Whole School Attendance Policy

September 2026

Name of Mersey View Learning Trust School:

Valewood Primary

As a Rights Respecting School we recognise that our Safeguarding duties, including attendance, reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As duty bearers we will uphold the rights of every child and always have the best interests of the child at the heart of all our decisions so that all of our children have the right to be heard, to be listened to, to access their education and be free from harm.

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1. Introduction and background

1.1 Background

At Valewood Primary we believe that regular attendance is fundamental to pupils' educational achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and future success. This policy sets out how the school will promote, monitor and support good attendance in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, governors, the Local Authority and other agencies.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote a culture where good attendance and punctuality are expected and valued.
- Encourage regular attendance and identify concerns early.
- Address barriers to attendance and provide support for pupils and families.
- Meet legal attendance requirements.
- Safeguard pupils and support their wellbeing and educational progress.
- Explain how attendance is monitored, recorded and improved.

We believe every child has the right to a full-time education and that good attendance is a shared responsibility. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment where pupils want to attend, working with families to maintain high expectations, identify concerns early and provide support when needed. Good and improving attendance will be recognised and celebrated.
Pupils are expected to attend whenever school is open unless there is a valid reason for absence. The Headteacher, or an authorised member of staff, will determine whether an absence is authorised.

1.2 Attendance, Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Regular attendance supports children's safety, wellbeing and success in school. If a child is absent regularly or for extended periods, we will work with parents/carers to understand the reasons and provide support where needed. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside wellbeing, safeguarding and SEND needs, and safeguarding procedures will be followed where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

1.3 Legal Duties of Parents and School

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child receives a full-time education and attends regularly. The school monitors attendance follows up unexplained absences and works with families to address concerns.
We work with parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance, provide support and, where needed, involve relevant services. If attendance does not improve, further action may be taken in line with legal requirements.

1.4 Policy Development and Review

This attendance policy is based on current government guidance and best practice and has been developed with input from education and attendance professionals to support pupils and families effectively.

The policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if requirements change. The Governing Board monitors implementation and ensures attendance remains a school priority. It is informed by Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

2. Legislative Framework

2.1 Statutory Guidance

This policy is based on Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The school promotes good attendance through early identification, partnership working, appropriate support, consistent procedures, accurate records, and consideration of safeguarding, SEND, mental health and wellbeing.

2.2 Relevant Legislation

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance and School Attendance: Parental Responsibility Measures. It reflects the requirements of the **Education Act 1996**, **Education Act 2002**, **Education and Inspections Act 2006**, **School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024**, **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**, and the **Equality Act 2010**, which set out the legal responsibilities of schools, parents and local authorities in promoting attendance, safeguarding pupils and ensuring every child receives a full-time education.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education and attend regularly. Schools must maintain registers, monitor attendance, support pupils at risk of poor attendance, share information where required, and work with families and partners to improve attendance.

3. Promoting Regular Attendance

3.1 Whole School Approach

At Valewood, good attendance is a shared responsibility and is essential to pupils' learning, wellbeing, safety and future success. We work with pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors to promote regular attendance, providing a positive and inclusive environment where every child can engage fully in education and achieve their potential.

Our whole-school approach includes:

- Promoting high expectations for attendance and punctuality through the curriculum, assemblies, communications and daily school routines.
- Building positive relationships with pupils and families and working collaboratively with parents/carers, the Local Authority and partner agencies to achieve the best outcomes.
- Identifying attendance concerns early, understanding and addressing barriers to attendance, and responding proactively with appropriate support.
- Embedding attendance within safeguarding, pastoral care, behaviour, wellbeing and SEND processes.
- Recognising and celebrating positive attendance and improvements in attendance

3.2 Attendance Expectations

- The school expects pupils to attend every day it is open unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason for absence.

We expect all pupils to:

- Attend regularly, arrive on time, participate fully in lessons and school life, and engage with any support provided to improve attendance.

We expect parents/carers to:

- Ensure their child attends regularly and punctually and report absences in line with school procedures.
- Provide explanations or evidence when requested and work with the school to address attendance concerns.
- Avoid arranging holidays, leisure activities or non-essential appointments during term time.

The school promotes a minimum attendance expectation of 97% or above, recognising that lower attendance can significantly affect learning, progress and social development.

Attendance below 90% is Persistent Absence (PA) and below 50% is Severe Absence (SA). The school monitors attendance and provides additional support where needed.

