

The Priory School

Attendance Policy

Selfless, Self-assured and Successful

Approved: Summer Term 2024

Contents

Introduction	4
Principles and Ethos	4
Excellent school attendance, high expectations and future prospects.	4
Attendance is everyone’s responsibility.	5
Specific Responsibilities	5
The Law on school attendance.....	7
Culture of support and inclusivity.....	8
Use of resources	9
Celebrating and Incentivising Excellent and Significantly Improved Attendance	9
The Trust’s Commitment	9
Definition of Excellent Attendance and Categories of Absence	10
Authorised and Unauthorised Absence from School	11
Illness.....	11
Other absences.....	12
Day to Day Procedures.....	14
Admissions Register.....	14
Attendance Registers	14
Notifying the school of your child’s absence	16
Supporting Attendance and Punctuality	16
Attendance Intervention.....	16
Working with parents to improve attendance.....	17
SEND and health-related absences.....	17
Persistent Absence PA (attendance less than 90%).....	18
Legal Intervention.....	18
Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality	18
Children Missing in Education.....	19
Reduced Timetables.....	19
Policy Monitoring and Review.....	19
Monitoring	19
Review	19
Appendix A - Definition of Parental Responsibility	21
Who has parental responsibility?.....	21
Births registered in England and Wales.....	21
Unmarried parents.....	21
Births registered in Scotland.....	21

Births registered in Northern Ireland.....	21
Births registered outside the UK.....	21
Same-sex parents	21
Appendix B – Request for Leave of Absence	22

Introduction

This policy applies to all schools within The 3-18 Education Trust.

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' refers to all adults or carers with either

- Parental Responsibility (please refer to Appendix A) or
- Responsibility for the day-to-day care of the pupil.

Throughout this policy the term 'attendance' may also refer to absence and punctuality (lateness).

Abbreviations used throughout this policy:

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CME	Child Missing in Education
DFE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EAL	Pupils with English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Educational Health Care Plan
FSM	Free School Meal Pupils
IHCP	Individual Health Care Plan
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Pupils (A child is looked after by LA if he or she is in their care or if he or she is provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours by)
PA	Persistent Absence (attendance less than 90%)
PP	Pupil Premium
PPOE	Pupil Missing Out on Education
SA	Severely Absent (attendance less than 50%)
SEND	Special Educational Need/Disability
SENDCO	Special Educational Needs/Disability Co-Ordinator
SW	Pupils with a Social Worker

Principles and Ethos

Excellent school attendance, high expectations and future prospects.

The 3-18 Education Trust believes that attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system.

- *Academic Achievement:* Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- *Knowledge Acquisition:* School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- *Social Development:* School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- *Building Routine:* School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- *Teacher Interaction:* Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.

- *Preventing Knowledge Gaps:* Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- *School Engagement:* Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.
- *Legal and Parental Responsibility:* Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to legal consequences.
- *Community Well-being:* High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

It is acknowledged that parents of children who are not of statutory school age cannot be subject to legal processes if their child has poor school attendance.

Statutory school age is:

- All children in England must receive an effective education from the first 'prescribed day', which falls on or after their 5th birthday and must remain in school until the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16.
- The 'prescribed days' are 1st January 1st April or 1st September following the child's 5th birthday. For example, children becoming 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Securing excellent school attendance and promoting the importance of such, is the responsibility of the whole school community. Each school ensures that each member of the school community understands their attendance roles and responsibilities, is consistent in their communication with parents and pupils and receive the relevant training required to support excellent attendance.

Specific Responsibilities

Trust Board – including but not limited to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies.
- Ensure Trust and school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Receive regular reports on attendance from the CEO.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends.
- Have an understanding of the attendance trends across the Trust and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Have an understanding of Trust attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets.

CEO – including but not limited to:

- Ensure Trust and school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Receive regular reports on attendance from each Headteacher via the School Overview File.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Understand the attendance trends across the Trust and put in place actions to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.

- Understand Trust attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets.

