



Securing Strong Attendance

and supporting our families to ensure that
'Every child in School, on time, every day,
learning ready'

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The Importance of School Attendance

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE

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Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of security good attendance is that school is a **calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment** where all pupils are **keen and ready to learn**.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by **building strong and trusting relationships** and working towards to **put the right support in place**.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single number of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

At Kernow learning we believe that working in partnership with our families and ensuring our schools are exciting, enriching, inclusive places to be is the best way to ensure strong attendance.

Every member of staff is trained to ensure that every child is **'in school, on time, every day, learning ready'**. By being explicit, supportive and proactive in our strategy on securing strong attendance we aim to achieve our vision that all children benefit from strong attendance, and no child ever reaches the threshold of persistent absenteeism. Our strategy is underpinned by whole staff and Governing body training, clear systems, and positive relationships with our families and partner agencies.

Our relentless drive for strong attendance ensures that every school in our Trust will:

1. Have a universal approach for all and a bespoke approach for those who need it to achieve strong attendance for every child.
2. Invest in our relationship with families, with a 'support first' approach.
3. Have in place a 'first day' contacting system with parents of children who are absent from school to establish why the child is absent, and when the child is expected to return.
4. Robustly use our attendance strategy to ensure 'strong' whole school attendance with kindness and support and gentle challenge.
5. Ensure that school has a positive working relationship with their LA provided Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and uses its full entitlement of support from the Local Authority.
6. Consider the use of Penalty Notices as an early intervention tool should the criteria within the LA's Penalty Notice adhering to the National Framework.
7. Ensure any absence is for a justifiable reason and evidenced with medical letters, prescriptions, or appointment cards etc.
8. Hold a register of all pupils whose attendance is a concern - known as a Register of Concern.
9. Seek support from external agencies including making full use of the support, advice and guidance from our nearest Attendance Hub at Cabot Learning Federation to secure strong attendance for all children who hit the persistent absenteeism threshold.
10. Ensure that Trust Leads are informed about persistent challenges to securing strong attendance.

In our Trust, Headteachers are responsible for ensuring strong attendance for all, however the management of day-to-day attendance is a whole team approach which includes all members of the school. Every school in Kernow Learning can draw on the support of our Trust lead for Safeguarding and Attendance.

Staff involved in leading attendance should follow this guidance document including the Kernow Learning Attendance Flowchart and accompanying Templates to achieve strong all year-round attendance for every child. Please use and adjust the template to ensure that the language reflects your school's communication style without losing the core legal message and high expectations. Letters should only be sent **after a conversation** with the parent and should feel personalised for each child's individual circumstance.

Attendance sits firmly in the Safeguarding area of school leadership and must be prioritised as such.

Remember our measures around securing strong attendance are our most important and protective action of the day. These actions will ensure that every child is in school, on time, every day, learning ready.

Our Robust (and Kind) Strategy

Our Attendance Strategy follows two clear approaches both of which are intended to be robust and kind, building strong partnerships with our families.

Our 'universal' approach for all children to secure strong attendance ensures:

1. A warm welcome every day, and at any time of the day
2. A rich diverse curriculum – too good to miss!
3. Timetabling to strengthen the weak spots (end of term gets more exciting)
4. Breakfast club / After school wraparound
5. Daily monitoring
6. Supportive calls to parents for clarification and offering support
7. Continual positive attendance messages on newsletters, social media platforms
8. Letters to families designed to support better attendance – noticing improvement

Our 'additional and different' approach in supporting families with decreasing or concerning attendance:

1. Register of Concern
2. Dedicated named member of staff linked to family/child
3. Personalised pastoral support for parents
4. Access/signposted for additional help
5. Priority access to after school clubs, activities, and events – paid
6. Relentless rewards for improved attendance and positive affirmation
7. Home visits on non-attendance
8. Use of Penalty Notices

The revised DfE Expectations (February 2024) and Our Kernow Learning Framework

Our Kernow Learning Framework links with the revised DfE Expectations (February 2024) to ensure that we:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils and parents understand
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Attendance Monitoring Daily Schedule

This early morning intervention time should be protected by the Headteacher to ensure it is successfully and robustly implemented every day.

<p>Daily 8am to 9am Wellbeing & reminder calls for children on register of concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all calls from families as they come in. • Call the family clarifying reasons for non-attendance. • Suggest that the child is able to come to school – maybe they could come in late once they are ready. Late is better than not at all! • Remind the family that their child can come into school at any time of the day if they have recovered, detail what the child will be missing. • Under exceptional circumstances or if the family is refusing to bring their child in, or unable to, offer a member of staff to go and collect them. • Use whole cohort text messages – ‘what’s happening today in school’
<p>Daily 9am to 9.30am Prioritise children on register of concern</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmly welcome all pupils who arrive after registration has closed. • Once child is safely in class, discuss with the family the barrier that day, and how we can avoid lost minutes of learning in the future. • Where possible, arrange for a colleague to take the child to class while you or the Headteacher speaks with the Parent/Carer. • Ensure the family is aware of the importance of what the child will have missed, ask what support is needed to avoid this happening again, and explain the consequences for them if it continues. • Phone all parents of children who have not been registered (if parents have not contacted the school) – ensure that the absence meets the authorised criteria. Suggest that the child is able to come to school – maybe they could come in later once they are ready. If the family is refusing to bring their child in, or unable to, offer a member of staff to go and collect them.
<p>Wellbeing Alert!</p>	<p>REMEMBER when taking a child to class, after registration, or when discussing with parent/carer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There could be potential embarrassment/anxiety for the child/parent ➤ The interruption of class receiving pupil after the start of the day will have an impact and so this will need to be discrete to minimise loss of focus for the rest of the class
<p>By 9.30am</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to know where every single child on roll is. • All pupils on your register of concern who are not in school have been contacted and supported into school, unless unwell.

<p>Daily 10.00am</p>	<p>Action - If any pupil absence from today means that a child has reached the threshold for a letter, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ make the phone call and follow-up letter to the family ➤ <u>Parent/Carer must be invited to see or speak via phone to the Headteacher before the issue becomes a problem</u> <p>Refer to Flowchart and Template Letters Use Attendance Meeting Form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post on social media and text messages to families – ‘what’s happening in school tomorrow’
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<p>Once a Week Analyse Attendance Data</p>	<p><i>DfE Expectations and Kernow Learning Framework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse absence and attendance data to identify and focus improvement efforts for pupils or groups – note the positives and the concerns • Use data to monitor the impact of attendance strategies to understand their effectiveness • Share information and work collaboratively with local stakeholders when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe • Use the Register of Concern to track progress in attendance • Make any referrals to the EWO or our Trust Attendance and Safeguarding Lead <p>Ensure that the Headteacher and class teachers are aware of all those children, including specific groups, who need support with their attendance.</p>
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<p>Lost minutes of learning, lost minutes with friends (formerly known as ‘late’ or ‘punctuality’)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treat ‘lost minutes of learning’ data in a similar way to attendance data. Which year groups? Which vulnerable groups? ➤ Use our letter template for persistent ‘lateness’ ➤ Follow both our ‘universal’ and ‘additional and different’ approaches to improve and secure punctuality 	
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Precision Coding

Please ensure coding is correct at all times. No pupil should have an authorised code after 5 days of absence or if the absence will bring them below 91% unless there are exceptional medical circumstances.

Unauthorised		Authorised	
G	Holiday not granted	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
N	Reason not yet established	C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
U	Arrived in school after registration closed. DfE guidance states that registers should only be open for half an hour from the beginning of the school day.	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances: Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
<p>Arriving after school has started: Between 9am and 9.30am = L After 9.30am = U</p> <p>Please refer to full guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p>		H	Holiday
		I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments)
		M	Medical / dental appointment
		S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
		T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
		E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Attendance Not Required: Dual Registered Pupils (Not counted as a possible session)		Attendance Not Required (Not counted as a possible session)	
D	Dual Registration (attending other establishment where there is a dual enrolment) e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA or Community Hospital Education Service (CHES) • Managed Move (attending another school for a trial period (e.g. 6 weeks). • Nursery Class which is part of a State Maintained school. 	Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
W	Attending work experience	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
B	Attending any other approved educational activity.	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Please refer to full guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)		Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
		Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
		X	Non-compulsory school age absence
		Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register

#	School closed to pupils & staff e.g. for school holidays and INSET days
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Weekly checks of missing marks are essential. Missing marks impact on attendance % and more importantly are a safeguarding red flag.

N Code - this needs to be chased to ensure robust safeguarding.

What to do.....

Missing in Education

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information. This principle underpins this guidance and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are safely on school rolls.

Definition of a Child Missing in Education (CME)?

Children of compulsory school age who are:

- not on a school roll;
- not being educated other than at school e.g. privately or in alternative provision;
- on a school roll but have suddenly stopped attending without reason and the school have been unable to contact parents at the home address.

Why do children go missing from education?

There are several reasons why a child may not be accessing education and be deemed missing. These include a child who:

- fails to start appropriate provision and never enters the system;
- ceases to attend, due to exclusion, withdrawal, or lack of robust measures to ensure a child attends school
- fails to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA, failing to make a successful transition at Year 6-7 or applying for EYFS / Infant to Junior).

There are also several more serious circumstances by which a child could go missing from education and as a result all children and young people who go missing from education in Cornwall are deemed to be at risk. A child missing in education could be a missing child.

Therefore, our measures to support children attending school are an important and significant safeguarding measure.

Preventative Measures to ensure a child does not become 'Missing in Education'
Our Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead must be given evidence of the school approach and interventions in place before a referral for EWO support is submitted

1 st Day	Call all Parents/Carers with parental responsibility or Special Guardianship <u>ALSO</u> call Social Care if the child has a Social Worker. Home visit if the pupil is deemed vulnerable.
2 nd Day	Call all contacts on the child's contact list. Put a note through the door.
3 rd Day	Visit the family home. Ask other children in the child's class. Call the Police if you have any concerns about the family home.
4 th Day	Call, Text, Email and write to the family indicating that the child will be reported 'Missing in Education' if they do not contact the school immediately. Call all contacts on the child's contact list.
5 th Day	2 nd or 3 rd Visit to the family home.
6 th Day	DSL Complete a 'Missing in Education' report.
7 th Day onwards	Continue attempts to make contact – phone, text, notes and visit to the home.

Holiday Requests

- DfE expectations and our Trust Policy states that all holiday requests can only be approved when there are exceptional family circumstances. **These should be compassionately and carefully considered on a case by case basis.** A request for planned holiday absence must be discussed with the Headteacher and put in writing, with good notice, and the reason(s) for the request logged.
- Children with additional and different needs who attend mainstream school are required to comply with the Attendance Policy with regards to holidays. This also applies to pupils not at statutory school age.
- If holiday is authorised due to exceptional circumstances the Headteacher must complete **template document 6 - Absence Tracking Report (summary to LGB)** and present to the Local Governing Body or tell them when updating under Safeguarding during the LGB meeting, so that LGBs are kept up to date with your 'authorisation' decisions.

Planned Holiday Absence: Action

- A phone call and follow-up letter to the Parent/Carer
- Refer to the Flowchart and Template Letters E and F**

5+ Days Absence or the Child's Attendance is below 91%

- Children who have had more than 5 days off, within a 3-month period, or attendance is at risk of falling below 91%, will no longer have authorised absences unless supported by medical evidence or there are exceptional circumstances.
- The school must see or be given evidence of medical appointments, and any reasonable adjustments required.

- Remember to be proportionate within the first term, **but do not minimise** the impact of any lost minutes/days of learning.
- You cannot refer for EWO support if you have authorised the absences.

Flexible Timetables (also referred to as Flexi School)

Our Trust does not normally accept requests for flexible timetables although every request must be considered. Please consult with our Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead if a parent has requested this.

Delayed & Deferred Requests

- All Delayed/Deferred requests should be discussed jointly between our Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead and the Headteacher. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Each case will be considered by a Panel convened by our Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead.

Temporary Reduced Timetables

Where necessary in exceptional circumstances

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs.

The School Admissions Code (published by the DfE in December 2014) (issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) states that a child is entitled to a full-time place in the September following their 4th birthday.

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

A reduced timetable should only be used as a short-term measure.

Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as an authorised absence.

Any use of an Alternative Provider (AP) to support a reduced timetable must adhere to our [Kernow Learning Alternative Provision Guidance – Document 8](#) and [Commissioning of Alternative Provision Checklist – Document 9](#)

Headteachers must state what these exceptional circumstances are. Tell our Trust Attendance and Safeguarding Lead and Cornwall Local Authority (LA) as soon as possible

The headteacher must justify

- Why the pupil cannot receive full-time education
- Why this decision is in the best interests of the child
- Why the allocated alternative provision is best suited to support the child back into school

A reduced timetable **is not:**

- A suspension (fixed-term exclusion), so you must record it as an authorised absence (DfE [guidance on school attendance](#), page 18)
- The same as [flexi-schooling](#) (a combination of school attendance and home schooling)
- A child starting EYFS on a gradual/staggered/phased start or a transitioning period

You **cannot** use potential exclusion to influence parents to remove their child from school – this is known as 'off-rolling' and is unlawful.

Examples of when you might use a temporary reduced timetable

Our **reduced timetable guidance** sets out examples of circumstances where the headteacher might consider using a temporary reduced timetable, including:

- Where a medical condition or significant family bereavement prevents a pupil from attending full-time education
- Where there are behavioural difficulties, and the school is seeking an alternative to permanent exclusion
- Where a pupil joining the school has significant needs and a reduced timetable would help them get used to the school and its routines

All pupils with a temporary reduced timetable will require a risk assessment

Particular vigilance/rigour will be needed if they are identified as a child who is 'in need' or 'looked after', or they are involved in/vulnerable to:

- Child sexual or criminal exploitation
- Substance/Alcohol misuse
- Self-harming
- Lack of supervision
- Radicalisation
- Domestic Abuse
- Other potential abuse
- Criminal activity
- Unexplained missing episodes from home

Discuss arrangements with child/children's social care and involve your designated safeguarding lead in any decisions.

The Headteacher needs to ensure that they have considered the school responsibilities under the [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) So:

- Contact our Trust Attendance and Safeguarding Lead/additional SEN support from our Trust who will support you to make reasonable internal adjustments to lessons, the class learning environment and timetable, and to review your current provision to see if there are any other solutions that can be considered to help the child in school – especially if there is funding from an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- Contact your local authority SEN service

This advice is from the National Association for Special Educational Needs ([nasen](#)).

Next steps for a child moved to a temporary reduced timetable

Meet with the pupil and their parents (regular meetings with parent/carers will have already informed decision). Use Document 7 to complete the Parent/School Agreement.

Discuss:

- Why you believe this is the best course of action
- What extra support the pupil will receive while at school
- Expectations for the pupil when they are not at school:
 - What they will be doing when they are at home during school time – including how they will be expected to complete any work set
 - What remote provision will be on offer
 - What Alternative provision is being offered
 - Who the designated adult responsible for their care will be – e.g. will an adult be available when the pupil is meant to be at home?
 - How they will travel to and from school
 - How they will access free school meals if they are entitled to them

During the meeting:

- Agree the review and dates for return to full time provision in school
- Listen to and address any concerns they may have
- Ensure parents agree with the decision and sign

Tell the Local Authority (LA) as soon as possible

The LA is required to keep records of all pupils who are not accessing full-time education. You might be asked for evidence of:

- Any safeguarding concerns you may have
- How the school is meeting the needs of the child while in school and then when at home – especially if they are considered vulnerable
- How you have followed all medical advice and guidance
- Parental involvement

Along with:

- A description of the proposed recommendations (including any medical reasons, if applicable)
- Total hours of education the pupil will receive per week (in school and off-site)
- Planned start date, review dates and end date (6 week cycle)

Review periods for temporary reduced timetables

After 2 weeks

Decide whether the current needs of the pupil have changed.

Look at the impact the reduced timetable has had on the pupil:

- How are they managing in school – have they met any targets that were set?
- How much education have they missed and what are the catch-up plans?
- Are transport arrangements to and from school suitable?
- Ask them:
 - Are they safe while at home?
 - How's their mental health and wellbeing? How are they feeling?

Following this review, you may consider:

- Adjusting your original timetable

- Setting new targets for your next review
- Increasing the time your pupil is at school

After 4 weeks

At this point, your focus should be on fully integrating your pupil back into school. With the pupil and their parents, review your support plan:

- See whether there's a way you can reduce this
- Set re-integration targets (more on this below)

Remember the focus of the temporary reduced timetable is a short-term intervention with a focus of a return to full-time provision within 6 weeks

The aim is for all pupils to be back in full-time education within 6 weeks. The LA will have the same expectations.

When our vulnerable pupil is ready to return to school full time, meet with:

- **Your SENCO:** to review the provision the pupil has received and whether it's manageable to continue giving them this level of support full time
- **Your staff:** to find out if the pupil has managed to engage and is ready to return to school full time. Agree re-integration expectations
- **The pupil's parents:** to review your original concerns, review behaviour and attitudes while the pupil has been on a reduced timetable and discuss proposed re-integration expectations
- **Ongoing Interventions:** ensure there is a socially and emotionally inspired framework to support the child with enhanced cycles of plan, do review

Inform the LA once your pupil is back to school full time.

Alternative Provision / Dual Placements

If the temporary reduced timetable is combined with any other use of an additional provider (AP) to educate the pupil, then please use our [Kernow Learning Alternative Provision Guidance and Commissioning of Alternative Provision Checklist – Documents 8 and 9](#)

Supporting strong attendance for our most vulnerable children

Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support (*DfE Working together to improve school attendance*)

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

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible. Schools may also find it helpful to refer to DfE's non-statutory guidance on [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) for case study examples.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

In developing this support, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.
- In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. They should:
 - Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
 - Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
 - Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
 - Make a sickness return to the local authority 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 15 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 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, our school will:

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

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

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

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

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

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases (see code I). Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments

or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) or [arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

Where parents do not engage in support, schools should work with the local authority or other local partners to formalise that support and as a last resort, enforce attendance through legal intervention.

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

Our Trust and DfE view on issuing Penalty Notices

National Framework for penalty notices (*DfE Working together to improve school attendance*)

Purpose of penalty notices

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 where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and **should 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).

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority.

Where a penalty notice is issued by someone other than a local authority officer, the person issuing the penalty notice is expected to check with the local authority before doing so and must also send them copies of any penalty notices issued.

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 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school must have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance.

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 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 (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
 - If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a Notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.
 - If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance, not including issuing a penalty notice or prosecution. As part of this consideration, schools and local authorities should consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary from other services and agencies in the area. They should then decide whether any of those things are appropriate in the individual cases and for those that are appropriate, whether they have been provided previously or could be provided now instead of taking legal action. The local authority's decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final.

Whatever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, schools, and local authorities where appropriate, should monitor the impact of the action, and if it does not lead to attendance improvement review the case and consider alternative actions.

The National Framework does not prevent a penalty notice from being used in other cases where an offence has been committed but before doing so authorised officers are expected to make the same considerations as set out above. If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate,

they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. If local authorities wish to exercise this discretion to issue a penalty notice earlier in such circumstances, they should make this clear in their Local Code of Conduct. Local authorities who conduct, or may wish to, conduct truancy sweeps will also want to make provision for this within their Code.

The penalty notice system is not a money-making scheme and local authorities should not have income targets. Any revenue collected through the system must be ringfenced for attendance.

Attendance legal intervention *(DfE Working together to improve school attendance)*

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

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are **Attendance Contracts, Education supervision orders, Attendance prosecution, Parenting orders, Penalty notices.**

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

Schools and local authorities should decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention, but this should usually be the parent or parents who have allowed the absence

Appendix 1

Strongest Attendance
100% (190 days in education – no missed days)
97% (185 days in education – 5 missed days)



Good Attendance
97% (185 days in education – 5 missed days)
95% (180 days in education – 10 missed days)

Monitoring



At Risk of Persistent Absence

93% (178 days in education – 12 missed days)

Cause for concern

Focused monitoring and support, and contact with Parents/Carers



Persistent Absence

91% (172 days in education – 18 missed days)

Cause for concern – At risk of not fulfilling academic potential

Risk of underachieving
Strong scaffolding
Regular meetings with Parents/Carers



Severe Persistent Absence

85% (161 days in education – 29 missed days)

Cause for serious concern – severe risk of underachieving
Formal Interventions
Multi-Agency approach to support child accessing education

Appendix 2

Templates / Documents

Document 1	Attendance Strategy
Document 2	Attendance Flowchart
Document 3	Attendance Register of Concern & Record of Support
Document 4	Attendance Record of Meeting Form
Document 5	Application for Leave of Absence
Document 6	Leave of Absence Tracking & Summary for LGB
Document 7	Temporary Reduced Timetable Agreement
Document 8	Alternative Provision Guidance
Document 9	Commissioning of Alternative Provision Checklist
Template Letter A	Attendance falls below 95% - discussed with the Parent/Carer via telephone or in person
Template Letter B	Attendance falls below 95% - unsuccessful attempt to contact Parent/Carer
Template Letter C	Attendance falls below 91% - discussed with the Parent/Carer via telephone or in person
Template Letter D	Lost Minutes of Learning
Template Letter E	Request for exceptional leave – authorised
Template Letter F	Request for exceptional leave – unauthorised (prior to the absence)