The school uses attendance thresholds to help identify concerns early and provide timely support:

- 97% and above: Expected attendance.
- 95% to 96.9%: Early monitoring and discussion where concerns arise.
- 90% to 94.9%: Additional support and Attendance Support Plan may be considered.
- Below 90%: Persistent Absence procedures and targeted intervention.
- Below 50%: Severe Absence procedures and multi-agency involvement.

The Headteacher, or an authorised member of staff, decides whether absences are authorised in line with statutory guidance and school procedures.

3.3 Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE)

The school will work towards its annual Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE), a school-specific attendance improvement target set by the Department for Education. Progress towards the target will be monitored regularly by school leaders and governors and used to inform attendance improvement strategies and support. Our target is 97%.

3.4 Attendance Improvement Strategies

The school adopts a graduated and supportive approach to improving attendance, working with pupils and families to understand absence and remove barriers to attendance.
To improve and maintain high attendance, the school will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality, identifying trends, patterns and vulnerable groups.
- Communicate attendance expectations and provide information to pupils and parents/carers through routine communications, reports and meetings.
- Recognise and celebrate excellent and improved attendance and punctuality.
- Follow up unexplained absences, hold attendance meetings where concerns arise, and develop Attendance Support Plans where appropriate.
- Provide pastoral, emotional and wellbeing support, working with the SENDCO, safeguarding team, Early Help services and external agencies to address barriers to attendance.
- Review support and interventions regularly to ensure they remain effective and proportionate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board will:

- Promote the importance of attendance and ensure it is reflected within the school's culture, policies, improvement priorities and statutory responsibilities.
- Monitor attendance data, including Persistent Absence (PA), Severe Absence (SA) and vulnerable groups, and hold the Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion to account for attendance outcomes and improvement.
- Ensure effective attendance systems, policies, resources, staff training and interventions are in place, implemented consistently and reviewed regularly.
- Support the Senior Attendance Champion in driving attendance improvement and promoting effective partnership working with families, the Local Authority and other agencies.
- Receive regular attendance reports, including whole-school attendance, Persistent Absence, Severe Absence, attendance of vulnerable groups, emerging trends and the impact of attendance improvement strategies.

4.2 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) leads and promotes a strong attendance culture across the school. The SLT will:

- Promote high expectations for attendance and punctuality through a whole-school attendance strategy and school improvement planning.
- Implement and monitor this policy, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and effective attendance systems and reporting.
- Monitor attendance data, trends and interventions, and support the Senior Attendance Champion to drive improvement.
- Work with governors, families and external agencies, ensuring attendance is considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, behaviour and wellbeing.

4.3 The Senior Attendance Champion provides strategic leadership for attendance and will:

- Lead attendance improvement, promote excellent attendance and ensure staff understand their responsibilities.
- Monitor attendance, absence and punctuality data, identifying trends and coordinating support for pupils facing barriers to attendance.
- Oversee and evaluate attendance interventions, working closely with safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and wellbeing teams, the Local Authority and partner agencies.
- Report attendance priorities and outcomes to leaders and governors and support staff training and development.

4.4 The Attendance Officer and Administrative Staff manage the school's day-to-day attendance processes and will:

- Maintain accurate admission, attendance and intervention records; monitor attendance and punctuality; complete first-day response procedures; and follow up unexplained absences, ensuring compliance with statutory and data protection requirements.

- Coordinate attendance meetings, support plans and interventions; work with staff, safeguarding leads and external agencies; analyse attendance data, produce reports, promote attendance initiatives, and record concerns, interventions and communications.

4.5 All staff will:

- Promote attendance and punctuality through positive relationships with pupils and families, creating inclusive and engaging learning environments and recognising good and improving attendance.
- Identify, report and respond to attendance concerns, follow procedures consistently, and work collaboratively to deliver attendance support, interventions and plans for pupils experiencing attendance difficulties.

4.6 Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends regularly and punctually by establishing routines that support attendance, wellbeing and learning, and notify the school of absences, providing reasons, evidence and updated contact details where required.
- Work positively with the school and relevant agencies, attend meetings and support plans when required, arrange appointments outside school hours where possible, and avoid term-time leave unless exceptional circumstances apply.

4.7 Pupils are expected to:

- Regularly, arrive on time, be prepared to learn, engage positively in lessons and school life, and follow late arrival procedures.

- Speak to a trusted adult about attendance difficulties, engage with support and interventions, develop positive attendance habits and routines, and understand the importance of attendance for learning, wellbeing and future success.

