13.1. The school believes that working together with families is the key to improving attendance. The school aims to keep parents/carers well informed on the child’s attendance through regular attendance letters to all parents/carers. Parents/carers will be given information on the importance of attendance and the impact of poor attendance on pupils.
- 13.2. The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance.
- 13.3. The school will ensure that there are emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.
- 13.4. The school will ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child’s legal right to a fulltime education – parents/carers will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Principal in advance. The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child’s levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents/carers are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.
- 13.5. If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the school will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than punitive approaches.

- 13.6. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, the Principal and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, will work together to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Principal will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents/carers to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

- 14.1. There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:
- Children on Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plans
 - Care-experienced children (LAC/PLAC)
 - Young carers
 - Pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM)
 - Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
 - Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
 - Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination
- 14.2. The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistent absence to attend school. These include:
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
 - Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
 - Having regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
 - Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
 - Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
 - Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.
 - Specific support from the school ELSA or Trauma Informed Schools Practitioner
 - Working with staff, parents/carers and pupils on the specific reasons for emotionally based school avoidance.
- 14.3. Where a pupil at risk of persistent absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe persistent absence following intervention may,

in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection Policy.

15. Further / legal interventions

15.1 The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the Principal will consider:

15.2 Attendance contract

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

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

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

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

15.3 Education supervision order

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

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

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

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

15.4 Notice to improve

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

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

It will include:

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

15.5 Penalty notices

The Principal (or a Deputy or Assistant Principal, authorised by the Principal), 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 decision is made to issue a penalty notice, the school will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

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/carer in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

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

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

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

16.1. The Attendance Lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

16.2. The school will collect data regarding punctuality and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence.

16.3. The Attendance Lead will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a regular basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

16.4. The Attendance Lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

16.5. The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the Principal in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

16.6. The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

17. Training of staff

17.1. The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

17.2. The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy and that staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

17.3. Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance

- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it
- 17.4. The school will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Attendance Lead and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.
- 17.5. Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Monitoring and review

- 18.1. Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.
- 18.2. This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1

