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TRUST IN LEARNING (ACADEMIES)

Attendance POLICY

Approval Date: June 2025	Version: 02	Review: Annually
Approval By: Quality of Education Committee	Lead: Director of SEND, Safeguarding and Inclusion	Review date: Summer 2026
As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.		

History of Policy Changes:

Date	Page	Change	Reason for Change
August 2024		New policy	New over-arching policy for the Trust incline with updated national legislation
May 2025		New policy format	Centralisation of policies.
	5	Simplified the aims	Avoid repetition.
	6-7	Detailed attendance responsibilities incorporated with standard roles and responsibilities of stakeholders	Merging with updated TILA policy format
	8-9	Section added to outline TILA's approach to attendance: belonging and support first	Explains how attendance is prioritised across the Trust
	10-21	Re-ordering of information from previous policy. No significant changes to information.	More logical sequencing.
	23	Moved to appendix from the body of the policy.	School specific procedural information is included in the appendices.

Trust in Learning
Trust in Success

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1. Statement of Intent

This document sets out the policy for Attendance within Trust in Learning Academies (the Trust).

It is the aim of all schools within Trust in Learning Academies that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. The Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

Trust in Learning Academies make an unwavering commitment to excellent pupil attendance, centred around proactive child-centred actions, evidence-informed practices, data analysis and insights, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities.

The policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with schools, including Headteachers and Attendance Leads. It is shared with parents/carers.

2. Values and Principles

This Trust Policy is set out with the following principles at its core:

Trust in Learning Academies is a family of schools each with a distinctive identity, collaborating to strengthen and support each other. We deliver high quality education with evidence-informed approaches to teaching, learning and the curriculum. Inclusion is at the heart of all we do. We actively listen to the voices of our pupils, staff and communities. Every school makes deliberate choices to be sustainable and globally focused.

The Trust vision is to:

- Inspire pupils to trust in learning and achieve their full potential
- To empower pupils to have confidence in their successes to make a positive contribution to the world
- To remove barriers to learning and help transform the lives of our pupils

Any data collected, stored or managed as a result of this policy is in accordance with UK and any relevant retained or assimilated EU law, and in line with the Trust's ethos and values.

This Policy has been framed in accordance with the guidance on best practice from the Department for Education (DfE).

3. Objectives and Scope

3.1 The specific aims of this policy are to:

- Outline the Trust's ethos on attendance and the rationale which underpins each school's attendance procedures.
- Provide the policy framework within which schools will meet their statutory obligations with regard to school attendance.
- Identify how the Trust prioritises attendance and works in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and external partners, including the local authority, to enable good attendance.
- The appendices detail the procedures that school will follow and procedures for parents/carers to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

3.2 This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- Equality Act 2010;
- Sentencing Act 2020
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2024
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, 2015
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs, 2013
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, 2015
- School census guidance, 2022
- Home to school travel and transport guidance, 2014
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools, 2023

It follows local authority guidance from Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council including:

- Children Missing Education Guidance
- Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

3.3 This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusions and Suspensions Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

4. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the Trust central team

- To ensure that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- To ensure the policy is well communicated to all Headteachers.
- To ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- To ensure the implementation of and compliance with current policy and procedures at school level
- To monitor systems, resources, impact and actions related to the policy
- To ensure the policy is well communicated and staff understand their role in its implementation
- To handle any complaints at school level which arise through this policy.
- To regularly feedback to the School Performance Board on attendance and belonging
- Where necessary, to make requests for fixed-penalty notices and requests for other legal action.
- To attend legal meetings regarding absence or to delegate this to a suitable school leader.

4.3 Responsibilities of school leadership team

- To ensure staff are inducted into the procedures surrounding this policy and any updates and to support them in implementing it effectively
- To prioritise school actions to support good attendance, including school activities to support children to feel a sense of belonging in school
- To provide training to ensure policy compliance
- To hold sessions for parents/carers and pupils as required, to ensure the policy is understood
- One member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for overseeing attendance. They will oversee the monitoring and analysis of attendance data to understand attendance by group, particularly vulnerable groups, and to regularly feedback to the SLT
- To take responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements regarding attendance
- To gain feedback from stakeholders on strengths and weaknesses in school attendance procedures.