4.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures attendance concerns are considered within safeguarding processes and will:

- Monitor attendance as a safeguarding indicator, working with attendance staff to identify vulnerable pupils and investigate unexplained, persistent or severe absence.
- Ensure attendance concerns inform safeguarding assessments and support, working with Children's Social Care, Early Help and partner agencies, following Children Missing Education procedures, and maintaining effective records, information sharing and a joined-up approach across attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion services.

5. Understanding Types of Absence

Regular attendance is essential for education, wellbeing, social development and future opportunities. The school monitors attendance and works with families to promote regular and punctual attendance. The school determines whether absences are authorised or unauthorised in line with statutory guidance, and all absences are recorded using the appropriate attendance code.

5.1 Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is one the Headteacher, or authorised delegate, considers reasonable and unavoidable. Examples include:

- Illness, injury, medical appointments, religious observance, approved educational activities, exclusions/suspensions, exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher, and other absences permitted by attendance regulations.

The school may request evidence where absences are frequent, prolonged or cause concern. Authorisation remains at the school's discretion.

5.2 Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence occurs where no valid reason is provided, the reason is not accepted, or permission has not been granted. Such absences are recorded in line with statutory guidance and may result in attendance interventions or legal action. The school will seek to understand and address any barriers to attendance, but parents/carers should be aware of their legal responsibility to secure regular attendance.

Examples of Unauthorised Absence include:

- Unauthorised term-time holidays, shopping or social outings, family events, childcare for siblings, accompanying relatives to appointments, oversleeping, transport issues, minor ailments, unexplained absences, late arrival after registration closes, and any absence that does not meet authorisation criteria.

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from complex circumstances and will take a supportive, child-centred approach to addressing barriers. Where unauthorised absence continues despite support, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority in line with the National Framework for School Attendance.

5.4 Persistent and Severe Absence

The school recognises that absence can affect educational achievement, wellbeing, safeguarding and future opportunities. Attendance is monitored regularly to identify concerns early and provide timely support in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, the Local Authority and other agencies.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil is Persistently Absent (PA) when attendance falls below 90%. Persistent absence can affect learning, wellbeing, social development, engagement and future opportunities.
Where attendance is approaching or below 90%, the school will:

- Identify concerns early, work with families to understand barriers, and implement appropriate support, including attendance meetings and Attendance Support Plans.
- Provide pastoral, SEND, safeguarding and external agency support where required, and regularly review progress.

5.5 Severe Absence (SA)

A pupil is Severely Absent (SA) when attendance falls below 50%. Severe absence is often linked to complex barriers and increased risks to learning, wellbeing, engagement, safeguarding and becoming a Child Missing Education (CME).

Where severe absence is identified, the school will:

- Undertake an urgent review, work with the pupil and family to understand barriers, and implement a personalised Attendance Support Plan.
- Coordinate safeguarding and multi-agency support, maintain close monitoring, involve the Local Authority where appropriate, and consider statutory interventions where support has not secured improvement.

The school is committed to ensuring pupils who are persistently or severely absent receive timely support to overcome barriers, re-engage with education and achieve sustainable improvements in attendance.

6. Attendance Registration and Recording

The school is committed to maintaining accurate attendance records and ensuring that all absences are followed up promptly. Effective attendance procedures help safeguard pupils, promote regular attendance and enable the school to identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity.

6.1 Attendance Registers
The school takes attendance registers twice daily and records attendance for every pupil using the Department for Education's national attendance codes.

6.2 Attendance Coding
The school uses national attendance codes to record attendance consistently as outlined in Appendix 2

6.3 Recording Attendance
Attendance is recorded accurately at each session using the appropriate code. Any unexplained absence recorded as **N** will be reviewed and updated once the reason for absence is confirmed.

6.4 Maintaining Accurate Records
The school monitors and updates attendance records regularly to ensure accuracy, support safeguarding, identify pupils needing support, and meet statutory attendance requirements.

7. Attendance Procedures

7.1 Reporting an Absence

Parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school whenever their child is unable to attend.

Parents/carers must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:30am using the school's agreed reporting procedure.
- Provide the child's name, class/form and the reason for absence.
- Maintain contact with the school for each subsequent day of absence unless otherwise agreed.
- Inform the school of the expected date of return where known.
- Provide any supporting evidence requested by the school.

Absence can be reported via:

- Telephone: 0151 924 0483
- Email: admin@vps.mvlt.co.uk

- School communication platform/app dojo Arbor

The school expects parents/carers to communicate honestly and openly regarding the reasons for absence so that appropriate support can be offered where necessary.
Where no reason for absence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unexplained until satisfactory information has been received and considered by the school.

7.2 First Day Response Procedures

The safety and welfare of pupils is a priority. The school operates first-day response procedures to investigate unexplained absences promptly.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will:

- Check attendance records, contact parents/carers using agreed communication methods, and make reasonable attempts to establish the reason for absence, including contacting emergency contacts where appropriate.
- Consider welfare checks, involve the DSL where safeguarding concerns arise, contact cannot be established, attendance indicates vulnerability, or there is a risk of the pupil becoming a Child Missing Education (CME), and follow Local Authority CME procedures where required.

Where a pupil has been absent for ten consecutive school days without authorisation and their whereabouts remain unknown, the school will follow Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures. The school will not wait until ten days have elapsed where safeguarding concerns exist and will make appropriate referrals immediately where a child may be at risk.

7.3 Medical Evidence

The school will generally accept a parent's/carer's explanation for short-term illness. However, medical evidence may be requested where illness absence is frequent, recurring, prolonged, follows a pattern, raises attendance concerns, or where the authenticity of the illness is in doubt.

Evidence may include appointment letters, prescription or pharmacy records, hospital notifications, medical reports or confirmation from a healthcare professional. Requests for evidence will be proportionate and sensitive, recognising that obtaining evidence can be difficult for some families. Parents/carers may find NHS and UK Health Security Agency guidance helpful when deciding whether a child is well enough to attend school. The provision of medical evidence does not automatically result in an absence being authorised; this decision remains with the Headteacher or delegated representative.

7.4 Graduated Attendance Support Process

The school uses a graduated approach to attendance, recognising that early intervention is the most effective way to improve attendance. Support will be tailored to the needs of the pupil and family and focused on removing barriers to attendance.

- **Stage 1**: Universal Support - A positive attendance culture, clear expectations, attendance promotion, recognition and routine monitoring.
- **Stage 2:** Early Intervention - Increased monitoring, communication with parents/carers, attendance discussions, and early support to address emerging concerns.

- **Stage 3**: Attendance Support Plan - Formal meetings, agreed targets and actions, regular reviews, and additional pastoral, wellbeing or SEND support.
- **Stage 4:** Multi-Agency Support - Early Help, TAF/TAS meetings, specialist services, partner agency involvement and Local Authority support.
- **Stage 5:** Formal Intervention - Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service, Attendance Panels, Attendance Contracts, Notices to Improve, Penalty Notice consideration, Education Supervision Orders and legal action where appropriate.

The school will seek to provide support and intervention before enforcement action is considered, unless safeguarding concerns or exceptional circumstances require a different approach.

7.5 Attendance Support Plans

An Attendance Support Plan may be implemented where attendance concerns are identified and additional support is needed to improve attendance.

Attendance Support Plans aim to:

- Identify barriers to attendance, agree attendance targets, actions and responsibilities, and coordinate support and interventions.
- Set review arrangements, success measures and referrals to relevant services, and monitor progress and impact.

Attendance Support Plans will be developed with pupils and parents/carers wherever possible and reviewed regularly to ensure support remains effective. The school will take a supportive, solution-focused approach to achieving sustainable improvements in attendance. Where attendance does not improve despite appropriate support, further intervention may be considered in line with Local Authority procedures and statutory guidance.

Where a pupil returns following a prolonged period of absence, the school will consider a personalised reintegration plan to support a successful return to education. This may include phased support, pastoral input, reasonable adjustments and regular review arrangements.

8. Punctuality and Lateness

Good punctuality is essential to pupils' learning, wellbeing and future success. The school expects all pupils to arrive on time each day and works with families to promote positive punctuality habits.

8.1 Importance of Punctuality

Punctuality supports pupils to:

- Take part fully in registration, assemblies and learning, develop positive habits, and build confidence, independence and responsibility.

Late arrival can affect:

- Learning, achievement, wellbeing, relationships and classroom routines.

The school promotes punctuality to ensure all pupils receive their full entitlement to education**.**

8.2 Registration Arrangements

The school is legally required to maintain accurate attendance registers and record attendance at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
School Day Timings (schools should amend as appropriate):

- School gates open: 8:35
- Class doors open: 8:40
- Registration begins: 8:45
- Registration closes: 9:15
- End of the school day: 3:15

Pupils are expected to be present and ready to learn when registration begins. Pupils arriving after registration starts must report to the school office or designated sign-in point so attendance can be recorded accurately and safeguarding procedures maintained. Attendance and lateness are recorded using the appropriate DfE attendance codes.