Local Governing Bodies – including but not limited to:

- Provide professional support, and challenge to the Headteacher/School Strategic Lead for Attendance regarding attendance
- Receive regular reports on attendance from the Head Teacher/School Strategic Lead for Attendance
- Have an understanding of the attendance trends across the school and the actions in place to improve/sustain high attendance including for vulnerable groups.
- Have an understanding of school attendance performance in comparison to national averages and progress towards targets.
- Consider any complaints regarding this Policy in line with the Trust's Complaint Procedure.

Head Teacher and School Strategic Lead for Attendance – including but not limited to:

- The day-to-day implementation of this Policy and attendance management procedures.
- Ensure all staff, parents, and pupils are aware of the school's attendance expectations.
- Monitor attendance data and identifying trends (including for vulnerable groups and individual pupils).
- Develop, implement and review a strategic approach and action plans to address areas of development/improving attendance.
- Monitor the impact of attendance interventions.
- Ensure the effective deployment of resources to promote excellent attendance across the school, vulnerable groups and for individual pupils.
- Ensure the accurate and timely reporting of attendance data to the Trust Strategic Lead for Attendance,
- Ensure that relevant staff with key responsibilities (e.g. PP, EAL, SENDCOs, Heads of Year etc) are aware of attendance performance and are accountable for excellent attendance within their areas of responsibility.
- Communicate with pupils and parents regarding attendance, including individual pupil attendance.
- Ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education.
- Inform the LA of CME, PPOE and pupils being deleted from the admissions register.
- Update the School Overview File on a termly basis and ensuring a robust attendance action plan is in place to deal with any data dips relating to particular groups/individuals.

Parents – including but not limited to:

- Provide up to date and accurate contact information.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact.
- Ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and have excellent school attendance.
- Not to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for holidays.
- Inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of absence.
- Keep in regular contact with the school during a period of absence.
- Contact the school for support if school attendance/punctuality is a challenge.

Pupils – including but not limited to:

- Attend lessons and off-site activities as arranged by the school.

- Be punctual to lessons.
- Talk to an adult in school if they find attending school/being punctual a challenge.

The Law on school attendance

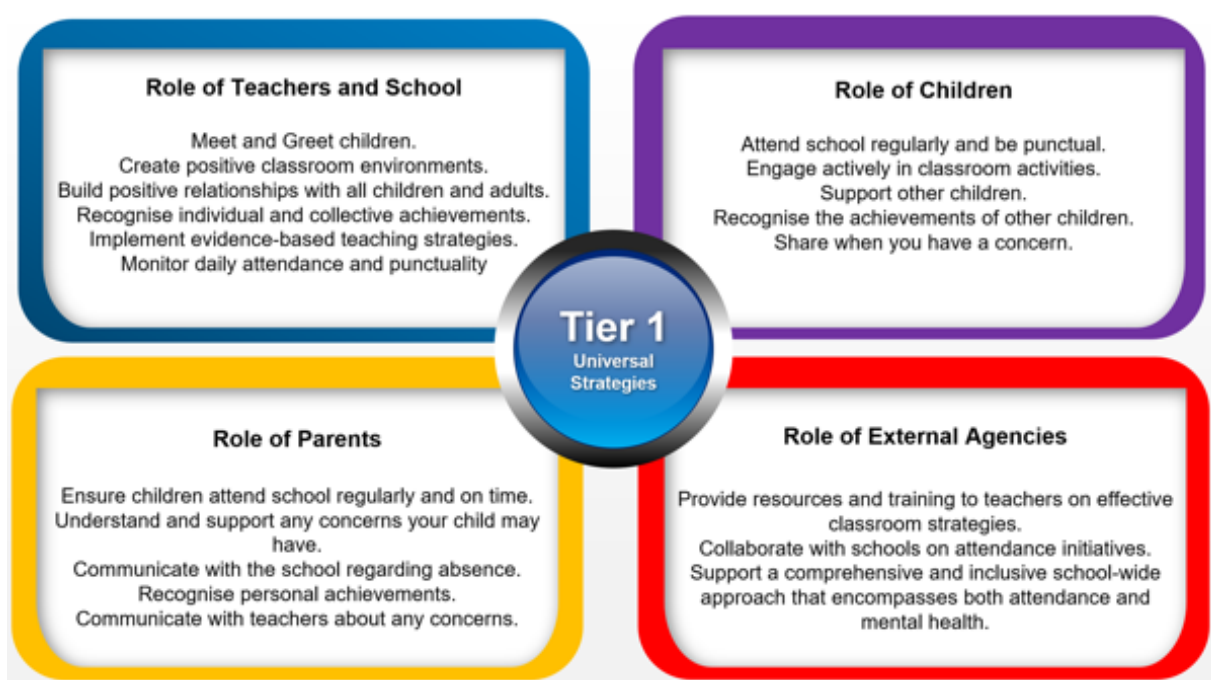
Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their child receives an education at school or by education otherwise than at school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Department for Education – ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ August 2024.

Both parents, with parental responsibility, are equally liable for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time, regardless of who the child resides with or who is the main carer. Therefore, they may both be contacted when deemed necessary in managing attendance and punctuality. Similarly, where it is necessary to enforce statutory action (such as issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices) both parents will be liable.

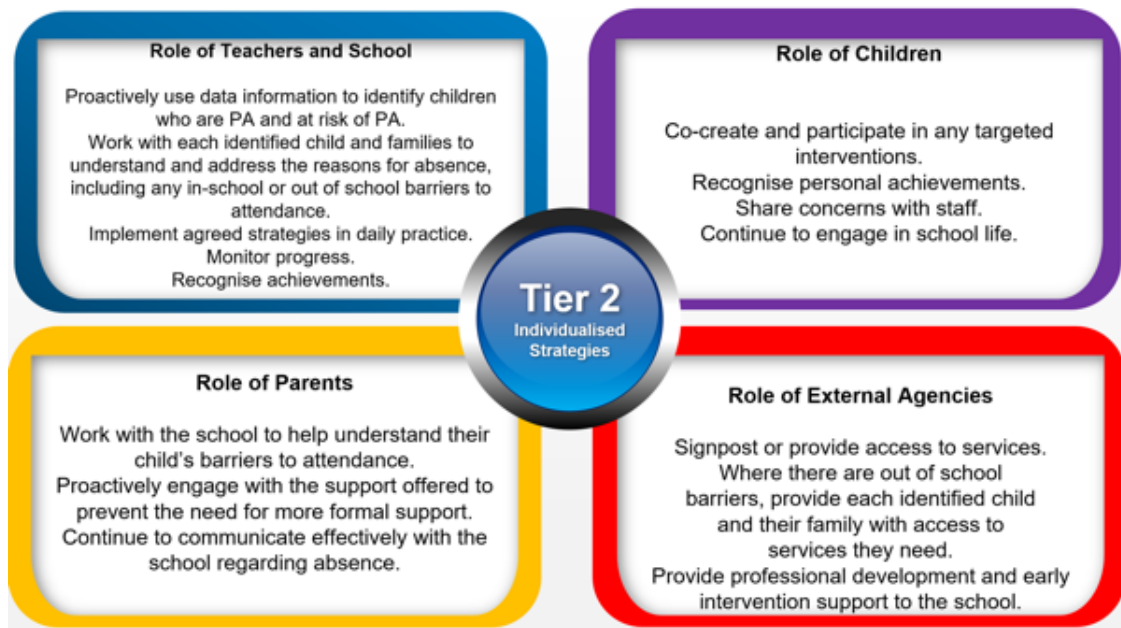
Multi-Tiered System of Support

To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, we implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support across our trust. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority. Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of the system. The system aligns with the Department for Education’s (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidelines.

