Attendance Policy

Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust

Southend High School for Girls Academy Trust

Governor Policy 26NS	**Author: Lee Boney**	**Authorised by:** **Board of Governors**
Attendance Policy	**Date first issued** **June 2020**	**Page 2 of 19**

Reviewing authority: Student and Curriculum Committee
Review Frequency: Annually

Date for review	Reviewed Annually by	Reviewed by Board	A	B	C	Date of new edition
June 2020	AJL	01/06/2020			*	01/06/2020
June 2021	AJL	29/6/2021	*			
March 2022	AJL	29/03/2022	*			
November 2023	LPB	4/12/2023	*			
September 2024	LPB	24/09/2024	*			
December 2025	AJL	02/12/2025	*			
October 2026	JNZ	20/10/2026		*		
October 2027	JNZ					

A = accepted with no amendments

B = accepted with amendments

C = new edition created

Contents

1. Aims and principles....4
2. Legislation and guidance....4
3. Roles and responsibilities....5
3.1 The governing board....5
3.2 The Headteacher....5
3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance....6
3.4 The Director of School, Head of Year and Pastoral Support Officer....6
3.5 Class teachers/form tutors....7
3.6 Parents....7
3.8 Pupils....7
4. Recording attendance....7
4.1 Attendance register....7
4.2 Unplanned absence....8
4.3 Planned absence....9
4.4 Lateness and punctuality....9
4.5 Following up absence....10
4.6 Reporting to parents....10
5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence....10
5.1 Authorised Absence....10
5.2 Approval for term-time absence....11
5.3 Leaving during the school day....12
6. Strategies for promoting attendance....12
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school....13
7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers....13
7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical health....13
7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable absence....14
8. Attendance Monitoring.... 14
8.1 Monitoring attendance....14
8.2 Analysing attendance....15
8.3 Using data to improve attendance....15
8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence (including legal sanctions)....16
9. Monitoring arrangements....18
10. Links with other policies....18
Appendix 1: attendance codes....19

1. Aims and principles

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK, through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Ensuring our school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment that promotes attendance and punctuality to both school and lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance, Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2026 State-funded Schools Inspection Toolkit

This policy also follows guidance issued by Southend City Council regarding school attendance and the code of conduct for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for school absence (September 2025).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy meets the expectations outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance, and is published and publicised regularly so that it is easily accessible to pupils, parents/carers and staff
- Actively supporting and prioritising attendance improvement, and working together with school leaders to establish a whole school attendance culture
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Recognising that improving a pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies around attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs (SEN) support, supporting pupils with medical needs or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing and support for disadvantaged pupils
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources, including ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority school attendance team and wider local partners and services
- Making sure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils including those with long-term illnesses, or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils with a social worker, or who are young carers or are entitled to free school meals
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve
- Regularly reviewing attendance data at governing body meetings including examining recent and historic trends at a school level, as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the local authority area, region and nationwide
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Making sure, as part of staff induction, that staff are aware of the school's safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods
- Making sure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place to respond to children absent from education, repeated absence and prolonged absence
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the Local Authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of ten school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss fifteen days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with Senior Leaders, Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and providing advice on the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

The designated senior leader for attendance will participate in regular 'targeting support meetings' with the local authority school attendance team to review data, discuss and agree multi-agency action plans for persistently and severely absent pupils.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs P Hopkins and can be contacted via phopkins@shsg.org.

3.4 The Director of School, Head of Year and Pastoral Support Officer

Attendance is managed for each year group by the Director of School (for the Key Stage), Head of Year and Pastoral support Officer who are responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across their year group and at an individual pupil level
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and complete the attendance contract where appropriate
- Working with other agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance

- Making the 'first day' absence calls to parents/carers (Pastoral Support Officers)
- Ensuring the correct codes are used by staff to record daily attendance and absence (see appendix 1) (Pastoral Support Officers)

3.5 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance during morning registration and for each lesson during the day, using the correct attendance codes.

3.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day and all timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work together with the school to achieve high attendance, including attending meetings with the school to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the appropriate Head of Year the school office on 01702 588852 or office@shsg.org.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and every timetabled lesson, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day at 8.35am, during form time by the Form Tutor, and at the start of every lesson (within the first 15 minutes). The start of the afternoon session at 1.25pm is recorded using the lesson register for period 4. Every register will be recorded on SIMS. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of the circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Sixth Form Registration

Registers are taken at morning registration by the Form Tutor (as per the above procedure) and at the start of every lesson (within the first 15 minutes). The start of the afternoon session at 1.25pm is recorded using the lesson register for period 4, if the student has a lesson at this time. If a student does not have a period 4 lesson, they will register via the electronic InVentry system, between 12.15pm and 1.25pm. Sixth Form students can leave the school site for lunch from 12.25pm, signing out using InVentry. When they return to the school site they must sign back in using InVentry.