8.3 Managing Late Arrivals

The school recognises that occasional lateness may occur; however, all late arrivals are monitored and recorded.

- Pupils arriving late must report to the school office, where the reason for lateness will be recorded and the appropriate attendance code applied.
- Parents/carers may be contacted where concerns arise. Pupils arriving before registers close normally receive an L Code, while those arriving after registers close receive a U Code, recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session.

The school will work with families to understand and address any factors contributing to lateness.

8.4 Persistent Lateness

Persistent lateness can negatively affect education and may indicate wider attendance concerns. The school monitors punctuality and will work with pupils and families to identify barriers and improve punctuality.

- Where concerns arise, the school may contact parents/carers, monitor punctuality, issue letters, arrange meetings and agree improvement targets or support plans.
- Support may include advice on routines, transport assistance, pastoral or wellbeing support, Attendance Support Plans, Early Help or other services.

Where punctuality does not improve despite support, further action may be considered in line with this policy, Local Authority procedures and statutory guidance. The school is committed to working with pupils and families to ensure every pupil can access the full benefit of their education from the start of each school day.

9. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

The school recognises that poor attendance is often linked to wider challenges. We work with pupils, families and partner agencies to identify concerns early, remove barriers and support regular attendance through a child-centred, supportive approach.

9.1 Early Identification and Support

The school monitors attendance regularly to identify concerns early. Where issues arise, we will:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality and consider concerns alongside attainment, behaviour, wellbeing and safeguarding.
- Work with pupils and parents/carers to understand barriers, provide appropriate support and review progress regularly.

9.2 Multi-Agency Working

Some attendance concerns require support from additional services. The school works with the Local Authority, Early Help, Children's Social Care, health, CAMHS, Educational Psychology, SEND, family support and other specialist services to provide coordinated support for pupils and families.

Where appropriate, multi-agency meetings may be used to identify barriers, coordinate support and review progress. Information will be shared appropriately in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements to secure the best outcomes for children and families.

9.3 Medical Needs and Long-Term Illness

The school recognises that medical conditions and long-term illness can affect attendance. Where this occurs, the school will:

- Work with parents/carers, health professionals and other agencies to support the pupil's health, wellbeing, attendance and access to education.
- Maintain communication, consider reasonable adjustments, implement support plans where appropriate, monitor progress, and support reintegration following absence.

Where a pupil is expected to miss, or has missed, 15 or more school days for medical reasons, the school will work with the Local Authority and relevant professionals to ensure continuity of education and meet its statutory responsibilities. The school remains committed to supporting pupils with medical needs to access education wherever possible.

9.4 Mental Health and Attendance

The school recognises that anxiety and mental health needs can affect attendance. However, the presence of mental health needs does not automatically mean absence is unavoidable. The focus will be on understanding barriers, providing appropriate support and helping pupils attend regularly wherever possible.

Attendance difficulties may be linked to anxiety, depression, trauma, low self-esteem, Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) and other social or emotional needs.

Were mental health affects attendance, the school will:

- Work with pupils and parents/carers to understand concerns, identify barriers and provide appropriate pastoral, wellbeing and educational support, including reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Implement tailored support and reintegration arrangements, seek specialist advice where appropriate, and regularly review support to meet changing needs.

9.5 SEND and Attendance

The school recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional barriers to attendance. Attendance concerns will be considered in the context of

identified needs, SEND Support Plans, EHCPs, professional advice and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The school will:

- Work with the SENDCO, parents/carers and relevant professionals to identify and address barriers to attendance, including any unmet needs.
- Review provision and support, and implement reasonable adjustments and appropriate strategies to help pupils access and engage with education.

Attendance difficulties will not automatically be viewed as behavioural concerns where SEND-related factors may be contributing to absence.

9.6 Alternative Provision

The school retains responsibility for the attendance, safeguarding, welfare and educational progress of pupils attending alternative provision.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance, maintain regular communication with providers, and follow up unexplained absences.
- Include attendance in reviews and support plans, and work with providers to remove barriers and improve engagement in education.

Pupils attending alternative provision remain on the school's roll unless alternative arrangements are formally agreed.

9.7 Part-Time Timetables

The school recognises that every child is entitled to a full-time education. Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances and where they are in the pupil's best interests.
Any part-time timetable will:

- Be agreed with parents/carers, have a clear rationale, and take account of the pupil's safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing needs.
- Include a time-limited reintegration plan, be reviewed regularly, and be monitored to support a return to full-time education.