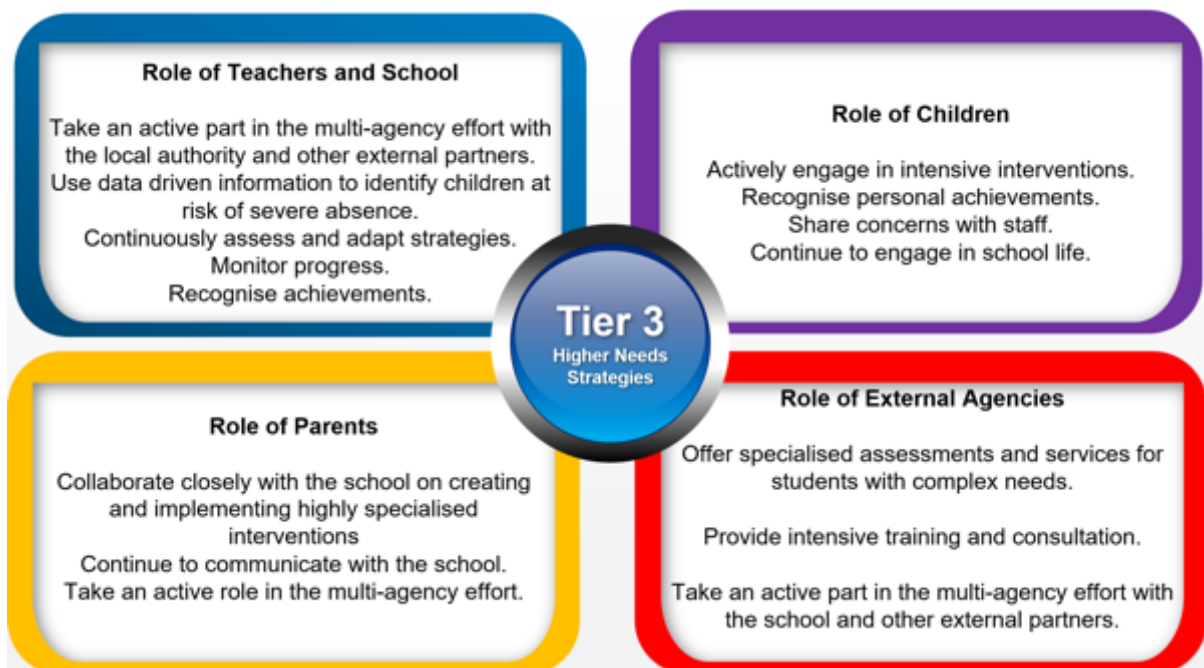
Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



Tier 2 – Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



Culture of support and inclusivity

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance or attendance is a challenge, it is the Trust's aim to work with pupils and their families in a supportive manner to improve attendance by removing any barriers. The Trust and its schools recognise the importance of building strong relationships with pupils and their families.

Where a pupil has a medical condition (physical or emotional), a disability, a special educational need or indeed any other factor which may present a barrier to attendance the Trust upholds its expectation of excellent attendance. The Trust endeavours to work with these pupils and their families, taking into account their individual needs, in order to make reasonable and supportive adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance.

Where parents are facing challenges in getting their child to attend school, they should contact the school to seek support and resolve any potential underlying issues so that attendance can be improved. Older pupils are encouraged to be proactive in speaking to a trusted adult in school, should they have concerns about attending school.

Offering bespoke, individual support, encouragement and making reasonable adjustments to facilitate excellent school attendance, for those facing challenges or over coming barriers, is always our priority.

Use of resources

As part of the Trust's commitment to promoting excellent school attendance schools ensure that attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced. This may include both financial (for example, effective use of pupil premium funding) and human (deployment of senior leaders, attendance and pastoral staff, external agencies and professionals) resources.

Celebrating and Incentivising Excellent and Significantly Improved Attendance

Each school has individual ways of promoting and incentivising excellent and significantly improved attendance.

At The Priory School, all staff encourage high levels of attendance and promote the positive impact of this e.g. weekly House group focus via bulletin, messages in assemblies, tutor period tracking in student planners and letters home. Focus on and praise those students with the most improved attendance.

