

# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims – Working together to improve attendance

At the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust, we believe that regular attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We value the attendance of all pupils and improving attendance is everyone's business.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the academy gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with our academies being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that our academies each have a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend education and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, our academies should work in partnership with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the responsibility of a single member of staff, but must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in all of our academies, the central team, governing bodies, the local authority, and other local partners.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in education or more broadly, requires DEMAT academies and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.

We aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance**. However, if this is unsuccessful, legal sanctions will be considered where appropriate.



When required, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a Penalty Notice/fine, or prosecution being issued, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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 one of our academies, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that Academy regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the academy 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 academy.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Associated Policies and Documents

This Policy/Procedure should be read in conjunction with the following DEMAT Policies/Procedures:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Principles of inclusion

## 4. Expectations

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.

- Ensure that they contact the school before **9am** if their child is unable to attend school, citing the reason.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure the school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.
- Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

**We expect that our Academies will:**

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, information from a GP or other relevant body may be requested to assist school in offering appropriate support.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality, for example through assemblies, social media, displays and parent/carer communications.
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Provide intensive and bespoke support to children at risk of persistent absence.
- Work alongside other services and teams to support children's attendance. E.g. other schools in a multi academy trust, the Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care, Virtual School and the local community (including volunteers).
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance and success looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and children regarding attendance.
- Follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who are failing to access education in school due to medical and behavioural needs. This goes hand in hand with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for children with medical needs.

- Work alongside LA Inclusion teams to identify and support children with medical needs preventing them from attending school.

All members of staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Headteacher having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and/or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

**We expect that all children will:**

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance.

**We expect that governors will:**

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.

**We expect that the Local Authority will:**

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support in some cases of persistent absence.
- Work with schools in the enforcement of penalty notices, fines and prosecutions in cases that require legal involvement.
- Identify suitable provision and reasonable adjustments for pupils unable to access education due to prolonged ill health.

## **5. Categorising Absence and Attendance**

When marking registers, DEMAT academies will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance. [Attendance and absence codes](#)

## **6. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.**

The law requires all of our academies to have an admission register and an attendance register. These registers must be kept electronically. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register.

### **6.1 Admission register ('the school roll')**

The admission register must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with their start date, information regarding parents, and details of the school last attended. [Full details on the keeping of the admission register can be found in chapter 7.](#)

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

## 6.2 Attendance Register

Academies must take the attendance register at the start of each morning and afternoon session of each school day. On each occasion they must record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. [Full details on the keeping of the attendance register can be found in chapter 8.](#)

At **The Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust** all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the academic year. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to their academy start time. The register will be taken immediately at the start of each day. All pupils arriving after the specified start time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign in and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before **the close of register** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

**Each academy register will officially close 30 minutes after opening.** All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorized as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

***Please note:*** L or U codes will also be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the afternoon session.

## 6.3 Retaining and amending registers

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance. Academies are expected to use the electronic management information system- Bromcom- to keep their attendance and admission registers to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier.

Registers are legal records and all academies must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date the data was entered. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

**Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.**

## 6.4 Granting leaves of Absence

Our academies can grant a leave of absence **when a pupil needs to be absent from school with prior permission.** All academies are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024.](#)

These circumstances are:

- **Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad:** in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). [\(For full details please see code C1\)](#)
- **Attending an interview:** for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- **A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:** where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend the Academy as part of that timetable. [\(For full details please see part-time timetable\)](#)
- **Exceptional circumstances:** All academies can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. [\(Please see Code C\)](#). Academies are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Academy to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from education.

**Exceptional circumstances** (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised which could make it subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.
- **Protest activity during school hours.**

All academies are also able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend [\(For full details see code X\)](#).

**Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a fortnight before the planned leave.** If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised.



Academies will treat each application individually and discuss with parents the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the Academy may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave;
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken;
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, academies will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible **children missing from education** procedures being instigated.