4.4 Responsibilities of all staff

- To uphold the whole school approach to the policy through modelling expected standards and utilising appropriate procedures
- To provide a warm and welcoming environment for all pupils, conducive to creating a sense of belonging
- To keep up to date with policy changes over time
- To promote a collaborative and inclusive ethos where all pupils can thrive
- To feed back to school leaders where concerns may arise in the implementation of the policy.

4.5 Responsibilities of teachers

- To record their pupils' attendance in line with the school's procedures (see appendices).
- To communicate regularly and effectively with parents/carers, ensuring parents/carers are aware of the importance of their child attending school and providing opportunities to discuss barriers to attendance at an early stage of concern.
- If required, in line with the school's attendance procedures, to raise attendance concerns with parents/carers.

4.6 Responsibilities of SENCO

- To regularly meet with the Attendance Lead to review the attendance of pupils with SEND and agree actions required
- To take action to proactively mitigate persistent and severe absence through data-oriented approaches and adjusting additional support for pupils with SEND or where there is a concern that a pupil may have SEND.

4.7 Responsibilities of DSL

- To regularly communicate with the Attendance Lead, identifying and supporting pupils where poor attendance is a safeguarding concern and including pupils at ALP or those educated offsite
- In collaboration with other leaders, to have oversight of the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils and agree any action needed.

4.8 Responsibilities of Attendance Team

- To monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- To report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate
- To arrange calls/meetings/home visits with parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns
- To proactively work to improve pupil attendance by using knowledge of anticipated absence (e.g. through prior analysis) to support pupils (and their parents/carers) in attending school regularly and on time, and to recognise and praise pupils (and their parents/carers) whose attendance is improving.

4.9 Responsibilities of parents/carers

- To support the implementation of the policy with their child, as appropriate
- Where a parent/carer has feedback on the implementation of the policy, to raise this directly with the school while continuing to work in partnership with the school.

4.10 Responsibilities of pupils

- To uphold school rules and expectations and thereby comply with the implementation of the policy
- To feed back on the implementation of the policy through appropriate means, such as school council, to school staff.

5. Prioritising good attendance

Trust in Learning Academies is committed to prioritising the promotion of good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled, acting early to address patterns of absence, and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

5.1 Belonging

Trust in Learning Academies places a particular emphasis on creating a 'sense of belonging', so that pupils feel a secure connection to the school which they attend. This involves the proactive implementation of strategies which foster positive attitudes towards school and develop a sense of belonging. This is paramount to ensuring good attendance.

To this end, the Trust's schools strive to provide a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents/carers. This enables any potential barriers to attendance to be supported together. Improving attendance is everyone's business.

5.2 Establishing good attendance habits

Trust in Learning Academies want all pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace. Children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Schools encourage parents of pre-school children, and Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them.

The Trust expects pupils to attend school every day unless they are really not well enough.

5.3 'Support First'

In line with Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024, Trust in Learning Academies advocates a 'support first approach' to attendance.

The principals of a 'support first approach' are implemented through the TILA Attendance Framework. Through this the school seeks to:

Support first approach	
Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

6. Recording attendance

6.1. Contents of the attendance register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school enters pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent/carer, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. As the register is a legal document, parents/carers are encouraged to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

The law states that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code is entered for every pupil (Appendix 1). The school records whether each pupil is present or absent.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported by the use of schools' electronic Management Information System (MIS) to record attendance information. The school's registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

6.2 Daily recording of attendance

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. Pupils are recorded as late (Code L) if they arrive within 30 minutes of when the register opens; after that they will be marked as Code U (unauthorised absence – late after the register closes). However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. If a pupil leaves the premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

All absences are recorded in the attendance register in the school's management information system. Information about the reason for the absence, how it was reported, by whom, and any additional information pertinent to the absence may also be recorded.

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that pupils attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The school's morning and afternoon registration procedures are detailed in Appendix 2.