The Trust's Commitment

The Trust is committed to:

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

- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- Working across schools and MATS to share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

Definition of Excellent Attendance and Categories of Absence

The Trust aims for ALL pupils' attendance to be in line or above national averages – no more than 6 days absence in any one year.

**There are 380 possible attendance sessions/190 days in one academic year.
Each day being divided into 2 sessions.**

97% and above	95% to 97%	Less than 95%	Less than 90%	Less than 50%
Excellent	Good	Concerning	Persistent Absence/Critical	Severely Absent/Critical
No more than 6 days/12 sessions absent in a year	No more than 10 days/20 sessions absent in a year	More than 10 days/20 sessions absent in a year	19 days/38 sessions or more absent in a year	95 days/190 sessions or more absent in a year

Days off school add up to lost learning

175 NON SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR

175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments

Lost Learning

If your child is late 10 minutes a day - surely that won't matter or affect my child..

Only missing just..	That equals..	Which is...	Over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 ½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ a year
20 minutes per day	1hour 40minutes per week	Over 2 ½ weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years

Surely 1 or 2 days absent a week doesn't seem much but this is how it is..

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence from School

The law states that *'children must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school'*. Department for Education – *'Working together to improve school attendance'* August 2024

Absence from school falls into 2 categories – authorised and unauthorised. Only the school can authorise an absence, not parents.

An **authorised absence** is where:

- A child is too ill to attend school (as per UK Health Security Agency guidance: see Illness below) and
- The absence is unavoidable and exceptional.
- A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances has been granted by the school.

An **unauthorised absence** is where:

- The school considers that the pupil was well enough to attend school but did not.
- The school considers that the absence was not unavoidable or exceptional.
- A leave of absence request is declined but still taken (this includes holidays in term time).
- Reasons for absence have been falsified.

Further information on authorised and unauthorised absence can be found in *'Working together to improve school attendance'* DFE Sept 2024 Chapter 8 Contents of the attendance register [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Illness

Illnesses may not mean a child cannot attend school. Schools and parents are asked to refer to the UK Health Guidance *'How long should you keep your child off school'*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infectious-diseases-schools-and-other-childcare-settings/how-long-should-you-keep-your-child-off-school-checklist-poster-text-version>

Where a child requires medication throughout the school day to enable them to attend school parents should liaise with the school who may make suitable arrangements in line with the school's *'Administration of Medication Policy'*. If there are circumstances effecting a child's health and ability to attend school parents should again liaise with the school so that reasonable adaptations can be made (For example, in hay fever seasons it is not necessary to keep a child at home when school may be able to make adaptations).

Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention.

Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

All pupils should return to school as soon as they are well enough.

Other absences

There are very few circumstances where other absence from school will be authorised.

Medical Appointments

Parents are asked to make routine medical, dental and opticians outside the school day. If this is not possible, absence will be approved for medical appointments during the school day.

Requests for Leave of Absence – exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the event and in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form given in Appendix A. Parents do not have the right of appeal if a request for a leave of absence is declined, the head teacher's decision is final.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted for pupils who are at a level of persistent absence (less than 90%) or where attendance/punctuality are a concern.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted during periods of public examinations or internal school assessments.

Leave of absence will NOT be granted for holidays during term time regardless of circumstances.

Where leave of absence is NOT authorised and parents decide to take pupils out of school despite the school's decision, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice (a fine).

Where a pupil fails to return to school after an agreed period of leave of absence, absence will be recorded as unauthorised, a fixed penalty notice (fine) may be requested, and they may be reported to the Local Authority as 'A Child Missing in Education.'

Grounds for Deleting a Pupil from School register – DFE – [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Ground H - The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence Relevant regulation 9(1)(h)

245. Where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence and:

- the pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for,*
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and*
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:*
 - o they have not succeeded, or*
 - o they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.*

246. DfE's guidance on [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) sets out the expectations for schools and local authorities in respect of making reasonable efforts to find out a pupil's location and circumstances.