Part-time timetables must never be used as a long-term solution to attendance concerns.

9.8 Young Carers

The school recognises that young carers may face additional challenges that affect attendance, wellbeing and educational progress.

The school will:

- Identify young carers early, work with pupils and families to understand the impact of caring responsibilities, and monitor attendance and wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate support and adjustments, including liaison with specialist services where appropriate, to remove barriers to attendance, participation and achievement.

9.9 Children with a Social Worker

The school recognises that children who have, or have previously had, a social worker may face additional barriers to attendance. This includes pupils subject to Child in Need Plans, Child Protection Plans and those receiving support from Children's Social Care.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will:

- Work with social workers and other professionals to share information, identify barriers and coordinate support.
- Monitor attendance closely and consider attendance within statutory planning processes, including Child in Need and Child Protection arrangements.

Attendance support for these pupils will be prioritised to help maintain engagement in education.

9.10 Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

The school recognises its corporate parenting responsibilities and the importance of promoting strong attendance for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children.

The school will:

- Work with the Virtual School, carers, social workers and other professionals to monitor attendance and educational engagement.
- Consider attendance within Personal Education Plans (PEPs), remove barriers, provide support, and promote stability, inclusion and achievement.

Attendance concerns for Children in Care will be prioritised and reviewed through established care planning processes.

9.11 Cross-Border Pupils with EHCPs

The school recognises that some pupils may have an EHCP maintained by a different Local Authority.

Where significant attendance concerns arise, the school will:

- Monitor attendance and work with parents/carers, professionals and relevant Local Authorities to identify and address barriers to attendance.
- Ensure attendance concerns are considered through EHCP reviews and planning arrangements, and review whether current provision continues to meet the pupil's needs.

The school will work with relevant agencies to ensure pupils with EHCPs receive the support needed to access education regularly and achieve positive outcomes.

10. Remote Learning and Attendance

The school recognises that, in limited circumstances, pupils may require remote learning due to medical needs, short-term absence or exceptional circumstances. In line with *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*, remote learning is not a substitute for regular attendance, and pupils are expected to attend school whenever they are able to do so.

Where remote learning is provided, the school will ensure appropriate education, maintain communication with pupils and families, monitor engagement and wellbeing, support reintegration, and work with parents/carers, health professionals, the Local Authority and other agencies where required. Arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and support a return to full-time education at the earliest opportunity.

11. Local Authority Attendance Support

The school works with the Local Authority, families and partner agencies to secure regular attendance and ensure pupils receive their entitlement to a full-time education. Where concerns continue despite school support, the Local Authority may provide additional intervention. In line with *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)*, support will normally be considered before enforcement action unless safeguarding concerns or exceptional circumstances apply.

11.1 School Attendance Support Team (SAST)

The Local Authority School Attendance Support Team (SAST) provides advice, challenge and targeted support where attendance concerns affect a pupil's education. SAST may:

- Support schools and families to identify barriers, develop Attendance Support Plans and coordinate appropriate intervention.
- Work with schools, families and partner agencies, attend meetings, facilitate Attendance Panels and Contracts, and advise on statutory attendance procedures.

The school may seek SAST support where attendance concerns remain unresolved despite school-led intervention.

11.2 Attendance Panels

Where attendance has not improved despite support from the school and other agencies, a referral may be made to a Local Authority Attendance Panel.

Attendance Panels bring together families, the school, the Local Authority and relevant professionals to review attendance concerns, identify barriers, consider support, agree actions and reinforce parental responsibilities. An attendance contract will be agreed and reviewed. Failure to engage or improve attendance may lead to further intervention.

11.3 Attendance Contracts

An Attendance Contract is a formal agreement between the school, parents/carers, the pupil and, where appropriate, the Local Authority. It identifies barriers to attendance, sets expectations, targets and responsibilities, outlines support and interventions, and provides a framework for monitoring progress and securing sustained improvement.

11.4 Education Supervision Orders (ESO)

An Education Supervision Order (ESO) is a statutory intervention under the Education Act 1996 where attendance remains a significant concern despite support. The Local Authority supervises and supports the pupil and family, coordinates multi-agency involvement, monitors progress and helps address barriers to attendance. An ESO may be considered where attendance continues to place education at risk and formal supervision is considered more appropriate than prosecution. The school will work closely with all involved professionals throughout the order.

12. School Attendance and the Law

The school has a legal duty to promote attendance and work with families to ensure children receive a suitable full-time education. While support remains the primary approach, formal legal intervention may be considered where attendance does not improve.

12.1 Parental Responsibility

Under the Education Act 1996, parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable full-time education and attends school regularly. For attendance purposes, a parent includes anyone with parental responsibility or care of a child. Parents are expected to ensure regular attendance, report absences, work with the school to address concerns, engage with support and avoid unnecessary term-time absence. Failure to secure regular attendance may result in formal intervention.

12.2 National Framework for Penalty Notices

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a Penalty Notice must be considered where a pupil accrues 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. This may include unauthorised leave, late arrival after registers close, unexplained absence and other unauthorised absences.

- First Penalty Notice: £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Second Penalty Notice within three years: £160 per parent per child.
- Further offences within three years: May result in prosecution.

Penalty Notices normally follow appropriate support and intervention unless circumstances require immediate consideration.

12.3 Notice to Improve

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents may receive a Notice to Improve. This sets out attendance concerns, parental responsibilities, support already provided, further support available, expected improvements and possible consequences if attendance does not improve. The improvement period is normally between three and six weeks, during which attendance will be closely monitored and support continued.

12.4 Leave of Absence During Term Time

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance. Requests will be considered individually, taking account of the circumstances, educational impact and any supporting evidence. Unauthorised leave may result in a Penalty Notice referral.

12.5 Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are determined by the Headteacher on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will be given to the nature of the request, whether it is rare, significant and unavoidable, the pupil's attendance record, educational impact, ability to arrange the event outside term time and any supporting evidence. Family holidays, cheaper travel, birthdays, visits from relatives, leisure activities and avoidable work-related absences will not normally be considered exceptional. Authorisation remains at the Headteacher's discretion.

13. Deletion from Roll and Children Missing Education

The school maintains accurate admission and attendance records and works with families, the Local Authority and partner agencies to ensure every child receives a suitable education and remains safe.

13.1 Removal from School Roll

A pupil may only be removed from roll in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Parents/carers must inform the school when a pupil leaves and provide relevant information about their destination. The school will make reasonable enquiries where information is incomplete and will not remove a pupil from roll until statutory and safeguarding requirements have been met, paying particular attention to vulnerable pupils.

13.2 Statutory Notifications

The school will notify the Local Authority, within statutory timescales, of relevant admissions, deletions from roll, attendance concerns and pupils at risk of becoming Children Missing Education (CME). Accurate records and timely notifications help ensure children remain visible to education and safeguarding services.

13.3 Children Missing Education (CME)

The school recognises that children missing education may be at increased risk of abuse, exploitation, poor wellbeing and adverse educational outcomes. Where a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, the school will take reasonable steps to locate them, including contacting families and professionals, undertaking enquiries, and making referrals where appropriate.

- Work with the Local Authority, Children's Social Care and other agencies to establish a pupil's whereabouts and secure suitable education.
- Follow Children Missing Education procedures and ensure attendance concerns are considered within safeguarding processes.

The school is committed to ensuring every child remains safe, visible and able to access their entitlement to education.

14. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Elective Home Education (EHE) is where parents choose to educate their child at home rather than at school. Parents have the right to do so provided the education is suitable to the child’s age, ability, aptitude and any SEND.

Where parents are considering EHE, the school will:

- Discuss the decision with parents/carers, explore the reasons for the request, consider available support within school, and provide information about EHE responsibilities and Local Authority guidance.
- Work with the Local Authority and relevant professionals where safeguarding, SEND or additional vulnerabilities are present, ensuring statutory duties are met.

The school will not promote EHE as a solution to attendance, behaviour, anxiety, safeguarding concerns, exclusion or unmet needs, and will seek to address underlying issues through appropriate support.

Once EHE is confirmed, the school will follow Local Authority procedures, provide required information, maintain appropriate records and remove the pupil from roll only when permitted by regulations. The school will continue to work with the Local Authority to help ensure children remain safe and receive a suitable education.

15. Attendance Data, Monitoring and Reporting

The school uses attendance data to identify concerns, target support, evaluate impact and promote excellent attendance. Attendance information is monitored by leaders, attendance staff and governors to support safeguarding, school improvement and strategic decision-making.

15.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The school maintains accurate attendance records in line with statutory requirements and will:

- Record, monitor and analyse attendance, absence and punctuality, including authorised and unauthorised absence, persistent absence (PA) and severe absence (SA).
- Maintain registers, submit required data returns, identify emerging concerns, evaluate interventions and use attendance information to inform school improvement priorities.

Attendance data is reviewed regularly by the Senior Attendance Champion, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board.

Attendance data will be reviewed at least fortnightly by attendance leaders and termly by governors to identify emerging patterns, vulnerable groups, pupils at risk of persistent absence and those requiring additional support or intervention.

15.2 Vulnerable Groups Monitoring

The school recognises that some pupils may face additional barriers to attendance and require enhanced monitoring and support. Attendance data is analysed regularly to identify trends and concerns affecting vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND or EHCPs, Children in Care, Previously Looked After Children, children with a social worker, young carers, disadvantaged pupils, those attending Alternative Provision, pupils with medical or mental health needs, and those receiving safeguarding or Early Help support.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify pupils and groups at risk of persistent or severe absence and target support appropriately.
- Review the effectiveness of support and adjustments, inform safeguarding, SEND, pastoral and inclusion planning, and reduce attendance inequalities.

Attendance concerns for vulnerable pupils will be considered alongside safeguarding, wellbeing and educational information to ensure coordinated and effective support.

15.3 Information Sharing and Returns

The school has a legal duty to share attendance information with the Local Authority, Department for Education and relevant agencies where required.

The school will:

- Submit statutory attendance, admission, deletion and sickness returns, and notify the Local Authority of pupils meeting attendance reporting thresholds.
- Share attendance information with relevant agencies, schools and educational settings to support safeguarding, attendance and pupil welfare, in line with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Information may be shared with the Local Authority, Social Care, health professionals, Alternative Provision providers, Virtual School Heads, educational psychologists and other agencies involved in supporting the child and family.

Information will only be shared where lawful, necessary and proportionate to promote safeguarding, pupil welfare and improved attendance. Through effective monitoring and information sharing, the school aims to ensure all pupils attend regularly, achieve their potential and access their full entitlement to education

Appendix 1

Guidance in relation to attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my_child_off_school_guidance-A3-poster.pdf
DfE external document template (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Appendix 2

Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority including perm exclusion **(Waterside) and (JIGSAW)**

V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Code	Definition	Scenario
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or

		Detained under a sentence of detention
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
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Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
Code	Definition	Scenario
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or Detained under a sentence of detention
Code	Definition	Scenario
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered

	register	
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 3

Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for the Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools after 19th August 2024.

Who may be fined?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Increasing to £160 if paid between 22-28 days.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including the U code (late after registers have closed).

For example: a 5-day holiday would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Second Offence

(Within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday) per child, payable withing 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution may result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilt in the Magistrate's Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Appendix 4

Working with cross border pupils

Early help or Supporting Families Plan		Assessing and putting in place any early help or multi-agency family support plan in cases where LA action is needed sits with the **Home LA**. Where schools are completing the single assessment or acting as the lead practitioner (but with LA involvement) the school will need to work together with the Home LA.
Children's Social Care		In line with usual processes, any assessment or plan under sections 17 or 47 of the Children Act 1989 sits with the **Home LA**. For looked-after children, local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the educational attainment of all children in their care, wherever they live or are educated. When a looked-after child is placed out of area, the Virtual School Head of the **Home LA** should work with Virtual School Heads from other local authorities to support their attendance and additional educational support needs.
Alternative Provision		Responsibility for arranging any alternative provision a pupil requires under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 sits with the **Home LA**.
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	SEN support	No specific provisions apply, so the expectations of each LA are the same as for a pupil who is not in receipt of SEN support.
	Education, health and care plans (EHCP)	Where a pupil has an EHCP, the School LA should alert the LA which maintains the EHCP about any significant issues emerging over attendance of which it becomes aware, so that the LA can consider whether needs continue to be adequately supported through the existing plan.
Transport		If the child is eligible for free home to school transport under section 508B of the Education Act 1996, responsibility for arranging that travel sits with the **Home LA**.
Attendance legal intervention	ESO	Either local authority can apply for an ESO, but it will usually be the **Home LA** that acts as the 'designated LA' and therefore both LAs should discuss and agree before proceeding.
	FPNs	A fixed penalty notice must be issued in line with the code of conduct for the area in which the child goes to school, and if issued by a local authority, it must be the **School LA**.
	Prosecution	Either local authority has the power to prosecute, but in general it should be the **School LA** that takes forward prosecutions under s.444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996. It is, however, good practice for the School LA to inform the Home LA that legal action is being taken.