#### 6.5 Education off site

As well as the above leaves of absence, all academies can also allow pupils to be absent from the academy site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings:

- to attend an offsite approved educational activity. ([For full details see Code B](#))
- to attend another school at which the pupil is registered (dual-registration). ([For full details see Code D](#))
- to attend provision arranged by the local authority. e.g. alternative provision or as part of an education, health and care plan. ([For full details see Code K](#))
- to participate in an approved sporting activity. ([For full details see Code P](#))
- to attend an educational visit or trip arranged by the school. ([For full details see Code V](#))
- to attend work experience. ([For full details see Code W](#))

These circumstances are part of delivering a full-time education and are not classified as absences for statistical purposes. [See chapter 7 for full details on recording these circumstances.](#)

#### 6.6 Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances, their education may be provided partially at one of our academies and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Time away from our academies to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes ([see chapter 8](#)).

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for an academy to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending one of our Academies or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. ([For full details please see part-time timetable](#))

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process. If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, an academy has agreed to a pupil being absent for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly ([normally using code X or C2](#)).

#### 6.7 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of Academy hours, we ask that parent notify the Academy in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be absent for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day of education for an appointment. No pupil will be allowed to leave the Academy site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the Academies absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. If Academies have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, they may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the Academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend an Academy-led Attendance Support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make any supportive referrals to external services and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, Academies will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and relevant Local Authority policies on Medical Needs and consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

#### 6.8 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

The Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside academy holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the academy will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

### 6.9 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils.

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6), the academy will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend education because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending education as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around their Local Authority, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base Academy (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. **The DEMAT academy which the pupil is on roll will be regarded as the 'base academy'** if it is the academy where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended the academy in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other education settings temporarily while away from their base Academy; in such cases, the pupil's school place at the base academy will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their academy of usual attendance.

To ensure academies can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the academy of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the Academy regarding proposed return dates.

### 6.10 Pupils with a social worker and/or youth offending team worker

To facilitate effective working across the local authority area, Academies are expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences. Children missing education officers or an academy's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team should also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register.

6.11 Pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending education, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations, or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend education regularly - in many instances, regular attendance may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from their Academy might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

Academy staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings as much as possible.

Academies may also find it helpful to refer to [DfE's non-statutory guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) for case study examples.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided. In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply. [Further guidance on pupils absent from school due to mental, physical ill health or their SEND needs.](#)

6.12 Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

Academies are expected to:

- Work in partnership parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main academy day. [Please see further details on SEN support.](#)
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.

- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return would be appropriate.

Attendance is everyone's business so in many of these cases Academies will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies.

Academies should:

- make use of educational nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
- consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.
- work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support where external support is provided.

If the child has an education health and care plan, academy staff should:

- Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Where possible agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents.
- Where needed work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases (see code I). Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, academies can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

Academies should ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and or special educational needs or disabilities including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

### 6.13 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the academy. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation

- A refusal to attend the Academy on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the Academy

## 7 Persistent and severe absence

Where absence escalates to persistent and pupils miss 10% or more of their education (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across an academic year), academies and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

In doing so, academies should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of the academy being a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