Circumstance	Number of Days which maybe be authorised	Additional Notes All requests MUST be made in writing, 2 weeks in advance using Appendix B
Religious Observance	1 day in any one academic year.	Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.
Family Celebration	Each case will be looked at independently by the headteacher. Advice can be sought by LA EWO.	Additional days for travelling abroad may NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.
Family Emergency/compassionate leave	Each case will be looked at independently by the headteacher. Advice can be sought by LA EWO.	Additional days for travelling abroad may NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.
Participation in a performance	Dependent on LA licence. Absence must <u>not</u> to be authorised if licence not obtained by parents from LA	Additional days for travelling abroad will NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice. Parents are required to obtain a licence from the LA. Not to be authorised if a pupil's attendance would fall below 96%. School to make arrangements for pupil to receive a suitable education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For not less than 6 hours per week and • During each complete period of 4 weeks or if less than 4 weeks during that period, for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day and • On days where pupils would be expected to attend school and • For not more than 5 hours on any such day
Participation in a sporting event – competing at a national level or above only.	Each case will be looked at independently by the headteacher. Advice can be sought by LA EWO.	Additional days for travelling abroad may NOT be authorised and may be subject to a fixed penalty notice.
Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Absence	NA but only travel for occupational circumstances	Absences will not be granted for any other reasons other than exceptional circumstances

Schools are under no obligation to provide work for pupils who are absent from school, unless parents/carers have received a licence from the LA for their child to take part in sporting/arts/theatre events as part of professional organisation, as detailed above.

Remote learning for pupils unable to attend school will only be provided in exceptional circumstances (e.g. long-term illness supported by medical evidence, unexpected school closure).

Further information about authorised and unauthorised absences can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE August 2024 Section 8 Contents of the attendance register.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Day to Day Procedures

Admissions Register

All pupils are placed on an admissions (school roll) and attendance register. The admissions register must include specific information.

Further information about authorised and unauthorised absences can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE Sept 2024 Section 7 Contents of the admissions register ('the school roll')

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Expected First Day of Attendance

Pupils (both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) must be entered on the admissions register on the first day they are expected to attend. If a pupil fails to attend on the expected first day of attendance the school must strive to locate the pupil and establish the reason for not attending.

When a pupil is added to the admissions register (other than at the usual transition points, for example, pupils who are registered at secondary school at the start of year 7) the school must notify the LA within 5 days.

Deletion of a pupil from the admissions register (removal from school roll)

There are specific circumstances where a pupil maybe removed from the admissions register (school roll)

Further information about Deletion of a pupil from the admissions register can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE August 2024 Section 7 Contents of the admissions register ('the school roll') (paragraphs 152 – 196)

Deletion of names from Admission Register

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Attendance Registers

Schools must take an attendance register at the start of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. All our schools use Arbor to ensure the accurate recording of attendance information, data analysis and information sharing.

Attendance registers are legal documents and must be preserved for a period of 3 years.

All schools will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are recorded in a consistent way.

Attendance registers should not be amended or altered unless the reason for absence is established after the register has closed. Any amendments to the register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Schools must include specific information in attendance registers.

Further information can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE August 2024:

- Authorised and unauthorised absence: Section 8 Contents of the attendance register
- Specific information in attendance registers Section 8 Contents of the attendance register

[Working together to improve school attendance \(19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Morning Registration

The school gates open to welcome pupils at 8am and close at 8:30am. Pupils arriving after 8.30am but before 8.40am attend form but are marked late (L code) by their Form Tutor. Those arriving after 8.40am report to reception to sign in on Inventory, explaining the reason for their lateness this will be marked as late (L code).

All students arriving late will be told to report to the School Hall at break for a late detention with Senior Leadership Team.

Pupils arriving after 8:55am will be marked as late after register closes (U code). This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage.

Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration is open from 1.40pm to 2.10pm. Pupils arriving after registration closes (after 2.10pm), will be marked as late after register closes (U code). This is an unauthorised absence and negatively impacts a pupils attendance percentage

Lesson Registration

In secondary schools, attendance and punctuality registers are also taken for individual lessons.

If a pupil isn't present for a lesson, they will receive an O code, which means they are missing from the lesson.

- Registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- Attendance administrator runs a report to check for N codes and cross references these against daily attendance.
- All students with N codes are accounted for but vulnerable students are prioritised.
- Students who are deemed to be missing from lesson but in school are tracked down by student support and SLT. A note is recorded on Arbor as to whether the absence was legitimate or truancy.
- If a student is unable to be found, parents are called and informed that their child has absconded.

Leaving The Premises During the School Day

When a student is known to have left without consent or permission parents are informed immediately. Reasons why are established, and appropriate action is implemented to try to prevent a reoccurrence.

Notifying the school of your child's absence

Parents must notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend school by 08:20.

Parents must give detailed reasons for absence. For example, 'child has a throat infection/been sick etc' rather than just 'unwell/poorly'.

Attendance issues must be reported to the Attendance Administrator Victoria Martin via pri-attendance@pri.318education.co.uk or 01743 284000

Where a child (including those of non-statutory school age) is absent from school and parents have not contacted the school to inform them of the reason for absence the school will contact parents. If it is not possible to contact parents and where there are pre-existing concerns about the safety or well-being of a pupil the school may carry out a home visit on the first day of absence. Where there are serious concerns about the safety and well-being of a pupil whose reason for absence is not known the school may contact the police, local authority or social services.

In order to carry out Safeguarding responsibilities, when a pupil is absent from school for more than 5 days (regardless of the reason for absence) a member of school staff will be required to carry out a safe and well check on the child. The member of staff must have seen the child, in order to ascertain their safety. This could involve a home visit, virtual check in or the child briefly visiting the school. Safe and well checks must be carried out regardless of reasons for absence and will include pupils who are attending alternative provision, absent due to long term illness and have taken unauthorised holiday. When these checks cannot successfully be carried out the school may report the absence as a safeguarding concern or report the child to the Local Authority as missing in education.

Supporting Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing attendance and absence the school and Trust will follow a 'Graduated Response'. School may also:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Consider if an Early Help Assessment is appropriate.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures and develop an Attendance Support Plan.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with the school's EWO.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

Working with parents to improve attendance.

All pupils and parents/carers are urged to contact the school if they feel that they are facing any such challenges. Parents should contact your child's Head of House, Form Tutor or Student Support team, in the first instance.

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. Children's Services.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the member of staff in charge of attendance will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer or attendance lead will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENDCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g., they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer/leader will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g., children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

SEND and health-related absences.

The Trust recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP plans that have been implemented.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) procedures.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will implement an Attendance Support Plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be

regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

Persistent Absence PA (attendance less than 90%)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school.

These may include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHCP plan is appropriate.
- Considering whether an Early Help Assessment may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who are severely absent (attendance less than 50 %) and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect or parents fail to engage in the support being offered, the Attendance Officer/Leader will consider statutory action. This may involve requesting the LA to issue a fixed penalty notice (fine); referring to the LA for prosecution as a final resort and referring to children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued for a variety of reasons and thresholds for such vary according to each Local Authority. Parents should refer to Local Authority websites for further information.

Further information on legal intervention can be found in 'Working together to improve school attendance' DFE August 2024 Section 6: Attendance legal intervention.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/124444/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-19-august-2024.pdf)

Monitoring and Analysing Attendance and Punctuality

The Strategic Lead for Attendance in each school will monitor and analyse attendance data weekly to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address attendance issues.

The school will collect and report attendance data to the Trust Strategic Lead for Attendance, Local Governors, School's Senior Leadership Team, lead professionals for vulnerable groups (e.g. PP, SENDCO, EAL, heads of year etc) at least half-termly. The Trust Strategic Lead for Attendance will in turn collect and report attendance data to the CEO and Trust Board at least termly.

Data collected and analysed will include data for attendance, persistent absence and severe absence:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Pupils from vulnerable groups – PP, FSM, SEND, EHCP, EAL, LAC
- Any other groups deemed to be at risk of poor attendance.