For pupils attending alternative provision (AP), the school will verify attendance daily with the provider and review placement safety and attendance at least half-termly.

Clubs, Trips and Fixtures Registration

An accurate pre-populated paper register must be taken at the start of each after school club/practice/fixture. This register must be passed to reception for after school activities. At the start of a trip/educational visit a paper register must be passed to the Pastoral Support Officers.

4.2 Unplanned absence

If a child is absent from school the following procedures will be followed:

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7), by calling the school on 01702 583081, option 1. They should provide the pupil's name, form group and a clear, unambiguous reason as to why they are unable to attend school, for example, a high temperature and extreme nausea, as opposed to 'sick/unwell/ill'. In addition, parents/carers should include whether they expect their child to attend school the following day or not.
- The school will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not had any communication regarding an absence.
- **Failure by parents/carers to contact the school or respond to staff calls and other forms of communication regarding absence may trigger a home visit from school staff, a Local Authority representative, the police or children's social care. As a school we have a duty of care to our pupils which includes knowing they are safe if they do not arrive at school. We will never assume that a child is at home unwell.**
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than five days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate

forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, for example medical evidence is not provided for the illness after the fifth day of absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- Parents/carers must contact the school on every further day of absence, again by 9am, unless specific medical evidence has been provided (e.g. medical certificate) **and** the school has confirmed that this is no longer a requirement.
- Parents/carers must ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible following an absence.
- Where a child has been absent for five consecutive days a home visit/MsTeams online meeting may be arranged and carried out to ensure that the child is where the school believes them to be.
- if the school is informed that a pupil is moving out of the borough and the parent/carer has provided the school with the destination details, the school will wait ten working days before making a 'Children Missing Education' (CME) referral to give time for the pupil to start their new school and the school file (CTF) to be requested.
- If the school is informed that the pupil is moving to a different country, a series of safeguarding activities will be carried out to ensure the wellbeing of the pupil.
- If the whereabouts of a pupil is unknown, then the school will make reasonable enquiries within a ten working day period. These reasonable enquiries include:
  - conducting home visits
  - contacting the parent via phone/email/letter
  - contacting the emergency contacts that school hold for the pupil to try to ascertain the family's whereabouts
  - contacting local schools of known siblings.

Following the school making reasonable enquiries a CME referral will be made.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents must notify the pupil's Pastoral Support Officer via email to office@shsg.org or in writing three school days in advance of the appointment. Wherever possible, parents/carers should make medical or dental appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend school before/after their appointment. We encourage pupils to wear their school uniform to the appointment to make it easier to return to school afterwards.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.30pm. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day. Any pupil not on site by 8.30am is late and will receive a late mark 'L' in the register. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35am. Pupils who arrive to this session after 8:35am, will receive a late mark 'L' in the register. This will be recorded by the appropriate Pastoral Support Officer. The register closes at 9:00am. A pupil who arrives after 9am will be marked as absent using a 'U' code. A register is taken at the start of every session/lesson. A student arriving late to a lesson, after the teacher has started the lesson, will be marked with a late mark 'L'.

For afternoon registration, pupils must arrive at period 4 by 1.25pm. If they arrive between 1.25pm and 1.30pm they receive a late mark 'L' in the register by the subject teacher. If the pupil arrives after 1.30pm the subject teacher enters a 'U' code in the register and the minutes that the pupil is late.

Pastoral Support Officers are at the school gate every morning and monitor late arrivals. Any pupil who arrives late to school is given a 'Late to School' behaviour point and sanctions will be put in place for persistent lateness.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow up their absence by calling their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may follow safeguarding procedures such as carrying out a home visit or contacting the police.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues **without explanation**, to make sure appropriate safeguarding actions are taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving children's social care and carrying out a home visit
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.
- Repeated or prolonged unexplained absences will be treated as a potential safeguarding issue and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s).
- The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE) and other safeguarding concerns. The school will:
  - Take all reasonable steps to identify pupils at risk of becoming children missing education
  - Investigate unexplained absence
  - Undertake appropriate welfare enquiries
  - Work with the local authority and other agencies
  - Comply with statutory pupil registration requirements
  - Ensure that no pupil is removed from the school roll unless the lawful grounds for deletion are met and all required notifications have been made

4.6 Reporting to parents

Reports to parents on their child's attendance record are:

- Included in annual full reports
- Available, in real time, to parents via the Satchel One/SIMS Parent apps.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

5.1 Authorised absence

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). The school considers 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' to be a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. A pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances, a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the Local Authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment (paid or unpaid) abroad
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave for a public examination
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

In very exceptional circumstances, and if it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be arranged. For example, if a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time.

Any part-time timetable in use will be short term and have a defined end point. Plans for supporting a pupil's return to full-time education will be clear and appropriate.

Part-time timetables will not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off, unavoidable events that prevent a pupil from attending school such as the death of a close family relative, a funeral, a wedding of a close family member, a housing crisis or respite care for a looked after child.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday or trip, or other leisure or recreation. The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent/carer does not apply in advance, a leave of absence will not be granted.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, using the online leave of absence request form, accessible via the school's website. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Where a leave of absence is refused, and the absence is still taken, the parent/carer may incur a penalty notice.

5.3 Leaving during the school day

A pupil may leave school during the day for the following reasons:

- A written request has been given to the Pastoral Support Officer for the pupil to attend a medical or dental appointment three school days in advance of the appointment. Pupils in Years 7-9 must be collected from reception by a parent/carer. Students in Years 10–13 may leave unaccompanied.
- A written request has been given to the Pastoral Support Officer for the pupil to attend a music examination or other approved appointment. Pupils in Years 7-9 must be collected from reception by a parent/carer. Students in Years 10–13 may leave unaccompanied.
- A pupil is too unwell/injured to continue with the school day and a parent/carer collects them. This includes for both physical health and mental health issues. Parents must collect their child within a reasonable timescale. In certain circumstances the school reserves the right to insist that the pupil remains in school, after school hours, until the parent/carer collects.
- Pupils must not contact parents directly if they feel unwell during school hours. They must report to Reception where First Aid staff on duty will contact parents. First Aid staff at reception will decide whether the pupil should try to return to lessons or go home.
- The Director of Sixth Form can authorise Sixth Form pupils to go home unaccompanied if unwell. In this instance, the parent/carer will be informed that the sixth form pupil is making their way home by telephone. The pupil will not be allowed to leave until the parent/carer has confirmed that this is acceptable.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher consider allowing a pupil in Years 10 -11 to leave unaccompanied if unwell. In this instance, the parent/carer will be informed that the pupil is making their way home by telephone. The pupil will not be allowed to leave until the parent/carer has confirmed that this is acceptable.
- In all circumstances, pupils must inform a member of staff that they are leaving the school and must sign out at reception using InVentry.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance. Attendance is rewarded through the school's achievement points system.

Helping to create good attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all members of staff. To help focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance as part of their annual full report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 93%.
- Reward good attendance with certificates.
- Provide support to pupils and their families to identify and reduce barriers to good attendance.
- Promote an ethos of attending and learning.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

Where a parent expresses an intention to educate a child at home, the school will meet with the parent and any relevant professionals before a final decision is made to ensure that the best interests of the child have been considered.

Where pupils have complex barriers to attendance the school will work with families in the following way:

- Meet with the pupil and their parent/carer to discuss absences and create an attendance contract
- Work with the pupil and their parent/carer to identify any potential barriers to full school attendance, including in school. Agree changes that can be made by the pupil/parent/carer/school that may serve to reduce these barriers to attendance and implement any changes in a timely manner. These may include:
    - An earlier start time for the pupil to avoid busy corridors
    - Increasing attendance of clubs and societies to widen social circles
    - A check-in with a Pastoral support Officer at the start of each day to help organise the pupil's school bag for the day ahead
- Make appropriate referrals to external agencies where additional support for the pupil/family may be required
- Meet with the pupil and their parent/carer regularly to monitor improvement

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical illness or SEND

The school recognises that worries about friendships, schoolwork, or examinations can cause attendance anxiety. However, regular attendance remains mandatory. Staff will communicate to parents/carers that pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. Staff will work with families to mitigate anxious feelings in school as much as possible and remove barriers to attendance.

The school maintains high expectations for all pupils. For those facing complex barriers, including pupils with SEND or long-term health conditions, appropriate additional support will be provided to secure regular attendance. The school will work with families in the following way:

- Meet with the pupil and their parent/carer to discuss absences and create an attendance contract with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible while supporting the underlying health issue. This may include the school SENDCo.
- Referring the pupil to the appropriate local authority Inclusion Team and coordinate the local authority provision of education for the period of absence if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss fifteen consecutive school days or more for illness, or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed fifteen school days
- Work with the pupil and their parent/carer to ensure that appropriate medical intervention is accessed, for example, a referral to the school nursing service, school Mental Health Support Teams or CAMHS.
- Work with the pupil and their parent/carer to identify any potential barriers to full school attendance, including in school. Agree any reasonable adjustments that can be made by the pupil/parent/carer/school that may serve to reduce barriers to attendance and implement any changes in a timely manner. These may include:
    - A referral to the SENDCo and addition to the schools' Inclusion Register
    - A modified timetable, or time-limited phased return, including use of the Wellbeing Suite
    - Measures to reduce sensory overload
    - A safety plan whilst in school
    - Check-ins with pastoral staff
    - Additional equipment such as a laptop

- Modified seating plans in lessons
- Short-term use of the school's Learning ROBOT (AV1)

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Parents should consult the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable absence

Where a pupil is returning to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence the school may use the following strategies to help the pupil to return to full-time education. These are:

- Meet with the pupil and their parent/carer to discuss the return to school plan.
- Organise a pre-visit to the school before the pupil returns, this can be out of uniform or normal school hours if necessary.
- Create a phased return timetable. For example, blocks of four weeks, with a maximum of three blocks i.e. block 1: 25% timetable, block 2: 50% and block 3: 75% timetable. Then a full-time timetable after that.
- Provide additional equipment to facilitate transition back to a full-time timetable.
- Augment 'in person' lessons, following the phased return timetable, with ROBOT (AV1) lessons and learning materials via MsTeams and other learning platforms as appropriate.
- Use the wellbeing suite to provide a 'third place' between home and school.

7.4 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

Where other barriers to attendance are identified, for example, pupils who:

- Are SEND
- Are disadvantaged
- Are known, or have previously been known to local authority children's social care
- Are young carers
- Have any other barriers to attendance

The school will work with pupils and their parents/carers to put in place reasonable adjustments to support regular attendance in school. Any adjustments and/or interventions will be timely and appropriate, well-chosen and targeted to the needs of the child.

8. Attendance Monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) fortnightly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. This will enable early identification of attendance concerns and the delivery of targeted support.

Attendance data will be shared with the DfE and local authority through the school's management information system. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be submitted to the DfE and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts needing early support across all absence levels, including persistent and severe, and deliver targeted intervention before absence patterns become embedded.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher than average absence or pupils eligible for free school meals if their attendance falls behind that of their more advantaged peers
- Monitor the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented or specific cohorts that we have sought to target. The findings will be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies
- Benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional and national levels or performance of similar schools to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Record young carers in the school census and, where a pupil's caring role may be contributing to absence, the school will work in partnership with the pupil and their parents to understand barriers to attendance and to put appropriate support in place. Where needs extend beyond the school gates, the school will work with the local authority to facilitate access to support through local early help arrangements and other relevant organisations
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and/or special educational needs and/or disabilities including governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide data and reports to the governing body to support its work

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern (greater than 7%), especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below). This support will initially be in the form of a letter identifying that their absence has reached a level that is concerning.
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the SENDCo, Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Inclusion lead).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Work with parents, the Virtual School Head and any other relevant professionals to monitor and support the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, pupils known or previously known to children's social care, and pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing

To facilitate timely collaborative working across partners, the school will share information from its registers with the local authority. This will include:

- New Pupil and Deletion returns
- Attendance returns
- Sickness returns

Where a pupil has a social worker and/or youth offending team worker, the school will inform the social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence (including legal sanctions)

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will:

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. The school will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence. Every fortnight the Pastoral Support Officers produce a list of pupils with attendance below 93%. This list is shared with the Heads of Year, the Director of School and the senior leader for attendance. Parents/carers of pupils with attendance below 93% will receive a letter advising that the pupil's attendance is a cause for concern. Pupils are set the target to achieve an attendance level of 97% or higher during a six-week monitoring period. If the target is not met or attendance shows no improvement, this will be escalated to the Attendance Support Meeting (see below). At this point the local authority will be notified of the pupil's absence level.
- Hold regular Attendance Support Meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the support that is available, for example through 'Early Help' interventions.
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
    - The Attendance Support Meeting will be held in school. The parent/carer, the pupil, the Pastoral Support Officer and the Head of Year will attend. The Local Authority Attendance Officer will either attend the meeting in person or will receive a copy of the Attendance Contract created and agreed during the meeting. The Attendance Contract will include: any barriers to attendance, strategies to improve attendance to be implemented by the pupil, parent(s) and the school, and the role of external agencies in helping to improve the pupil's attendance. The local authority will receive a copy of the Attendance Contract.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the Local Authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- If attendance still does not show improvement the school will either:
    - Issue a penalty notice, or
    - Escalate to home visits by the Local Authority Attendance Officer. If there is no improvement in attendance following the home visits, then a Pupil Progress Meeting will be arranged by the local authority.
- Implement legal sanctions, where necessary. Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided and the national threshold has been reached.

The Headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the Headteacher), local authority or the police can issue a penalty notice in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the Local Codes of Conduct maintained by the local authority.

Penalty notices will only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

If the school decides to issue a penalty notice, it will make a request to the Local Authority.

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

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met **(10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)**
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's absence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parent(s) who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those three years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may issue a 'Notice to Improve' letter to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

The national threshold is ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. These sessions can be consecutive or not. The period of ten school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the code of conduct for the Local Authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

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

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

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but not a criminal prosecution. An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be guilty of an offence. The local authority can prosecute for persistent non-compliance with the order, and parents will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000, upon conviction.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once a year by the Pupil and Curriculum Committee. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the

		transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has

	closed	closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays