



# **Attendance and Absence Policy 2025-2026**

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## STATEMENT OF INTENT

Enhance Academy Trust believes that in order to facilitate high achievement, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. The schools in Enhance Academy Trust set an annual attendance target of 97%.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

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

**The school's Attendance Strategic Leader is: Rachel Brook – Head of School**

**The school's Safeguarding, Attendance and Inclusion Officer is: Steph Pal and can be contacted for all attendance and absence concerns via [office@lepton.enhanceacad.org.uk](mailto:office@lepton.enhanceacad.org.uk) calling the school office on 01484 600384.**

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Local Academy Board** has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the Attendance Strategic Leader and School Leaders to set goals for

- attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding the implementation of this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints

#### Procedures Policy.

- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

#### The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the Senior Leadership Team to the Attendance Strategic Leader role.
- Appointing a member of staff to the Attendance Officer role.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring that attendance is high priority across the school and its importance is regularly shared with pupils and parents.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools within the Trust.

#### **Staff** are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

#### The **Attendance Strategic Leader** is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data reports and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Arranging or delivering relevant training for staff within school
- Reporting on attendance trends, strategies, and the impact of interventions to Senior Leaders and the Local Academy Board.

#### The **Attendance Officer** is responsible for:

- Undertaking first day absence processes.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Communicating with pupils and parents about poor attendance.
- Informing the Local Authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance

- registers.
- Involving and working with other agencies, including the Trust Educational Welfare Officer, to support children and families with poor attendance to improve.
- Providing reports and analysis of attendance and absence to the Attendance Strategic Lead.

The **Trust Educational Welfare Officer** is responsible for:

- Proactively promoting good attendance across Enhance Academy Trust and acting where there are issues, carrying out the statutory duty of legal action where required.
- Becoming involved with any case where a pupil's attendance drops below 92%.
- Ensuring that schools effectively implement statutory procedures in relation to attendance, liaising with the Education Welfare Service as required.
- Liaising with the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to parents/ carers for their child's non-attendance at the Academy and to implement and take the lead on Fast-Track to Prosecution.
- Implementing legal proceedings.
- Acting as the lead officer in relation to Education Supervision Orders or Academy Attendance Orders to ensure that appropriate action is taken in response to any court direction.
- Ensuring accurate collection and collation of data to enable the production of comprehensive statistics on prosecutions, outcomes, and attendance rates.

The Trust EWO, shared part-time across schools in partnership with another Trust, will ensure liaison with all three Local Authorities to meet statutory duties consistently and avoid duplication of referrals

The **Local Authority Education Welfare Service** is responsible for:

- Working in partnership to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, by supporting the Fast-Track to Attendance Programme; and at a whole school level using proactive strategies and action plans.
- Working with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
- Providing guidance with regards to Children Missing Education.
- Working in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
- Undertaking legal action on behalf of the school.

**Pupils** are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

**Parents** are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Informing school promptly regarding absences.
- Ensuring their child arrives punctually.

#### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

***Absence:***

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

***Authorised absence:***

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious observances
- An absence due to a family emergency (for example, a bereavement) for which the school has granted leave
- Authorised educational sporting events
- Temporary, time limited part-time timetables

***Unauthorised absence:***

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Pupils who have been permitted to stay up late the previous night
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips
- Holidays in term-time
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

**Persistent absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA):**

- PA is missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across the school year)
- SA is missing 50% or more of schooling across the year

**ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8:50am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:45am.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a L mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close 30 minutes later at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a U mark of absence if they arrive at school after 9.30am. The afternoon register will be marked by 1:00pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close 30 minutes later at 1:30pm. Pupils will receive a U mark of absence if they arrive to afternoon registration after 1.30p.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

#### ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 8:45am on the first day of their child's absence and will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, for example, one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am (the time the register closes) to report the absence, the Attendance and Inclusion Officer (or a member of the office staff) will contact the parent by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.

If no reason for absence has been established by 10am, this absence will be reported to the Headteacher.

If a child is already receiving multi-agency support, this will also be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or allocated Social Worker. School staff should undertake a home visit within the timescales set out below.

Local safeguarding escalation thresholds differ between Local Authorities:

- Barnsley – a home visit is required within three days of any unexplained absence.
- Kirklees – a welfare check must take place by Day 2.
- Wakefield – a welfare check must take place by Day 3

The Attendance Officer will ensure that the correct Local Authority escalation procedures are followed for each child, in line with their home Local Authority—including where pupils are known to Social Care or are subject to Child in Need or Child Protection Plans.

In addition to LA requirements, the school has its own internal welfare processes to maintain oversight and support attendance. The school will follow up all absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding action is taken.
- Determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Apply the correct attendance code for census reporting.

Where a pupil who doesn't meet the above criteria but is absent for more than three consecutive school days, the Safeguarding and Inclusion Officer will normally undertake a home visit to check on the child's wellbeing and offer support.

If this coincides with or falls before the Local Authority's required timeframe, the school's visit will fulfil both purposes.

If the Local Authority threshold requires an earlier visit, that procedure will take priority and be followed instead.

In the case of pupils who are classed as persistently absent (PA), arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **92%**, the Trust Education Welfare Officer will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions

register if the school and the Local Authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

### **PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS**

Poor punctuality and lateness are not acceptable, and all pupils must arrive on time. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. The late arrival of pupils also disrupts lessons, which can be embarrassing for the pupil and can also encourage absence. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and by celebrating good class punctuality.

If a pupil is late on three occasions in a half term, the school will write to parents. If lateness continues, the school will arrange to meet parents to discuss what measures may be required to ensure that the pupil arrives at school by the appropriate time.

If a pupil has 10 late marks (Code L) in the academic year, the school has the right to record any further lateness as unauthorised absences which is likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

### **ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

The school uses Integris to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session.

This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- C1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part time timetable
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- K = Attending education provision arranged by Local Authority
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- Q = Unable to attend the school due to access arrangements
- U = Arrived after registration closed (unauthorised)
- N = Reason not yet provided

- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered (at another educational establishment)
- 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 whole school closure
- Y5 = Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent in accordance with public health and guidance or Law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of other unavoidable cause.
- Z = Pupil not on admissions register.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

#### **AUTHORISING PARENTAL ABSENCE REQUESTS**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil’s education into account. ***The Headteacher’s decision is not subject to appeal***

#### **Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. In order to have a request for a leave of absence considered, the school expects parents to contact the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur. The Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant granting the leave of absence and if the leave of absence is granted, will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

As the Headteacher will only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

If a leave of absence (including holiday) is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

The first time a Penalty Notice issued for a Term Time Holiday, the Penalty Notice (fine) will be **£160 per parent, per child**

**if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.**

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a **second** Penalty Notice to the same parent/s for the same pupil/s within **3 years of the first notice**, the second Penalty Notice (fine) will be **£160 per parent, per child** (no reduced fee for paying early)

Fines will continue to be issued per parent per child, for example: 3 siblings in one family absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

On the **third** time that an offence is committed for either -a Term Time Holiday, a Penalty Notice will not be issued but the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school', the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000.

The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised and will incur a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Illness and medical appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment and providing a copy of the appointment details for school records.

### **Performances and activities, including paid work**

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the Local Authority which authorises the school's absence(s) and ensures safeguarding checks have been completed.

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching or home learning. These arrangements will be approved by the Local Authority who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the Local Authority issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the Local Authority; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the Local Authority and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the Local Authority, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 97%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

### **Religious observance**

If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance, the school will record this day as an authorised absence. The school will grant **one** additional day across the school year for religious observance if a parent applies for leave of absence.

### **Temporary, time-limited part-time timetables**

Where the pupil is of compulsory school age, and both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.

### **SEND AND HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES**

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

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC Plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health.

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

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

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.

- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Team Around the Family (TAF) process.

- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

### **LEAVE DURING LUNCHTIMES**

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunchtimes with permission from the Headteacher; it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within one week of the request.

Where permission has been granted, the Headteacher will ensure a photo lunchtime pass is printed for the pupil and will include the pupil's name on the off-site register.

Pupils will leave the school premises within 10 minutes of the start of lunch and will return no later than 5 minutes before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the school office when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register at the school office. A member of staff will be available at the school office before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff at the school office has given their permission.

The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time; this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the Headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the Headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a termly basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue

### **MISSING CHILDREN**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - The library and other group rooms
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and

will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated Social Worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

### **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)**

When a child goes missing from education, which includes within the school day, unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. In the case of a child in care, the Social Worker must be informed in line with safeguarding

Should the parent remove the child from school for a period of absence without prior permission, the school should also put this in writing, explaining the consequences for doing so.

Pupils will be removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law, after confirmation from Wakefield or Kirklees Council.

For Barnsley pupils, removal from the admission register will be confirmed with Barnsley MBC's Education Welfare Service in line with their CME procedures. Each academy will ensure contact details for the relevant LA are updated annually in September.

### **FLEXIBLE SCHOOLING**

Enhance Academy Trust does not grant flexible schooling timetables as we do not believe that they are compatible with our schooling ethos, as they do not allow for full integration into school life.

A Flexible Timetable will only be considered on the grounds of medical needs or SEN needs, used in conjunction with a phased return plan.

Any request must be put in writing to the Headteacher for consideration. Parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss arrangements prior to accepting or rejecting the request. Elective Home Education Officers are able to support at these meetings if required. There is no right of appeal against the decision of a Headteacher not to agree to a flexible schooling request in line with the Council's guidance.

### **ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION**

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Officer, supported by the Attendance Strategic Leader and Trust Education Welfare Officer, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Engaging with Local Authority attendance teams
  - Engaging with other services and professionals
  - Using Fixed Penalty Notices and other legal interventions

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **97%**, the school will write to the pupil's parents to alert them of their concerns and falling level of attendance. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored.

If a pupil's attendance falls below **95%**, parents will be expected to meet with the Attendance Officer and Attendance Strategic Leader/Headteacher to discuss the pupil's attendance and agree strategies to improve attendance.

If further absence occurs and the pupil's attendance falls below **92%**, a referral to the Trust Education Welfare Officer will be made.

### **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

The school will acknowledge improved and sustained attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Rewards such as acknowledgments and certificates
- Contacting parents to acknowledge improvements via phone calls, letters, or other communication pathways
- Promoting good attendance around school, on the website or via social media.
- Employ a range of reward systems to improve school attendance.

### **WORKING WITH PARENTS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

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

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, for example, sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Attendance Officer will involve the Trust's Education Welfare Officer and will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, for example bullying, the Attendance Officer will work with the Headteacher and any relevant school staff, for example the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, for example they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, for example, Children's Social Care or the Local Authority, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA) & SEVERE ABSENCE (SA)**

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), such as:

- Children in need
- Looked After Children
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

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

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they maybe having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC Plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have Severe Absence (rates of absence over 50%) and will work with the Local Authority and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where pupils meet the threshold for Persistent or Severe Absence, the school will ensure referral to the LA Attendance/EWS team and, where necessary, Children's Social Care, in line with Barnsley, Wakefield, and Kirklees safeguarding pathways.

### IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The threshold for Irregular School Attendance 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).

All schools must consider whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate in each individual case where a pupil reaches the national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice. If a Penalty Notice is deemed to be appropriate as an alternative to prosecution:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Where pupils are at risk of persistent absence, the school will engage with the LA's escalation process (Fast Track, Attendance Panel, or Attendance Strategy Group, depending on LA). The Trust EWO will coordinate referrals to ensure consistency and compliance.

### LEGAL INTERVENTION

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect the Attendance Officer and Trust Education Welfare Officer will consider:

- Working with the Local Authority to issue an Attendance Contract, Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order.
- Engaging Children's Social Care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Requesting that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice or Parental Prosecution

Further information about Legal Intervention can be found in the DfE guidance: ***Working together to improve school attendance (2024)***

Penalty Notices are issued via the Local Authority in line with their local code of conduct. While national thresholds apply (10 unauthorised sessions in 10 weeks, or persistent holiday absence), Wakefield, Kirklees, and Barnsley councils may have specific administrative requirements (e.g. referral forms, parental warning letters, or fast-track panels). The school will ensure it follows the prescribed LA procedures when requesting legal action.

### MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

The school will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will analyse attendance and absence data on a biweekly basis including punctuality and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.

- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The school will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly, and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Strategic Lead who will share analyses with teachers and support staff to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance Strategic Lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Local Academy Board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the Headteacher in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional, and national data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Board of Trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the Trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions through regular networking opportunities.

### **TRAINING OF STAFF**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The Trust will ensure that teachers, support staff, governors and trustees receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction.

Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development. Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The Trust will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the Attendance Officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2026**. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.



## Annual Attendance Compliance Check Appendix

(to be completed each September by Attendance Lead / Headteacher / DSL)

### 1. Local Authority CME (Children Missing Education) Contacts

- Confirm correct **CME referral email and phone number** for:
  - Wakefield
  - Kirklees
  - Barnsley
- Check if there are **any new forms or portals** (e.g. Kirklees “CME referral form”, Barnsley CME tracker).
- Ensure office staff know procedure for pupils missing 10 consecutive sessions (5 days).

### 2. Penalty Notice / Legal Intervention

- Confirm current **Penalty Notice Code of Conduct** for each LA.
- Check any updates to thresholds (e.g. holiday absence, 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 weeks).
- Ensure the Trust EWO and LA EWS referral process is agreed (forms, warning letters, timelines).

### 3. Fast Track / Attendance Panels

- Wakefield – confirm *Inclusion Panel / Fast Track* arrangements.
- Kirklees – confirm *Fast Track / Attendance Panel / Behaviour & Attendance Collaborative* referral process.
- Barnsley – confirm *Attendance Strategy Group* escalation route.

### 4. Safeguarding / Welfare Checks

- Barnsley – home visit required by **Day 3** unexplained absence.
- Kirklees – welfare check required by **Day 2** unexplained absence.
- Wakefield – follow DfE CME guidance (10 days, but earlier if safeguarding concerns).

- Ensure these thresholds are in the Safeguarding & Attendance logs.

### 5. Multi-agency Working

- Trust EWO liaises with LA attendance leads and social care where Persistent or Severe Absence is recorded.
- Confirm links with Early Help / Team Around the Child / SEND teams in each LA.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher / Attendance Lead)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Trust EWO / Clerk)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

