

Attendance policy

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1. Introduction

We recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “[Working together to improve school attendance](#)” and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children’s welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school’s commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE’s statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

1.1 Promoting Regular School Attendance

The need for **regular school attendance** is given a high priority by all schools. The Supreme Court ruled in April 2017 (Platt v Isle of Wight) that **regular** attendance is ‘**in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school**’. We interpret this as **every day that the school requires a child to attend, unless the absence has been approved by the Headteacher**

We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school’s vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school) is:

Mr D Chapman, Assistant Headteacher

daniel.chapman@sws.cheshire.sch.uk

01270660880

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is: Mary Massey – Chair of Governors.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Share attendance information with the Local Authority
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Give parents/carers details on attendance on our website and in our newsletters
- Promote the benefits of high attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance

- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance which stands at 96%.

Unsurprisingly, children who are absent from school or who are persistently late, can soon fall behind with their learning. Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE 2016) confirmed that, as the level of overall pupil absence increases, the likelihood of pupils achieving what they are capable of decreases.

Parents of children of compulsory school age are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.2 Definition of 'Parent'

For the purposes of this policy and other education related issues, a **parent** is as defined under section 576 of the Education Act 1996:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of their relationship with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

1.3 Understanding types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (this list is not exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration 9:30am are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own or family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

1.4 Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling (19 days across the school year which equates to 1 day every 2 weeks) for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling (95 days) is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

1.5 Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, Family/Early Help, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant

Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a meeting to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

We recognise that Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) can significantly impact pupils' learning and well-being. EBSNA often stems from emotional distress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges, leading to prolonged absences and disengagement from education.

To support our pupils, we implement a comprehensive approach that includes:

1. **Early Identification and Assessment:** We monitor attendance patterns to detect anxiety-related absences and use tools to understand pupils' perspectives
2. **Whole-School Preventative Approaches:** We foster an inclusive environment that promotes emotional well-being and resilience
3. **Targeted Interventions:** We provide tailored support, including flexible timetables and safe spaces for pupils who may feel overwhelmed
4. **Reintegration Strategies:** We develop personalised reintegration plans that are child-led and supported by parents, ensuring a gradual return to full attendance
5. **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** We work with external services to provide comprehensive support

By collaborating with families and utilising these strategies, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment that encourages every pupil to engage fully in their education. Together, we can help our pupils' overcome barriers to attendance and thrive in school and beyond.

2.1 Responsibilities & Expectations of Parents and Carers:

- To ensure that their child attends school every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason that prevents them from so doing
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time (8:30am). A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To inform school as soon as possible, by **phone (01270 660880 Option 1)**, if their child is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence.

- To trust that school staff will contact them during the school day if a child is ill in school and needs to go home
- To ensure that school has at least two sets of full contact details, and that these are kept updated
- To make all medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and to inform school in advance of any medical appointments that cannot be scheduled out of school time. For absence to be authorised as a medical absence, schools do require evidence, such as an appointment card or letter
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods, and to be aware that there is no entitlement to withdraw children for authorised leave of absence during term time. Any requests for leave of absence during term time should be made in writing using our leave of absence form and in advance to the head teacher; (via the Attendance Manager, Mrs H Taylor helen.taylor@sws.cheshire.sch.uk)
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and to be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during particularly important times such as assessment periods, mock exams and GCSE Examinations.
- To provide evidence and advice from a health professional when needed to enable school to gain a greater understanding of their child's health issues
- To talk to school staff as soon as possible should their child be reluctant to come to school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This is so that any barriers to attendance can be quickly identified and overcome. In most cases the first point of contact should be the child's form tutor or the pastoral team.

Absence Procedures:

It is important that parents / carers keep in touch with school about all absences. This information is used to help determine whether children's absence is recorded in the register as authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the ultimate authority to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. If parents do not communicate with school, and staff are unable to establish contact, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

2.2 Medical Evidence:

The most common reason for children being persistently absent from school is illness. When pupils are having repeat absences due to reported illness, schools may need more evidence and advice to help decide whether or not the absence should be authorised, and to see whether any additional support is required. This is in line with the DfE Guidance, [Working together to improve school attendance](#), page 87.

Children can be reluctant to attend school from time to time, or there may be other issues affecting attendance. It is never advisable for parents to 'cover' for their absence or to give-in to pressure to excuse them from attending. Covering up gives the

impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. It is always better to get in touch with school, to share concerns, and to plan a way forward.

Schools can accept the following as medical evidence:

- GP certificate
- Letter from health professional
- Appointment card / letter (dated)
- Prescription / Medication in the name of the child
- Text message from GP or NHS confirming an appointment
- Care of the chemist – date stamped slip to show medical advice has been sought

In situations where a child's attendance record is of concern, usual practice would be for parents / carers to be invited into school to meet with an appropriate member of staff. This provides an opportunity for concerns from both home and school to be shared, and for an agreed plan of action to be put in place to address any identified difficulties.

Please remember that parents and carers are encouraged to contact school at an early point should they have any concerns that are impacting on their child's school attendance.

We acknowledge that children are at a higher risk of missing school if they are experiencing challenges around their emotional wellbeing and mental health. This can then lead to further problems in terms of children falling behind with work, and of feelings of social isolation. It is particularly important in these circumstances that parents / carers work together with school to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to respond to concerns as they arise.

2.3 Responsibilities of School:

- To demonstrate a strong and inclusive whole school attendance ethos that helps pupils feel that they 'belong'
- To promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers at every opportunity
- To establish effective procedures that enable staff to record, identify, and address concerns around overall pupil absence
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences using the correct DfE prescribed registration code (see Appendix 1). This duty also extends to ensuring that N coded absences are resolved in a timely manner. Parents should be made aware that if school cannot establish an acceptable reason for their child's absence, the missed sessions will be recorded as unauthorised absence
- To have sensitive support systems in place for vulnerable pupils which recognise the complexity of children's lives and family circumstances

- To inform the local authority of any part-time or flexible education arrangements in place for individual pupils, together with plans for tracking and review
- To identify a senior leader who has overall responsibility for attendance, and who is also responsible for the achievement and wellbeing of all children who are on the school roll, but not accessing education in the usual way, such as those pupils in alternative provision placements. The senior leaders responsible are shown below:

Mr D Chapman – Assistant Headteacher

Miss E Johnson – Assistant Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead

- To encourage open communication channels and partnership working between home and school to improve attendance and punctuality. This will include meetings with parents and carers in school, where any support needs can be identified and addressed, together with the joint formulation of 'Raising Attendance Plans' for improving individual pupils' attendance
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long-term absentees. In addition, school must have plans in place to support each persistently absent pupil and each severely absent pupil
- To have support plans in place to ease pupils' transition between each phase of education when there is a change of school, with reference to the needs of more vulnerable children
- To have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school and other support agencies in relation to the provision of additional support for pupils whose attendance difficulties are symptomatic of wider family issues or / and indicative of safeguarding concerns where a multi-agency response is required seeking advice from the allocated Early Help worker as and when needed
- To engage in partnership working with the Authority's Attendance Service to ensure appropriate use of legal sanctions to reinforce parental responsibility for securing regular attendance
- To analyse and evaluate a range of accurate attendance data to improve individual pupil and whole school performance, and to identify any vulnerable groups of pupils whose attendance is below what would be expected
- To incentivise, reward and celebrate good and improved attendance on an individual, group, and whole school level – creating a positive culture in which good and improved attendance is highly valued
- To provide governors with sufficient data and information about pupils who are not attending regularly or accessing education in the usual way, so that they can evaluate and challenge the effectiveness of school's arrangements
- To refer children who are, or who are at risk of becoming, Children Missing from Education (CME) to the Local Authority in accordance with Cheshire East Policy
- To notify the Local Authority of any child whose name is deleted from roll at parental request in order to pursue elective home education

2.4 Expectations of School Staff:

First Day Contact

Parents should be encouraged to contact school on each morning that their child is absent. If a child is absent, and no contact from parent has been received by school:

- Heads of year will telephone parents/carers to ascertain a reason for absence in accordance with 'first day contact' procedures.
- School may also telephone any other persons on the pupil's contact list if they are unable to make contact with the parent.
- Home welfare visits may also be undertaken in connection with concerns around a child's absence (particularly when parents do not respond to requests for contact from school staff).
- Priority tracking should take place where safeguarding is a known issue. School's Designated Safeguarding Lead / Children Looked After Lead should be alerted should there be any concerns in respect of the absence of children subject of Child In Need arrangements or Child Protection Plans, or children Looked After by the Local Authority.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Informing the Attendance Lead / Designated Safeguarding Lead of any cases where the explanation for absence gives potential cause for concern, and where additional support or intervention may be required.
- Recording details of children who arrive late.
- Sending out letters and emails to parents regarding attendance concerns.
- Administration work around school Attendance Panels
- Reporting daily and weekly attendance figures.
- Along with the attendance lead, keep an overview of whole school, year, and individual attendance rates, looking particularly at overall absence, levels of unauthorised absence, and patterns of absence.

Teaching staff & form tutors:

- welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- buddy support

- one to one input
- meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- Support whole school attendance initiatives
- rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate students to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- follow up on absence and lateness with students to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of students

2.5 Expectations of the Local Authority

The Local Authority is expected:

- To promote regular school attendance of children in schools across the Authority, and to work towards breaking the cycle of poor attendance, reduced attainment, and social disadvantage.
- To meet, at least termly, with attendance staff within school.
- To help schools in their work to reduce overall, persistent and severe pupil absence. This involves working with school staff, parents / carers, children, and various partner agencies to develop and implement practices which can help raise and sustain individual pupils' attendance levels.
- To carry out statutory duties in relation to the enforcement of school attendance.
- To carry out statutory duties in respect of the identification and tracking of children known to be, or at risk of becoming, missing from education (CME).

Tables of responsibilities for school attendance can be found at:

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court

2.6 Link with Safeguarding / Education Neglect

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Schools have a key role in ensuring children and young people are kept safe. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children, and prevent concerns from escalating
- Every school has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and can liaise closely with other services such as children's social care and early help services
- Schools should be alert to unauthorised absence as being a potential indicator of educational or wider neglect. Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan in the UK
- **Working Together 2023** identifies neglect as: 'The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development'

2.7 TLP Attendance 'Trigger Points' for Escalation

TLP Attendance 'Trigger Points' for Escalation

Minimum Expectation of 96% Attendance for All		
↓	↓	↓
Trigger Point A	Trigger Point B	Trigger C
Authorised Absence which means that attendance has dropped below 96%	Unauthorised Absence which means attendance has dropped below 96%	Unauthorised Leave during Term Time (e.g. holiday)
↓	↓	↓
Escalation Process	Escalation Process	Escalation Process
Letter 1: Attendance has fallen below 96% (not to be sent if known contextual factors have affected attendance)	Letter 1 or Phone Call: If there have been four unauthorised sessions of absence.	If the holiday is 10 sessions or more (5 days in total) an application for a FPN will be made to the local authority
Letter 2: Following a monitoring period of between 4 - 6 weeks there has been no improvement so a 'Raising Attendance Plan' will now be put in place.	Letter 2 (Invitation to Attendance Panel Meeting): If the number of unauthorised <u>absence</u> has increased to 8 sessions.	
Letter 3: Following a monitoring period of between 4 - 6 weeks there has been no improvement so an 'Attendance Panel Meeting' will be convened to review the 'Raising Attendance Plan' and agree next steps.	Application to the LEA for a 'Notice to Improve' order: If there has been no improvement following the stages above, an application will be made to the LEA. At this point the parent could be subject to an FPN.	

Unauthorised attendance that falls below 75% can be an underlying risk factor and indicative of a safeguarding concern. All of the above should be underpinned by the

offer of ongoing support to address identified difficulties. All pupils under 50% are classed as severely absent and must have a plan to support their attendance.

2.8 Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. When children arrive late and miss the start of the school day, they can miss work and vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, and this can be embarrassing and upsetting for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence, as some pupils would rather not attend school at all, than arrive late.

- Registers are taken during form time. If children arrive to school after 8:30am, they will receive a late mark in the register (code L).
- In line with recommendations from the Department for Education (DfE), registers will close at 9:30 a.m. If children arrive after this time, they will be recorded as having arrived after closure of registers (code U). This counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.
- Any pupil arriving late should enter the school through the main entrance and be signed-in in accordance with school's procedures.
- If lateness becomes a regular occurrence, it will be treated in the same way as unauthorised absence, with parents/carers being contacted and invited into school to discuss the situation

2.9 Children on Part-Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances where a part-time timetable is needed as a time-limited intervention to respond to a child's individual needs. This must always be in agreement with the child's parent(s)/carer(s). Schools are required to submit information about such arrangements to the Local Authorities Attendance Service using the local authority template.

Examples of when a part-time timetable may be considered are:

- Medical issue
- Emotional/Mental Health
- Family/Friendship issue
- Re-integration programme following absence
- SEND – identified/awaiting specialist placement
- SEND – unidentified/undiagnosed needs

2.10 Celebrating Good Attendance

It is important that schools recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance. This can be done in a variety of ways, and some ideas are listed below:

- Attendance included on academic reports
- Attendance displays around school
- Certificates to recognise pupils who have reached their target attendance.
- Praise postcard sent home to recognise and celebrate improved attendance
- Attendance competitions
- Prizes/Raffle Vouchers for families
- Aspirations week
- Children choose half termly rewards

2.11 Expectations of Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and to obtain maximum benefit from the range of educational and other opportunities available to them.

Pupils are expected:

- To do all they can to attend school regularly and on time
- To talk with a trusted adult about any issues that are making it difficult for them to come to school, or that are affecting their wellbeing in school.
- To be aware of their attendance targets, and to work towards achieving this.

3. School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, then under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The Local Authority has a range of legal powers to promote and enforce regular school attendance:

- Penalty Notices (Section 444A Education Act 1996)
- Prosecution of Parents / Carers in Magistrates' Court (Section 444 (1) / Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996)
- Application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order in respect of the child (Children Act 1989)
- School Attendance Order (Section 437 Education Act 1996)
- Parenting Order (Section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Each case is considered on an individual basis, but the circumstances in which a Penalty Notice for non-attendance may be issued by the Local Authority include:

- Unauthorised absence from school
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave of absence, e.g., in excess of the agreed number of days
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

3.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices (Appendix 2)

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of Sir William Stanier that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or her assistant (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school.

Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework in respect of each parent believed to be involved in the absence.

The Local Authority retains any revenue from the Education Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs.

Non-payment of an Education Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and would normally trigger prosecution proceedings at Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996. There is no right of appeal by parents/carers against an Education Penalty Notice.

4. Deletion from Roll (Appendix 3)

For any pupil leaving school other than at the end of year 11 parents/carers are required to provide school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register within **five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Schools can only lawfully remove a child from their school roll under certain circumstances in accordance with Government Regulations (see Appendix 3). Schools are required to inform the Local Authority of the details of all children who are removed from roll at non-standard transition times.

5. Elective Home Education

One of the grounds under which a child can lawfully be removed from a school roll is if a parent notifies the Headteacher in writing that they are withdrawing their child from school to take full responsibility for provision of the child's education. School must notify the Local Authority, as the Authority will then have responsibility for assessing the suitability of education that is being provided for the child. The Authority must first

consent to elective home education when a child has special educational needs and is placed in specialist provision.

Schools and the Authority respect that it is a parental right to pursue elective home education. It is, however, important that when parents opt to home educate, this is a positive choice and in the best interests of the child, rather than the option of last resort. Parents should be aware that elective home education is not a route to obtaining a place in a school of their choice which may have previously been declined, or a way of accessing alternative provision.

6. Children Looked After (CLA)

The attendance of children in the care of the Local Authority is also monitored by the Headteacher and Governors of the Virtual School. Use of the B and C codes should be agreed with the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The use of the N registration code for looked after children should be rare, as reasons for any absence should be obtained as a matter of priority. It is essential that contact is made with a child's social worker as soon as attendance concerns emerge. Attendance staff should routinely inform school's designated teacher for looked after children of their looked after children's attendance rates.

7. Pupils Attending Off-Site Educational Provision

Any pupil who is attending off-site educational provision should be marked using registration code D or B by their main school (according to the circumstances of the individual placement).

Code B should be used when pupils are present at off-site educational provision that has been approved by school. School is ultimately responsible for the safeguarding of pupils educated off-site, and use of the B code signifies that the education is supervised and measures are in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of the pupil.

School must ensure that the B codes reflect the daily attendance of the pupil at the off-site provision. For example, if a pupil misses a day due to illness, then the main school attendance register will show this day as an I and not a B.

It is important for agreement and clarity to be reached between school and the off-site provision with respect to arrangements for daily tracking and follow-up of any absence. There should be daily communication between school and the off-site provision in respect of individual pupils' absence.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. The D code is used to signify that the pupil was not expected to attend the session because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Again, an agreement must be in place with respect to who has responsibility for the daily tracking of attendance and absence.

8. Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust and updated in accordance with any new legislation or guidance, or changes to any other relevant procedures or documents.

Appendix 1

Pupil Registration

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, and once during the second session. On each occasion, it must be recorded whether each pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent

School must then follow-up on all pupil absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for absence
- Make sure that any safeguarding action is taken if needed
- Identify the correct registration code to insert in the electronic register

Nationally prescribed registration codes should be used consistently by all schools. These codes are used to give depth of meaning to the register and to provide statistical meaning to absences. Codes are all collected by DfE via download to the School Census System.

As of 1st August 2024, the DfE released new attendance codes and archived some existing codes. All records of the old attendance codes will remain unchanged and can still be reported on as usual, but they should no longer be used for marking attendance.

Attendance codes currently in use

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution

E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		

D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday or for Year 12 and 13 students when they are not expected to be in school (due to timetable).
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.

Appendix 2 Leave of Absence during Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2014 state that leave of absence shall not be granted unless:

- an application has been made in advance to the head teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; **and**
- the head teacher, or a person authorised by the head teacher, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

This policy clarifies:

- there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their child on authorised leave of absence during term-time without obtaining prior approval from the school.
- the procedures to be followed whereby parents/carers can make applications for their child to be granted discretionary leave of absence during term-time.
- that each application will be considered by head teachers according to the individual circumstances surrounding the request. Head teachers determine the number of days, if any, a child can be away from school.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children.

Education Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence during Term Time

Headteachers should write to the parents/carers to confirm whether or not their request for leave of absence has been approved. In cases where a request for leave has not been approved, parents should be informed that they face the possibility of being issued with penalty notices for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school should they go ahead with their plans.

In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence, but that pupil then fails to return to school within 5 school days (10 sessions) of the agreed return date, a request to issue penalty notices to the parents can be made to Cheshire East (unless the school is satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause).

Application for Leave During Term Time

PARENT'S/CARER'S SECTION				
Surname of child			First name	
Date of birth		Year	Class	
Full name of parent (1)				
Address of parent (1)				
Postcode			Telephone No.	
Full name of parent (2)			Telephone No.	
Address of parent (2)				
Do you consider this request to be due to exceptional circumstances? If so, please outline the reasons why				
Departure and return date				
Would your child miss any national tests or examinations?				Yes / No
Has she/he had leave during term-time in the last 12 months? (If so, please give dates, reasons, and number of school days leave)				Yes / No
Are there any other siblings? If yes please state their name and the school they attend				Yes / No
Parent/Carer signature			Date	
SCHOOL SECTION				
Holiday in Term Time	(i) approved ____ school days		(ii) not approved ____ school days	
Reasons				
Date discussed with parent/ carer and/or date informed of approval/ non-approval				
Headteacher's signature			Date	

Appendix 3

Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

	Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
1	9(1)(a) the pupil has been registered at another school, unless— (i) a school attendance order naming the school is in force in relation to the pupil; (ii) the pupil is a mobile child, and the school is their main school; or (iii) the proprietor has agreed with a person with control of the pupil's attendance at the other school, or is such a person and has decided, that the pupil should be registered at more than one school
2	9(1)(b) the pupil was admitted to the school for nursery education and— (i) they have completed such education and would, if they continued attending the school, be transferred to a reception, or more senior, class at the school; but (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again;
3	9(1)(c) the pupil is also registered as a pupil at one or more other schools and— (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; (ii) the proprietor of each other school where the pupil is registered has consented to the deletion; (iii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil; and (iv) the pupil is not a mobile child or, if they are, the school is not their main school;
4	9(1)(d) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and formerly naming the school has been amended by the relevant local authority to substitute the name of the school with that of another school;
5	9(1)(e) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and naming the school has been revoked by the relevant local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the pupil to receive suitable education otherwise than at school;
6	9(1)(f) a parent of the pupil has told the proprietor in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at school and— (i) that day has passed; and (ii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil;

7	9(1)(g) the pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school and— (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; and (ii) the pupil is not a boarder;
8	9(1)(h) the pupil has been given leave of absence and— (i) the pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but— (aa) they have not succeeded; or (bb) they have succeeded, and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance;
9	9(1)(i) the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and— (i) none of the circumstances mentioned in Table 2 in regulation 10(3) or in any row of Table 3 in regulation 10(4) other than the final three rows applied to the pupil at any point during that period; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but— (aa) they have not succeeded; or (bb) they have succeeded, and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance;
10	9(1)(j) the pupil is detained under a sentence of detention and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school after they cease to be detained under that sentence;
11	9(1)(k) the pupil has died;
12	9(1)(l) the pupil will be over compulsory school age by the next time the school meets and— (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements to be transferred to the school's sixth form

13	9(1)(m) the pupil is a boarder at the school and— (i) the school is a school maintained by a local authority or is an Academy; (ii) charges for the pupil's board and lodging are payable by a parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the parent at the end of the school term to which they relate
14	9(1)(n) the pupil has ceased to be a pupil at the school and the school is not— (i) a school maintained by a local authority; or (ii) an Academy; or
15	9(1)(o) the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.