6.3 Effects of late arrival

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage pupils and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

If a pupil starts arriving late to the school on a regular basis, staff will work with the pupil and family to find out why the pupil is late and whether any support is needed for the pupil or family, in order to support the pupil to attend on time.

6.4 Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K: attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: attending work experience
- Code B: attending any other approved education activity
- Code D: dual registered at another setting.

The school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. The school should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby providers notify the school of any absence. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or pupil referral unit, for part or all of their education, the school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark the registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, the school will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify school staff of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure the school is aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and can take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance is updated daily unless agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by the school in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

6.5 Authorised absence

Authorised absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. Codes classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' include:

- Code C1: leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code C: leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

6.5a Medical/dental appointments

Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office and signed out by the parent/carer or another authorised adult. No pupil is allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

6.5b Part-time timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have. If, for any reason, the school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, staff will work with the pupil, parent/carer and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any part-time timetable will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible. See Appendix 3 for full details.

6.5c Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents/carers the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents/carers will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent/carer with

whom the pupil normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. Parents/carers should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated, and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. Although such absence may be unauthorised, school need to know that the pupil is safe, rather than missing. Parents/carers may be required to provide additional evidence in order to support any request for authorised absence under exceptional circumstances.

If the school has any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage they will follow the necessary protocols outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, where possible in advance, and agreed with social sare and the virtual school for children in care. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the virtual school in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6.5d Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code I: illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code T: parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: religious observance
- Code E: suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made.

6.5e Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have not been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

The school follows Department for Education guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024), which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. Where a parent/carer cannot provide any written evidence, staff will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent/carer and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parents/carers aware of this expectation in advance.

6.5f Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff.

In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent/carer or another authorised adult (unless otherwise agreed between the school and the parent/carer) and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parent/carer confirmation.

6.5g Mobile pupils - parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents/carers as necessary. Parents/carers should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the pupil should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the pupil will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other pupils in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.5h Religious observance

The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process.

Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.5i Suspensions and exclusions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a suspension. The school follows the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions and suspensions, outlined in TILAs Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

Any suspension or exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher. The school will notify the parent/carer of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the virtual school. In other instances, where a pupil is open to social care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

6.5j Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, the school will record pupils as 'unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code Q: unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.

6.6 Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence is provided. Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school.

Whilst parents/carers can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping
- haircuts
- birthdays
- waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- day trips
- long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- in the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised.

The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – arrived in school after registration closed.

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, usually penalty notices or prosecutions.

Where necessary and applicable, the school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: planned whole school closure.

7. Supporting attendance concerns

7.1. Support for poor school attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

When the school has concerns about the attendance of a pupil, staff do their best to make the parents/carers aware of the concerns about their pupil's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. Communication can be provided in accessible formats and can be offered in different languages if requested. School work with each pupil and family to identify barriers the pupil may be facing and support them to improve their attendance (7.2 Barriers to attendance).

In managing attendance concerns, the school follows the TILA Attendance Framework.

Where there are ongoing concerns about attendance such as no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with a member of staff to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract. If parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, it could result in legal sanctions.

If the school refers a case of poor school attendance to the local authority for legal sanctions, the school will show that they have warned the parents/carers that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

The school will not usually request legal sanctions from the local authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances the school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. When referring for legal sanctions, the school will show that they have warned the parents/carers that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

If the school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, staff will share information with other agencies as they deem necessary (7.5 Safeguarding and attendance).

7.2 Barriers to attendance

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. School staff encourage parents/carers and pupils to be open and honest with them about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/carer to give in to pressure to let the pupil stay at home. This can give the impression to the pupil that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. School staff need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents/carers in the best way.

To understand barriers to attendance, the school routinely monitor data to identify emerging attendance concerns. This includes identifying the individual needs of pupils, working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance, and formalising approaches in line with DfE guidance. The school works in collaboration with pupils and parents/carers, ensuring all stakeholders are treated with dignity and working to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

In communicating with parents/carers, staff highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance the school will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

The school supports pupils and parents/carers by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners work together to support pupils and parents/carers to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where a pupil's absence intensifies, the school works in partnership with the local authority and other relevant partners to increase support. Part-time timetables are only used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, and always aim to support pupils to reintegrate back into full time provision as quickly and as soon as possible.

7.3 Supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or a medical condition

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who have long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Trust in Learning Academies are mindful of the barriers these pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. For disabled pupils, 'reasonable adjustments' may be needed to the school environment or to policies to support good attendance.

7.4 Persistent and severe absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school routinely monitors data to identify emerging attendance concerns and seeks to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. If a pupils attendance does reduce to a level of persistent or severe absence, school works in partnership with the pupil and parents/carers to implement support which helps them overcome barriers to attending school.

The school is committed to sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7.5 Safeguarding and attendance

Schools are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding concerns. In line with government guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) staff investigate and report any suspected safeguarding concerns in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school monitors trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of their standard procedures. If a pupil is not attending as required, where the school deems it appropriate, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information. The school will follow

their safeguarding procedures to inform the local authority and/or the police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

7.5a Children Missing Education (CME)

If the school has reason to believe a pupil may no longer be living at the address held on record and staff are unable to confirm the whereabouts of the pupil through the school's usual processes, staff follow their local authority Children Missing Education guidance and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if further support is required for individual cases.

If a parent/carer notifies the school in writing that the pupil and family are moving out of the area and the pupil no longer requires a place, the school will remove the pupil from roll in line with the law and local authority guidance and will complete referrals/grounds for deletion notification forms as appropriate.

7.6 Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents/carers and children. Each case is considered individually. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parents/carers are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school refers cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to the local authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the local authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution:

- Penalty notice
  - The penalty is £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution.
  - If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.

- Prosecution
  - Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment.
  - See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Bristol City Council/South Gloucestershire Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance. See Appendix 5.

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of penalty notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four penalty notices would be issued. Penalty notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to penalty notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools. Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

8. Removing a pupil from the school roll

The school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The Trust does not encourage Elective Home Education (EHE), as for the vast majority of pupils, school education is best for their academic and social development. If a parent/carer expresses a wish to home educate, prior to this being agreed, steps will be taken to mitigate and/or resolve any identified issues and to ensure that this decision is made in the best interests of the child. In the event of a parent/carer electing to home educate, the school follows all legislative/local authority guidance to ensure the pupil is registered with the local authority as receiving EHE and that the local authority have assumed responsibility for the pupil, prior to deletion from roll.

For pupils who have moved out of area (including emigration), the school submits statutory notification as soon as it is made aware of the situation, and follows all legislative/local authority guidance to determine the precise date when the pupil should be deleted from roll.

For pupil transfers to a new school, the school will confirm the pupil's start date at the new school and that the pupil has started there and then submit the statutory notification to the local authority prior to deletion from roll.

9. Data use

The personal information used by Trust in Learning Academies to help manage attendance and absence is governed by the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Much of this information will be sensitive, to both pupils and their parents/carers, and staff take care to apply appropriate safeguards to ensure personal information is processed fairly and lawfully, is the minimum amount necessary to achieve our aims, is accurate, and where necessary, kept up to date, is not held for longer than is necessary and remains safe and secure.

Appendix 1: Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

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

Appendix 2: Registration procedure

Morning registration

Our gates open at **8.45am** and children are encouraged to come in from this time in order for them to settle in the classroom ready to learn.

Our pupils must arrive by **9:00 am** on each school day.

Pupils arriving after **9:00 am** will be marked as late (L) – which still counts as present.
See DfE Attendance Codes – Appendix One.

If a pupil arrives after the close of registration after **9:30 am**, they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the morning session. (See 'Unauthorised Absence' section for more information on unauthorised absences.) If a pupil arrives late after the registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

12.5 Afternoon registration

The afternoon register is taken at **1:00 pm** and will be kept open until **1:15 pm**.

If a pupil has been out of school during the morning and/or lunchtime session and arrives at school after the times set out above, they will be marked (L) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after **1:15 pm** they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code 'Late after registers close' (U) for the afternoon session. If a pupil arrives late after the afternoon registers close due to a valid reason, such as an unavoidable medical appointment, their absence will be marked with the appropriate authorised absence code.

Appendix 3: Part-Time Timetables

In line with the expectations of the Department for Education, all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

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

If, for any reason, the school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, staff will work with the pupil, parents/carers and other agencies where appropriate, to come to an arrangement that is deemed to be in the best interests of the child wherever possible. A decision to place a pupil on a part-time timetable should be approved by the Headteacher and must be agreed by the parents/carers.

Any part-time timetable should be in place for the shortest amount of time possible, it must not be treated as a long-term solution. A part-time timetable agreement must be completed and signed by parents/carers, It should be reviewed at least every two weeks, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time education at the academy or, where appropriate, at alternative provision.

The SENCO and DSL, as well as any other relevant members of staff, should also be aware of such arrangements and involved with decision making where appropriate.

Discussions and agreements should be clearly documented in writing and relevant information should be recorded in the school's management information system and CPOMS. The school will be mindful of any additional safeguarding risks to the pupil when they are not timetabled to attend school and will therefore consider carefully whether a part-time timetable is an appropriate measure.

If the pupil's part-time timetable means the pupil is expected to arrive at school after the register closes in the morning and/or be absent for the school's afternoon registration period, any such am and/or pm registrations must be recorded with the C code 'Leave of absence authorised by the school'.

Appendix 4: Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is issued as a final opportunity for a parent(s) to engage with the school in support for improving their child's attendance, prior to a Penalty Notice being issued.

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent, or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support has not been appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

A Notice to Improve should be issued in line with the Local Authority's Code of Conduct for the school at which the pupil attends. A Notice to Improve includes:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if sufficient attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a Penalty Notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

'Sufficient' improvement in attendance should be considered on a case-by-case basis and taken into account the individual family's circumstances. This should be made clear in the Notice to Improve.

In cases where it is clear that attendance improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a Penalty Notice prior to the improvement period ending (for example, if the agreed target for unauthorised absence is exceeded early within the improvement period). The parent should be informed before a Penalty Notice is issued if this is before the end of the improvement period.

Appendix 5: Issuing of Penalty Notices

Schools should consider when to issue Penalty Notices on a case-by-case basis where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for a Penalty Notice being considered, and the effectiveness of any existing support. The threshold of absence is detailed in The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, and is as follows:

10 sessions of unauthorised absence per rolling period of 10 school weeks, where a school week is any week with at least one school session. This unauthorised absence can include a combination of, for example, term time holiday with sessions of morning lateness following register closure and may, or may not, be consecutive within the 10-school week period. The rolling 10 school weeks can span terms, including the Summer term into the Autumn term.

When a school becomes aware of the threshold being met, they should consider the following factors prior to issuing a Penalty Notice:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
    - If yes, the existing support should be continued without a Penalty Notice being issued, or a Notice to Improve (see below) should be issued if the support is not working, or not being engaged with. A Penalty Notice can be issued if either has not worked.
    - If no, for example in the case of a term time holiday, a Penalty Notice should be issued, subject to the conditions below.

- Is a Penalty Notice likely to be the most appropriate and effective means of improving regular school attendance for this pupil and/or change the parental engagement with the school?

- Would issuing a Penalty Notice be appropriate having considered the obligations of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended), such as if the pupil has a disability?

- Would issuing a Penalty Notice risk contributing to the heightening of socio-economic disadvantage and/or not risk alienating a family from future fruitful partnership with the school?

Two Penalty Notice limit
If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour, they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool for securing improved attendance. Therefore, only 2 Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period. Any second Notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Escalation
A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first Penalty Notice was issued, a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous Penalty Notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty), but not those which were withdrawn.

Cross border checks

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous Penalty Notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. These checks can be made by the school and/or Local Authority (crossborder.penaltynotice@bristol.gov.uk) depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.

The payment of the Penalty Notice must be directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issued it.

Parents have no right of appeal against a Penalty Notice.