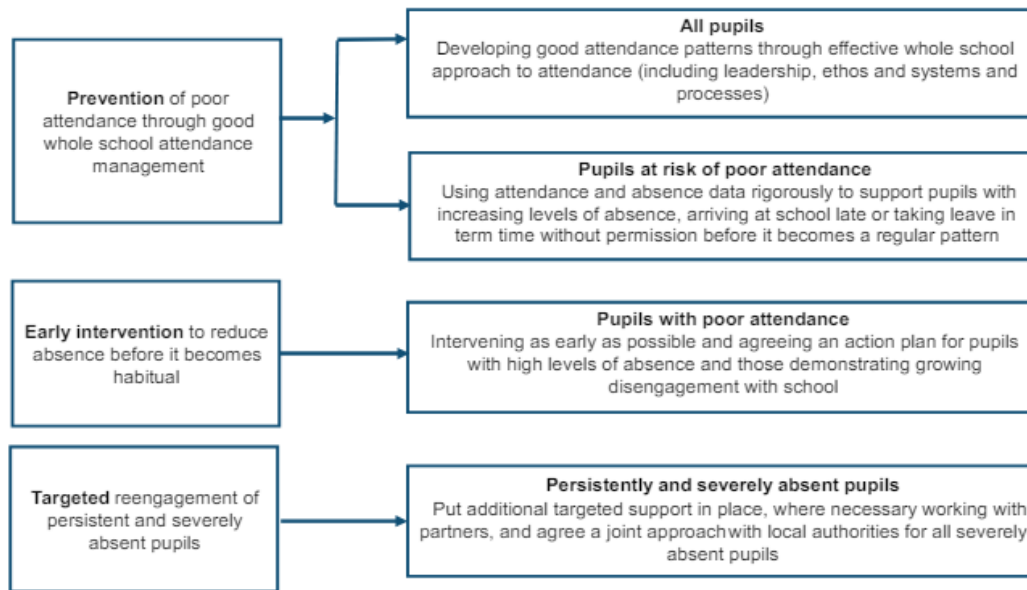
Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are severely absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by our academies, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, **it is likely to constitute neglect.**

Academies should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, complete a children's social care referral. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

In all cases, academies will be expected to ensure patterns of both persistent and severe absence are a focus of their weekly data monitoring, with cases discussed at fortnightly Designated Safeguarding Lead meetings and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence should also be central to Academy, trust, and local authority level strategies for improving attendance.

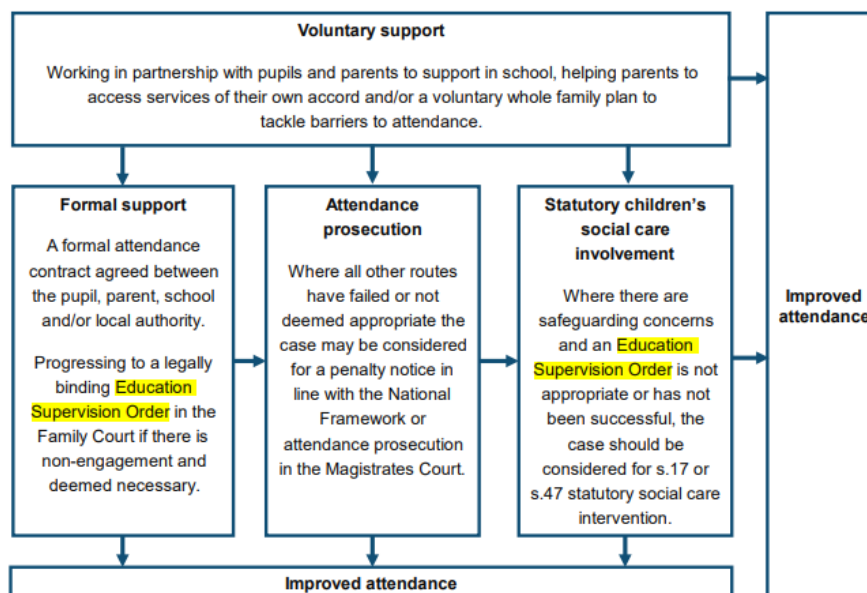
### Effective school attendance improvement and management



## 8 Attendance legal intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, academies should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention





Academies and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution.

These are:

- [Attendance Contracts](#)
- [Education supervision orders](#)
- [Attendance prosecution](#)
- [Parenting orders](#)
- [Penalty notices](#)

It is for individual academies and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

Where they are used, it should be clear that it is the most appropriate intervention to change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, headteachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

## **9 Penalty Notices**

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days), they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age.

If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## **10 Child missing education**

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the academy will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, the child is at risk of losing their school place with us.

## **11 Working with cross-border pupils**

In cases where a pupil lives in one local authority area and attends an academy in another, the overarching principle is that both the local authority in whose area the pupil attends education (the 'School LA') and the local authority in whose area the pupil lives (the 'Home LA') work together to support the pupil and family. This feeds into each local authority's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Each local authority also has specific expectations for delivering



certain actions. For an explanation of whether responsibility sits with the Home or academy LA please see [page 40-42](#)

## 12 Requirements on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

Academies should share daily attendance data with the DfE by giving approval for Wonde to access their MIS. [Guidance on sharing daily attendance data](#)

## 13 Monitoring and Reporting on attendance

All attendance Champions will:

- monitor and analyse **weekly** attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at **individual pupils, cohorts and year groups** (including their punctuality)
- Use this analysis to **provide fortnightly attendance reports at DSL meetings**. (including copying in any special educational needs coordinators and pupil premium leads where necessary). Identifying the pupils who need support due to persistent and severe absence developing targeted actions for those cases that will be followed up In the next DSL meeting.
- Feedback to class teachers via a **Fortnightly Attendance item on the staff meeting agenda** to enable them to facilitate discussions with pupils and parents. Identifying the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases. This should not just focus on persistent and severe absence but look at all severities of absence to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.
- Conduct thorough analysis of **half-termly, termly, and full year data** to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of vulnerable pupil groups, cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance. Provide a termly report to Governors.
- Benchmark, **half termly**, attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.

## **Attendance Information for Parents**

**School start time (register opens): 8:30 am**

**Registers will close at 9:00 am (30 minutes after registered has opened.)**

**To report an absence please call: 01945 410 312 (option 1)**

**Academy Attendance Officer for day to day contact:**

**Name: Audrey Embling**

**Contact details: [office@wsmacademy.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@wsmacademy.cambs.sch.uk)**

**Academy Attendance Champion**

**Name: Audrey Embling**

**Contact details: [office@wsmacademy.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@wsmacademy.cambs.sch.uk)**

### **First Day Absence procedures:**

Parents are expected to notify the academy **each day** if their child is unable to attend for an unavoidable reason, such as illness.

If the academy does not receive notification, we will:

- Send a message asking you to make contact with the school as soon as possible.
- Call all numbers for those with parental responsibility.
- Call other contacts
- If all avenues of communication have been exhausted with no response we will conduct a home visit.
- If concerns persist, we may ask the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' check.

## **Strategies for promoting attendance: What We Do at Wisbech St Mary Church of England Academy (WSM)**

At Wisbech St Mary Church of England Academy, we are committed to promoting excellent attendance among our pupils. We aim to achieve this by:

### **1. Understanding Our Pupils and Families:**

We take the time to get to know our pupils and their families, understanding their unique challenges and circumstances. This helps us address the root causes of absenteeism effectively.

### **2. Fostering a Sense of Community and Belonging:**

We create an inclusive and supportive environment where every pupil feels seen, understood, and safe. Our activities and school culture ensure that pupils feel they belong.

### **3. Effective Communication with Families:**

We maintain open and regular communication with parents, keeping them informed and engaged. This helps us address attendance issues promptly and collaboratively.

### **4. Enhancing the School Experience:**

We strive to provide high-quality teaching and engaging learning opportunities. Our lessons and extracurricular activities are designed to motivate pupils to attend school regularly.

### **5. Monitoring and Tracking Attendance:**

We use data to monitor attendance patterns and intervene early when issues arise. Regular tracking helps us address problems before they become serious.

### **6. Celebrating Good Attendance:**

We recognise and reward good attendance through certificates, assemblies, and other incentives. This encourages pupils to maintain regular attendance.

### **Link to LA strategies for supporting attendance: Supporting Attendance with Local Authority Strategies**

We also align our efforts with local authority strategies to support attendance. You can find detailed information for parents about school attendance on the Cambridgeshire County Council website. Here is the link: **School Attendance - Cambridgeshire County Council (<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance>)**

If you have any questions or need further details, feel free to reach out to us!