The School Strategic Leads for Attendance and the Trust Strategic Lead for Attendance will conduct thorough analysis of the data half-termly, termly and annually to identify patterns and trends; individual or groups of pupils needing support/intervention. Analysis is then used to develop and implement action plans/interventions to improve attendance.

Analysis will also include identification of:

- Types of absence (codes)
- Patterns in days of absence
- Lessons which have poor attendance
- Barriers to attendance

Schools are legally required to share information from their attendance registers with the local authority and in the future with the DFE.

Children Missing in Education

Where a pupil has been absent from school for a period of 20 consecutive school days without authorisation after an authorised absence a pupil can be removed from the admissions register when the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupils.

Reduced Timetables

Reduced timetables may be used as a strategy to support a pupil who are finding attending school a challenge or who need to reintegrate into school after a long-term period of absence. Reduced timetables are short term interventions (ideally for no more than 6 weeks) to ensure the successful return to full time education and they must be reviewed every 2 weeks. The decision to place a pupil on a reduced timetable must be approved by the Headteacher and will be monitored by the Trust Strategic Lead for Attendance. These pupils must also be reported to the LA.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

The Chief Executive Officer will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy on an annual basis.

Review

Member of Staff Responsible	Chief Executive Officer
Relevant Guidance/Advice/Legal Reference	Working Together to Improve School Attendance – Department for Education 2024 Providing Remote Education – Department for Education January 2023

	<p>Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance - Department for Education February 2023 Equality Act 2010 UN Convention on Rights of The Child 1992 Education Act 1996 Keeping Children Safe in Education – Department for Education 2023 Children Missing in Education – Department for Education 2016 Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs – Department for Education 2013 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2012 & 2013 Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 Child Protection Policy and Procedures Behaviour Policy Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy Supporting Children at School with Medical Conditions Policy Children with Health Needs who cannot attend School Policy Pupil Premium Strategy Complaints Policy</p>
Policy Adopted By	Trust Board
Consultation	
Date of Policy	Summer term 2024
Review Period	Annually
Date of Next Review	Summer term 2025

Appendix A - Definition of Parental Responsibility

Taken from [Parental rights and responsibilities: Who has parental responsibility - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government/parental-rights-and-responsibilities/who-has-parental-responsibility)
(www.gov.uk)

Who has parental responsibility?

A mother automatically has [parental responsibility](#) for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he's either:

- married to the child's mother, or
- listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in).

You can [apply for parental responsibility](#) if you do not automatically have it.

Births registered in England and Wales.

If the parents of a child are married when the child is born, or if they've jointly adopted a child, both have parental responsibility.

They both keep parental responsibility if they later divorce.

Unmarried parents

An unmarried father can get parental responsibility for his child in 1 of 3 ways:

- Jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003).
- Getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother.
- Getting a parental responsibility order from a court.

Births registered in Scotland.

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother when the child is conceived, or marries her at any point afterwards.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named on the child's birth certificate (from 4 May 2006).

Births registered in Northern Ireland.

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother at the time of the child's birth.

If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage.

An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).

Births registered outside the UK.

If a child is born overseas and comes to live in the UK, parental responsibility depends on the UK country they're now living in.

Same-sex parents

Civil partners: Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

Non-civil partners: For same-sex partners who are not civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- [applying for parental responsibility](#) if a parental agreement was made.
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth.

Appendix B – Request for Leave of Absence

Request for Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time in Exceptional Circumstances

Headteachers can only authorise any absence when an application has been made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance. An annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

Full name of child(ren)	Address:
Do you have another child in any of our other trust schools? If yes, please give details:	

Reason for application and dates	

Parent's forename _____	Surname _____
Parent's forename _____	Surname _____
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____	Date: _____
The headteacher may take into account:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life.• It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event.• The event cannot be organised outside of the school term.• Taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school.	

Office use only	
<input type="checkbox"/> Authorised	<input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised
Signed	(headteacher) Date:

WARNING

If this requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council may, in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:

- **Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time**
- **The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or**
- **A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation**