



South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust

Attendance Policy

Date	Changes
Sept 24	Reviewed by Kristien Carrington
Sept 24	Approved by Trust Board
July 25	Reviewed by Kristien Carrington
June 26	Reviewed by Kristien Carrington
July 26	Approved by Trust Board

Adopted Date: 18/09/2024

Status: Approved

Review period: July 2027

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Attendance Policy

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school Attendance Policy has been written to reflect the laws and guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority (Cornwall or Plymouth depending on where the child normally resides). You can find details of the relevant legislation and government guidance on p.92 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) – DfE, August 2024.

Section 1

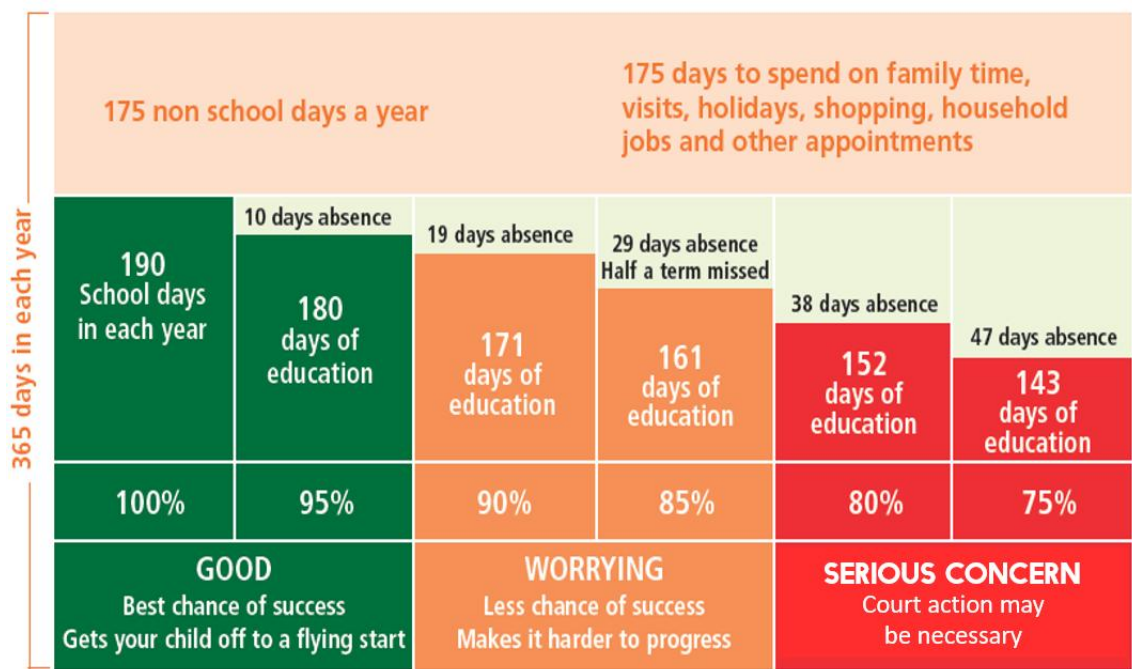
1.1 Rationale

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome through the embodiment of our Trust values.

The SMART Attendance Policy document 2026/27 describes what each school will do to support student attendance because good attendance matters.

Parent/carers and students play a part in making each school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents/carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. Each school within the trust will do all that can be reasonably expected to have every child in school every day. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

1.2 Good attendance is important because...



- **Student engagement and learning.** Regular attendance is directly linked to student achievement. When students attend classes consistently, they actively participate in discussions, collaborate with peers and absorb essential content. Our approach to promoting good attendance encourages students to be present and engaged in their learning.
- **Quality education.** Promoting good attendance contributes to the overall quality of education provided in school. It ensures that teachers can plan effectively, deliver lessons, and assess student progress. Consistent attendance allows us to maintain high standards and provide a supportive learning environment.
- **Accountability and responsibility.** By adhering to attendance guidelines, students learn responsibility and punctuality. Traits that are essential for success not only in school but throughout life.
- **Community and inclusion.** Regular attendance fosters a sense of community. Students build connections with peers, teachers, and staff which contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere where everyone feels valued and included.
- **Legal compliance and safeguarding.** Our attendance procedures align with the legal requirements set by government. Rigorously pursuing these requirements ensures we fulfil our duty to safeguard students.

Section 2

2.1 Operating the policy

Promoting good attendance

The expectation across the Trust is that all students attend school every day that it is open to them. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parent/carer and the child.

To help us all to focus on this, your child's school will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance through its website and letters, as well as contact with home
- report to parents/carers on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance rate is (which may include details of how this compares to their peers) and how it relates to their attainment
- set targets for the school and individuals for attendance, where appropriate
- run events in which parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels where appropriate
- have clear trigger points that may escalate to the next stage as detailed below

In order to support students and create a culture where excellent school attendance is the norm, schools need to ensure that they are aware of and reacting appropriately to all levels of attendance and absence. To do this schools should offer praise and rewards for sustained or improved attendance and support including referrals to safeguarding, SEN teams and other relevant outside agencies for those pupils with high levels of absence.

Attendance expectations and absence bandings

The Trust expects every child to achieve attendance of at least 96% across the school year. A child at 90% attendance is missing the equivalent of one half-day of school every week, and around four full weeks of learning across the year.

Each school uses the absence bandings reported through the Department for Education's View Your Education Data (VYED) service to identify which children need which level of support. The bandings, and the stage of this policy that normally applies to each, are set out below. A child may be moved to a later stage at any point, and the school does not have to work through the stages in order.

VYED absence banding	Attendance across the year	Normal response under this policy
Banding 1	95% or above but below 100%	Stage 1 – informal, school-led support
Banding 2	Below 95%	Stage 2 – concern letter and early support

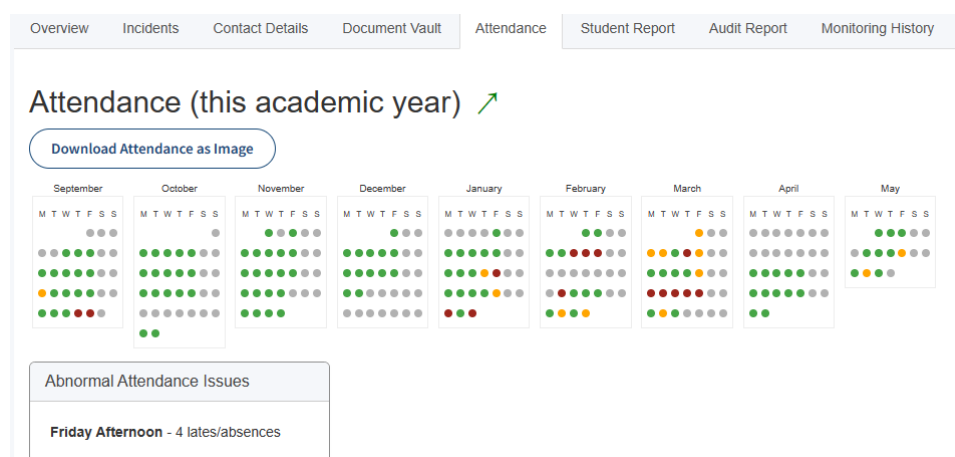
Banding 3	Below 90% – persistent absence	Stage 3 – Attendance Support Meeting and Attendance Contract
Banding 4	Below 80% (but 50% or above)	Stage 3 as a minimum, escalating to Stage 4 where there is no improvement
Banding 5	Below 50% – severe absence	Stage 4 immediately, plus the additional measures set out under Severe absence below

Stage 1 – For children whose attendance sits within VYED Absence Banding 1 (95% or above but below 100%)

During this stage, schools are free to employ a wide range of strategies tailored to the needs of the child. The goal of any strategy employed is to support the student to be in school every day. Every school will ensure parents are kept well informed and will check that absences are not an indicator of any possible emerging patterns or revealing a potential driver of poor attendance.

Examples of how this may be achieved include:

- **Increased communication with home.** The school may send home weekly letters, updates, or emails to inform parents of their child's current attendance level.
- **Day one contact.** The school may use text messages to inform parents of absence, requesting parents/carers to contact the school.
- **Live reporting.** The school may use apps (such as ClassCharts) to enable live reporting of attendance data.
- **Broken weeks, analysis of attendance data.** If a student has two broken weeks of attendance (triggered if a child misses either a morning or afternoon session of attendance in each week) in four calendar weeks – the teacher/tutor may try support initially by speaking with the student about this, emphasising the schools desire to see them in school every day and drawing attention to what they are missing out on by not being in school. The attendance tab of a student's CPOMS report will show clearly if there are any patterns of possible concern emerging:



which may inform appropriate actions such as phone calls home, an attendance/punctuality report or conversation about potential barriers to good attendance.

For early signs of absence patterns emerging, the teacher/tutor may refer to the Head of Key Stage/Head of Year/pastoral team for initiation of formal stage. It is the school's decision to proceed onto the formal stage, and this can happen at any time, even if the informal stage hasn't commenced.

Formal Stages

- **Stage 2** – Student percentage falls within VYED Absence Banding 2 (below 95%) - concern letter sent to parents/carers. The school (depending on the child's historical pattern of absence) may request medical evidence before any future absences can be authorised although this isn't routine. At this stage specific consideration of any SEND or other needs should be informing the schools decision regarding future actions.
- **Stage 3** – Student percentage falls within VYED Absence Banding 3 (below 90%) – the student becomes a 'persistent absentee'. A further concern letter sent to parents/carers. Parent/carers may be invited to an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) to discuss their child's attendance. As part of this meeting, an Attendance Contract may be drawn up to highlight current concerns/barriers and set targets for improvements (with an agreed timescale to review attendance)

Stage 3 SOP:

Why do we do this?

1. To identify pupils/cohorts whose attendance continues to be a concern and where next steps (stage 3) are required to improve attendance (persistent absentees).
2. To actively engage with parents/pupils by meeting (Attendance Support Meeting) to discuss barriers to attendance and agreeing actions/targets to improve attendance.
3. To review and monitor the attendance of pupils after the initial Attendance Support Meeting. To agree further strategies or actions as appropriate to improve attendance.
4. To refer individual cases to the EWO Service if no recognised improvement in attendance is observed.

Routine	Who
Identify pupils/cohorts that require stage 3 intervention due to attendance Support. Use of SIMS reports/Excel monitoring.	School Attendance Lead/Attendance Administrator

Parent/carer invited to Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) (stage 3 letter) with Head of Year/School Attendance Lead or other relevant staff as appropriate (SENDCo). Documentation prepared and reviewed prior to meeting (understanding the case detail). Upload documentation to CPOMS	School Attendance Lead/Attendance Administrator
ASM held by Head of Year/Attendance Lead/other. Discussion on barriers to attendance and agreement on target/actions to improve attendance. Update School Attendance Team and other relevant staff on meeting outcomes. Upload meeting notes and action points to CPOMS	Head of Year/School Attendance Lead/Attendance Administrator
Monitor case (6 weeks) according to guidance and review strategies/engagement as appropriate (case by case based on situation and experience). Regular liaison as appropriate with parent/pupil during the review period including home visits if necessary (safeguarding). Update school Attendance Team and other relevant school staff on case progress. Upload documentation to CPOMS	School Attendance Lead/Attendance Administrator
At the end of a maximum 6 week period a review of attendance progress is carried out. If an improvement in attendance against agreed target is identified, contact is made to the parent/carer to acknowledge and thank parent/carer and pupil for their engagement and efforts (telephone/letter). If NO improvement in attendance against agreed target is identified, an EWO referral form is completed for stage 4. Update school Attendance Team and other relevant school staff on case progress. Upload documentation to CPOMS	School Attendance Lead/Attendance Administrator

EWO Referral form completed and submitted via email. Stage 4. Subject "EWO Referral form – student initials/DOB" EWO to assess referral and in discussion with School Attendance Lead – • Referral is accepted – see EWO SOP • Referral is not accepted (explanation given) – school to resume actioning attendance/monitoring.	School Attendance Lead/EWO/Attendance Administrator
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Severe absence (VYED Absence Banding 5 – attendance below 50%)

Where a child's attendance falls below 50% they are *severely absent*. Severe absence is treated as a distinct and higher-priority category, not simply a more serious form of persistent absence, because these children are missing at least half of their education and are at significantly greater risk of harm.

Where a child is severely absent, or the pattern of absence indicates they are likely to become so, the school will:

- refer the case to the Education Welfare Officer at Stage 4 immediately, without waiting for a Stage 3 review period to expire
- hold a meeting involving the SENDCo, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any other professional already working with the family
- consider whether a safeguarding referral is required, and record that consideration on CPOMS whether or not a referral is made
- assign a named key adult in school who will maintain contact with the child and the family for as long as the absence continues
- agree a written reintegration plan with the family and the child, built from small and specific steps, reviewed at least every four weeks
- report each severely absent child by name to the Headteacher every half term, and the number of severely absent children to the LGC and to the Trust every half term

Enforcement action will not normally be pursued where a severely absent child is unable, rather than unwilling, to attend and the family is engaging with the support offered. Section 2.3 sets out how the school responds where absence relates to special educational needs, disability or mental health.

- **Stage 4** – The student may now be referred to an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will engage with the family to avoid progress towards Stage 5.

Stage 4 SOP:

Why do we do this?

1. To improve whole school attendance by promoting and encouraging excellent attendance through liaison with pupils, parents, staff and the LA EWS Team.
2. To liaise with and support school Attendance Teams with advice, strategies and suggested actions as appropriate to improve the attendance of all pupils (through stages 1 -3).
3. To manage referred "persistent absentee" cases through agreed processes including appropriate strategies to engage with pupils and parents. To liaise with relevant external support and agencies in managing cases and to process relevant cases through to EPM, fixed penalty or prosecution in conjunction with the LA EWS team.

Routine	Who
Pre referral support and advice to Attendance Teams on attendance strategies, trends, initiatives, guidance, challenges and successes. To include a regular fortnightly meeting with Attendance Teams to cover the above and/or case management updates as required.	EWO
EWO referral form submitted via email following end of stage 3. Subject "EWO Referral form – student initials/DOB"	School Attendance Lead
Following acceptance of EWO referral form the Attendance Lead/Head of Year/Administrator and EWO review referred case, including detailed discussion on • Pupil and parent engagement • Possible barriers to attendance – SEND/Mental and Physical Health needs/family situation • Strategies used to date and relevant meeting notes	School Attendance Lead / Head of Year / Attendance Administrator /EWO
Stage 4 Letter to parents/carers informing them of EWO referral/involvement including "Notice of Warning" and meeting invite. Upload documentation to CPOMS	EWO
EWO holds initial stage 4 meeting with parent/carers (and pupil where appropriate). Actions agreed including where relevant: • Supportive strategies • Internal support and relevant provision	EWO

- External support/referrals including professional agencies/medical/mental health/social services/safeguarding - Attendance target and review period Upload documentation to CPOMS	
Update school Attendance Team and other relevant school staff on case progress (scheduled meetings).	EWO
Monitor case (6 weeks) according to guidance and review strategies/engagement as appropriate (case by case based on situation and experience). Regular liaison as appropriate with parent/pupil during the review period including home visits if necessary (safeguarding). Update school Attendance Team and other relevant school staff on case progress. Upload documentation to CPOMS	EWO
At the end of a maximum 6 week period a review of attendance progress is carried out. If strategies and engagement has led to an improvement in attendance towards agreed target then update school Attendance Team and close case. Contact is made to the parent/carer to acknowledge and thank parent/carer and pupil for their engagement and efforts (telephone/letter). Upload documentation to CPOMS	EWO

- Warning of prosecution notice** – If there is no improvement following the initial involvement of the EWO a warning of prosecution letter will be issued by the EWO. This will notify the parent/carer of a potential Educational Planning Meeting (EPM) meeting which is the point at which a decision around prosecution is discussed.

If strategies and engagement has NOT led to an improvement in attendance towards agreed target, then issue First Warning towards prosecution letter. A review period follows – if 10 sessions are missed within 50 days (100 sessions) an Education Planning Meeting (EPM) is arranged (follow LA EWS guidance). Upload documentation to CPOMS	EWO
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Stage 5 Parent/carers invited to Education Planning Meeting (EPM). Documentation prepared and reviewed by EWO and relevant staff in advance of EPM.	EWO
EPM held. Robust plan with agreed actions which can include Final Warning/Education Supervision Order/Parental Order – update to relevant staff including LA EWS Team. Meeting notes and action plan provided to parent with relevant legal interventions. Upload documentation to CPOMS	EWO
Follow up/ monitor actions in line with EPM plan. A review period follows – if 10 sessions are missed within 50 days (100 sessions) a decision is made on next steps. If there is an improvement in attendance in line with EPM plan then update school Attendance Team and monitor case.	EWO
If NO improvement in attendance in line with EPM plan, then decision taken as agreed at EPM.	EWO
Liaison with LA EWS Team on next steps including progress towards prosecution.	EWO

- **Stage 5** – All efforts made have failed to result in improved attendance after an agreed period. The parent/carers, unless the absence is authorised/unavoidable, will likely face prosecution
- **Final Warning of Prosecution** – If the above stages do not have the required impact of improving a child's attendance rates in school, it may be necessary to proceed with legal action. We hope to avoid this, and this is of course possible with early identification and support as outlined previously.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Attendance at school is everyone's responsibility. The descriptions below take into account the latest guidance from [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

The Trust

The trust will hold the headteacher to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge through termly reports to the Learning Committee. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance. The Trust has a named senior attendance champion who leads this work across all schools, maintains a Trust-wide view of attendance and severe absence, and reports to the Learning Committee each term.

The Local Governing Committee (LGC)

The LGC is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- 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
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school during each LGC meeting and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance

- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Identifying a named link governor for attendance, who will meet the School Attendance Lead at least termly and report back to the LGC
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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 during every LGC meeting
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the school's Attendance Lead to be able to do so
- 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

Responsibilities of each school's Attendance Lead

In each school, a Senior Leader oversees, directs and co-ordinates the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance by promoting a collective sense of wellbeing and belonging in their school. They will ensure attendance procedures are consistently applied and that attendance is recorded accurately every day and analysed regularly with reports provided to the Headteacher and LGC at least every half term including comparisons with national and regional data.

Responsibilities of tutors and staff

Tutors/class teachers will:

- ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- promote good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities in line with these attendance procedures
- liaise with the Attendance Lead on matters of attendance and punctuality if a student's absence causes concern
- communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to the appropriate Leader (whether Head of Year (Secondary) or Head of Key Stage or Headteacher (Primary)).
- support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school through discussions and supportive interventions offered.
- log interventions, contact with parents, discussions with students, letters sent etc

Responsibilities of students

- attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence
- arrive in school on time ready for the morning
- arrive at all lessons and learning time punctually
- take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours (with parental consent)

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents must:

- inform the school on the first day of absence (and subsequent days if required)
- discuss with the school (usually teacher/tutor) any planned absences well in advance and apply for these on an Absence Request Form (available from the school)
- support the school in aiming for children to be in school every day that the school is open to them
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and every subsequent day of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments (these may not be authorised if it is for non-urgent appointments)
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance (absences are rarely authorised), such as if a parent/carer who is serving in the Military has leave; a housing crisis which requires immediate absence; attendance at a funeral; respite care of a Looked After Child (LAC). The school may ask to see evidence to support the decision to authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances

2.3 Attendance, SEND, disability and mental health

Absence is almost always a symptom of a wider issue. Before any formal or legal step is taken under this policy, each school will consider whether a child's absence relates to a special educational need, a disability or a mental health need, and will record that consideration.

Where a child has a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, the school has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. Adjustments that support attendance may include an adjusted or phased start to the day, a temporary reduction in timetable, a safe space the child can go to, a named key adult, adjusted uniform or equipment expectations, alternative arrangements at unstructured times, or support with travel to school. Adjustments will be agreed with the family, recorded in writing and reviewed.

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance is falling, or where barriers to attendance relate to their needs, the school will notify the local authority and consider whether an early annual review of the plan is required.

Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

Some children experience such high levels of anxiety about school that they are unable to attend, even though they want to. This is often described as emotionally based school avoidance. It is not truancy, and enforcement action alone will not resolve it.

Where EBSA is suspected, the school will:

- assess the child's views, the parent/carer's views and the school-based factors involved, rather than assuming the cause sits with the family
- identify the specific parts of the school day the child finds hardest, and adjust those first
- agree a graduated reintegration plan with the family and the child, in small steps, reviewed at least every four weeks
- involve the SENDCo, and seek external advice where the plan is not working
- keep the child on a full timetable wherever possible, using a part-time timetable only as set out in Section 4.2

Legal action will not normally be pursued where a child is unable, rather than unwilling, to attend and the family is engaging with the support offered.

2.4 Pupils who may need additional support

Some groups of children are at higher risk of low attendance. Each school will monitor and report attendance separately for:

- pupils receiving SEN support, and pupils with an EHC plan
- pupils eligible for free school meals, and disadvantaged pupils
- children with a social worker, including those with a child protection plan or a child in need plan

- children who are looked after or previously looked after – the Designated Teacher will ensure attendance is addressed through the Personal Education Plan and will inform the Virtual School Head where attendance falls below 90%
- young carers
- children on a part-time timetable, educated off site, or dual registered

Where a child in any of these groups falls into Banding 2 or below, the school will consider whether additional support or an external referral is needed before, and alongside, moving to the next stage of this policy.

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily (am and pm sessions). This is once at the start of the school day and again for the afternoon session.

Each school keeps both an admission register and an attendance register, as required by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations. The attendance register records, for every session, whether each pupil was present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend because of an exceptional circumstance, using the national codes set out in Section 5.

Each school shares its daily attendance data with the Department for Education. That data is used by the Trust, the local authority and the Department for Education to monitor attendance and to target support.

Registers are a legal document. They may be used as evidence in court, must be marked promptly and accurately, and must be retained for at least three years. The School Attendance Lead will carry out a check of coding accuracy at least once every half term and report the outcome to the Headteacher.

Adding to and removing from the admission register

A child can only be removed from the admission register on one of the specific grounds set out in the regulations. A school cannot remove a child simply because they have stopped attending.

Where a child's name is added to, or removed from, the admission register at any point other than the normal start or end of the school's youngest or oldest year group, the school will notify the local authority. Where a child has been absent without leave for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, or cannot be located, the school will work jointly with the local authority to make and record reasonable enquiries before any removal takes place, and will treat the child as potentially missing education.

Where a parent/carer gives written notice that they intend to educate their child at home, the school will notify the local authority and will only remove the child from the register once that notification has been made.

Attendance data and data protection

Attendance data is personal data. It is processed so that the school can meet its statutory duties, and is shared with the local authority, the Department for Education and, where relevant, other agencies working with the child. Full detail of how each school handles personal data is set out in the school's privacy notice, available on the school website.

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions (the am and pm register) and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions, retrieve prior knowledge or organise work. If a student is late, they can miss valuable learning time as well as causing disruption to the lesson for others.

- **all students are expected to be in school on time.** Please see Section 8 or your school's website for the specific timings for your child's school

- all lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- arrival after the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with the Department of Education guidance. This mark shows the student to be on site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session. Arrival before the register closes is recorded as late and coded L. Registration close times for each school are set out in Section 8. Repeated arrival after the close of registration counts towards the national threshold for a penalty notice – see Section 4.3
- if a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, medical appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays

Additional codes used nationally can be found in Section 5.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and could be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 for further detail).

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First day of absence

A student not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a student is absent the parent/carer must:

- contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- provide any appropriate medical evidence if a longer-term absence from school is likely, with clear dates of return (e.g. post-operative care)

Second day of absence

Parent/carers are required to contact school EVERY DAY of a child's absence. The school will continue to try and contact the child's parent/carer on this day.

Third day of absence

Please note: If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, on the third day of absence, the school may have to start safeguarding procedures (although the school can decide to commence this earlier if they deem it necessary). The school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the student, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. The school reserves the right to call the Police for a welfare check to be carried out.

Ten days of absence

Where a student is absent without leave for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, and the school has been unable to establish contact, the school has a legal duty to work jointly with the local authority and to make and record reasonable enquiries to locate the child. If a student is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority may be notified that the child is *missing in education*

(CME). Children's Services staff or Police may visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. It is the parents/carers responsibility to inform the school of any changes to contact numbers and addresses.

Continued or ongoing absence

If a student misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a *persistent absentee*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a student by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, the school monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data may be shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

Section 4

4.1 Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations have been updated and will apply from summer 2024: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/2024/08/19/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

These developments have been designed to support schools in improving the attendance of children.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the child's school) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. The school reserves the right to only authorise one session for medical appointments during school hours unless the appointment can be proven to be an exceptional circumstance.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and will likely result in a penalty notice or other legal action in accordance with the national framework set out in Section 4.3.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents/carers to help the school by not taking children out during school time.

4.2 Part time timetables

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

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time possible, and must:

- be agreed in writing with the parent/carer, and with the pupil where appropriate, setting out which sessions the pupil will attend and how the remaining time will be used
- have a clear end date and a written plan for returning the pupil to full-time education
- be recorded using code C2 for the sessions the pupil is not required to attend
- be reviewed at least every six weeks by the School Attendance Lead, together with the SENDCo where the pupil has SEND

- be notified to the local authority and to the Trust when it is put in place, and at each review

A part-time timetable will not be used to manage behaviour, to manage a shortage of staffing or provision, or as a long-term alternative to meeting a pupil's needs.

4.3 Penalty notices and legal action

Support will always come before enforcement. Where support has been offered and has not led to improved attendance, or where a parent/carer has not engaged with the support offered, the school may ask the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

Since 19 August 2024 a single national framework has applied to all schools in England.

When a penalty notice must be considered

A penalty notice must be considered where a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school day is made up of two sessions, so 10 sessions is usually equivalent to five school days. The sessions do not have to be consecutive, they can be made up of any combination of unauthorised absence, and the 10 school week period can span different terms or academic years.

How much the fine is

- A first penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within three years of the first is charged at a flat rate of £160, with no reduction for early payment.
- A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to a parent in respect of the same child within a rolling three-year period.
- Where a third offence occurs within that three-year period, a further penalty notice cannot be issued, and the local authority will consider prosecution or another legal intervention instead.

Penalty notices are issued per parent and per child, so a household with more than one child absent may receive more than one notice.

Before a penalty notice is issued

Except where the absence is an unauthorised term-time holiday, the school will normally issue a Notice to Improve first. This gives the parent/carer a final opportunity to engage with the support on offer before a penalty notice is requested.

Prosecution

Where a penalty notice is not paid, or where the case is not suitable for a penalty notice, the local authority may prosecute under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A conviction can result in a fine of up to £2,500 and, in the most serious cases, a custodial sentence of up to three months. A conviction may also appear on a future DBS certificate.

Penalty notice thresholds and amounts are set nationally and may change. The figures that apply at the time will be confirmed in any correspondence issued to parents/carers, and are published by the local authority – see Section 6.

Section 5

5.1 Understanding absence codes

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes (but is not limited to):

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily
- to go shopping
- their own or family birthdays
- to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Section 6

6.1 DfE guidance

The Department for Education produces guidance that summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, Headteachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents. These requirements are contained in:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000000/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

How this is implemented in Cornwall is described:

[Education Welfare Service - Cornwall Council](#)

The relevant legal Acts are:

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Section 7

7.1 Various situations not covered above and FAQs from parents/carers

I'm considering home schooling my child, what should I do?

We truly believe that the vast majority of children should be in school. Whilst it is the parent/carer's legal right to choose Elective Home Education, we will almost always dissuade against this move and would encourage parents/carers to discuss any potential concerns, or reasons why they may be considering EHE, with the child's teacher/tutor, a member of the Safeguarding Team, or someone from the Attendance Team.

My child is leaving the school, what do I need to do?

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 6, Year 11 or Year 13, parents are asked to:

- 1- Give the school comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing otherwise we are not allowed to remove a child from roll
- 2- If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child may be considered to be a *child missing education (CME)*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services (MARU/MASH), the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided

We are a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and/or Showman family and wish to travel

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the *T* code. If you intend not to return to your child's school, please communicate this to the school as soon as possible.

Study leave (Year 11 and 13)

As a research led organisation, we are always keen to learn from research into methods that give children the best possible chance of success in their examinations. Currently the very best available research states that pupils/students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. Hence, study leave is not currently granted during this period, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Schools, on occasion, may attempt new combinations of home and school learning including 'period 5/6' and holiday sessions. In such cases, parents will be kept fully informed of any changes to usual expectations.

Teenage pregnancy (Secondary)

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and, wherever possible, their return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence may be treated as unauthorised. Their case will usually be referred to CHES (Community and

Hospital Education Service) who will likely provide education if the child isn't able to attend school immediately before or after the birth.

My child doesn't attend the school due to diagnosed health conditions (physical and/or mental)

Schools will support children and families to re-engage in learning wherever possible. Where attending school site goes against medical advice (which should be provided in writing to the school), the school will work with external partners (such as Community and Hospital Education Service (CHES)) to initiate education at home or at another suitable venue. This will be reviewed every 6 weeks and the school should continue to carry out regular safeguarding checks on the child, as well as suitability checks on the provider in line with the guidance as stated with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

My child is not yet of compulsory school age – does this policy apply?

Children in our nursery settings, and children in Reception who have not yet reached compulsory school age, are not required by law to attend. A child reaches compulsory school age at the start of the term following their fifth birthday. Absence before that point is recorded using code X and no legal action can be taken. We still expect and strongly encourage full attendance, because attendance habits form early and regular attendance in the early years has a marked effect on later outcomes. Where a child below compulsory school age has attendance that would place them in Banding 2 or below, the setting will offer the same support it would offer for an older child.

My child is in Year 12 or 13 – does this policy apply?

Students in Year 12 and 13 are above compulsory school age, so penalty notices and prosecution do not apply to them. Students are, however, required to remain in education or training until their 18th birthday, and attendance remains a condition of holding a place. Sixth form attendance is monitored using the same bandings, and the same staged support applies up to and including Stage 5. Where attendance does not improve, the school may review the student's place on their course.

My child is being bullied or does not feel safe, and will not attend

Please tell us straight away. Where an absence is caused by something happening in school, that is something we can act on, and we would much rather know. Contact the School Attendance Lead or a member of the Safeguarding Team named in Section 8. We will look into it, put support in place, and agree a plan for your child's return. We will not treat the absence as a disciplinary matter for your child while we do so.

I do not agree with a decision the school has made about attendance

Please raise it first with the School Attendance Lead named in Section 8, who will explain the decision and the evidence behind it. If you remain unhappy, the Trust's Complaints Policy sets out how to take the matter further. Please note that there is no statutory right of appeal against a penalty notice once the local authority has issued it; if you believe a notice has been issued in error you should contact the local authority directly.

Section 8

8.1 School specific details

Academy	School Attendance Lead:	School contact for day to day matters relating to attendance:	School contact for detailed support on attendance:	Start time of the school day:	Finish time of the school day:	Morning registration close time:	Afternoon registration close time:
Dobwalls PS	Kathryn Pipe kpiper@dobwalls.cornwall.sch.uk	Colleen Smith csmith@dobwalls.cornwall.sch.uk Heather Read hread@dobwalls.cornwall.sch.uk	Kathryn Pipe	8.50am	3.20pm	9.05am	1.30pm
Liskeard S&CC	Chris Knipe cknipe@liskeard.net	Angela Mitchell amitchell@liskeard.net	Chris Knipe	8.45am	3.15pm	9.15am	12.30pm
Looe CA	Ed Gilbert EGilbert@looe.ca.net	Natalie Hulbert NHulbert@looe.ca.net	Ed Gilbert EGilbert@looe.ca.net	8.40am	3.10pm	9.15am	1.00pm
Saltash CS	James Perry jperry@saltashcloud.net	Sarah Moss smoss@saltashcloud.net Becky Szenk rszenk@saltashcloud.net	Linda Griffin lgriffin@saltashcloud.net	8.35am	3.00pm	9.30am	12.20 pm
Landulph PS	Karen Ball kball@landulphcloud.net	Carolyn Grainger landulphsecretary@landulphcloud.net	Karen Ball	8.50am	3.20pm	9.00am	1.15pm
Trewidland PS	Kathryn Pipe head@trewidland.cornwall.sch.uk	Mrs Anne Sherrington	Kathryn Pipe	8.55am	3.15pm	9.15am	1.15pm
SMART Nurseries	Rachel Sharman rsharman@liskeard.net	RSharman rsharman@liskeard.net KAXby (Liskeard) kaxby@liskeard.net HRead (Dobwalls) hread@dobwalls.cornwall.sch.uk	Rachel Sharman rsharman@liskeard.net	8.00am	5.00pm LSN (Friday closure 4pm)		

Section 9

9.1 Associated documents and templates

This policy should be read alongside the following documents. Templates and forms are held by each school office; policies are published on the Trust and school websites.

- Absence Request Form – leave of absence in term time
- Stage 2, Stage 3 and Stage 4 letter templates
- Attendance Support Meeting record template
- Attendance Contract template
- Education Welfare Officer referral form
- Part-time timetable agreement and review form
- Notice to Improve template
- Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Trust SEND Policy
- Trust Complaints Policy
- School privacy notice
- Local authority code of conduct for penalty notices