EASTERN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Group Policy Document

Attendance Policy

Summary

This policy document has been developed to ensure a consistent response to all students and families in our care in providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

If you are unsure about the validity of the content of this policy please refer to the Policy Owner.

Please Note: This policy is applicable to All Employees / Teachers / Support Staff / Volunteers including Trustees and Governors within the Group.

Policy owner	**Education Committee**
Policy holder	**Director of Education**
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Approved by

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1. Rationale

Eastern Multi-Academy Trust is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. This Policy has been developed in order to give a consistent response to all students and families in our care.

The Trust wants to do its best for all its young people and believes that regular attendance at the Academy is vital for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. Students should be at the Academy on time every day, but the Academy is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the Academy without a good reason is an offence by a parent. The Trust will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational potential, high attendance is essential. The Trust will set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils and will work with pupils and families to secure the highest possible attendance. Where individual pupils face barriers to attendance, academies will seek to understand those barriers and put appropriate support in place.

Attendance is governed by education law and statutory guidance. This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

Trust academies will analyse attendance and absence throughout the year, including weekly patterns and trends, and will undertake deeper half-termly, termly and full-year analysis. Performance will be benchmarked against national, regional, local and, where useful, similar-school information. Trust and academy leaders will regularly review the impact of attendance strategies and adapt support where required.

This document is the overarching principles with each academy having their own attendance policy that outlines the responsibilities of academy staff, children and parents in securing good attendance for all children. The local policy also outlines the procedures that each academy follows to support attendance as well as the key times for parents/carers to be aware of.

2. Procedures

The attendance register must be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils. The appropriate national attendance or absence code must be recorded for every pupil. Leave of absence may only be granted in accordance with the statutory framework and the academy's local attendance policy.

All attendance and absence coding will follow regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current DfE statutory guidance. The national codes are mandatory.

3. Lateness

Trust academies set their own registration times. The length of time the register remains open must be stated in the local attendance policy, must be the same for every session and must not exceed 30 minutes. A pupil who arrives after the register has started but before it closes will be recorded using Code L. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be recorded using Code U, unless another absence code more accurately reflects the reason for absence.

Academies will actively discourage late arrival, identify patterns of poor punctuality and work with pupils and families to address the reasons for lateness.

4. First Day Absence

On the first day of an absence, parents/carers should contact their child's academy before the registration period closes. If no contact has been made, the Academy will endeavour to contact parents/carers as quickly as possible during the 'academy' day and will transfer information to the registers, alerting the Principal or other key staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to any well-being issues.

Where no reason for absence has been provided, the Academy will contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence and continue appropriate follow-up while the absence remains unexplained. Safeguarding action will be taken where necessary. Where Code N is used initially, the correct code must be entered as soon as the reason is established and no later than five school days after the session; if no reason is established, Code O will be used.

Parents should contact the academy each day of absence to keep the academy informed as to the wellbeing of the child as well as ensuring the academy is aware of the likely length of any absence. The local policy will outline how contact should be made and to whom.

5. Ten Days' Absence

Academies will make the statutory attendance returns required by the local authority. This includes pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend regularly, and pupils absent for a continuous period of ten school days where the absence is recorded using one or more unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O and/or U). Returns will be made at the frequency agreed with the relevant local authority, at least monthly.

6. Absence Notes

Records of contact with parents/carers and evidence relevant to attendance decisions should be retained in line with the Trust's records management requirements. The reason for absence should be recorded accurately and with sufficient detail to support correct coding and any subsequent support or safeguarding action.

Medical evidence should only be requested in a minority of cases. Academies should not operate blanket rules requiring medical evidence for illness. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of an illness, or where prolonged or repeated illness means further information is needed to understand the pupil's needs, make reasonable adjustments or plan support. Academies should be flexible about the form of evidence requested.

7. Frequent Absence

Attendance is everyone's responsibility. All staff should be alert to emerging patterns of absence and punctuality and raise concerns promptly. Senior leaders, the Senior Attendance Champion, attendance staff and safeguarding leads will use attendance information to identify pupils and cohorts requiring support, including early indicators before absence becomes persistent.

Academies will work in partnership with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers to attendance and, where needed, will involve the local authority School Attendance Support Team, early help, health, social care or other relevant services. Formal support and legal intervention will be considered where support is not successful, not appropriate or not engaged with, in line with statutory guidance and the local authority Code of Conduct. Academies will participate in regular Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority where required or offered, using these to agree joint action for pupils and cohorts requiring wider or multi-agency support, particularly where absence is persistent or severe.

8. Persistent Absence [PA]

Academies will intervene early where attendance is declining and will not wait for a pupil to become persistently absent before providing support. The response will be proportionate to the pupil's circumstances, the pattern and reason for absence, and any identified barriers.

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible school sessions. This is separate from the national threshold for considering a penalty notice, which is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Severe absence means missing 50% or more of possible school sessions. Academies will prioritise pupils who are persistently or severely absent and work intensively with families and relevant partners to secure improvement, taking account of individual needs, SEND, disability, health needs, young caring responsibilities and safeguarding considerations.

9. A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil receives help to catch up on missed work and is updated on any information which has been passed to other children.

10. Safeguarding

Attendance is an important element of safeguarding. Academies will have robust processes for following up unexplained absence and will consider children missing education as a potential warning sign of safeguarding

concerns, including neglect, abuse and exploitation. Repeated or prolonged absence will be considered alongside other known safeguarding information.

Parents/carers should keep contact details up to date. Where reasonably possible, academies should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil so that a responsible adult can be contacted promptly when a pupil is absent or there is a welfare concern.

Academies should always follow-up any absences to ensure that the proper safeguarding action is taken.

DSLs should check the absence list on a daily basis to ensure that appropriate follow-up action can be taken where required.

Parents should inform academies of a change of address, phone number or email address as soon as possible after the change is made. Ideally this should be done in writing.

11. Promoting Attendance

The Eastern Multi-Academy Trust family of academies work actively together to improve attendance and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. Each academy will communicate high expectations clearly, explain the links between attendance, attainment and wellbeing, and work with families to address barriers. The academy attendance policy will be easily accessible on the academy website, shared with parents/carers when pupils join, and brought to families' attention at the beginning of each academic year and whenever it is updated.

12. Attendance Awards

Academies may recognise good and improving attendance where this is done sensitively and without discrimination. Recognition should not disadvantage pupils whose absence is related to disability, medical needs or other circumstances requiring individual support. The emphasis should be on encouraging good attendance and improvement rather than rewarding 100% attendance alone.

13. Holidays and absences (other than medical) in Term Time

Term-time holidays are not normally authorised. Leave of absence will only be granted in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE statutory guidance. A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation is not generally considered an exceptional circumstance. Parents/carers must apply in writing and in advance for any leave of absence. Further information can be found for Norfolk academies:

https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/38230/When-your-child-needs-to-attend-school

or for Suffolk academies:

Academy attendance and penalty notices | Suffolk County Council

All academies can grant a leave of absence where a pupil needs to be absent with permission. Leave will be considered in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Working together to improve school attendance. Requests for exceptional circumstances will be considered individually; academies will not operate blanket policies that automatically grant leave.

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad where the relevant statutory requirements are met (Code C1).
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution where leave has been granted (Code J1).
- Study leave for a public examination where agreed in advance (Code S). This does not include internal examinations such as mocks.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable for a pupil of compulsory school age, used only in very exceptional circumstances and where it is in the pupil's best interests (Code C2). It must be agreed with the parent, form part of a wider support or reintegration plan, be reviewed regularly and have a proposed end date. It must not be used to manage behaviour.

Exceptional circumstances: leave may be granted at the academy's discretion following individual consideration of the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context. If granted, the academy will determine the length of

leave. A holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation is not normally considered an exceptional circumstance.

The DfE does not normally consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during academy hours.

Working together to improve school attendance - DfE statutory guidance, July 2026

There is no exhaustive definition of exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its individual merits and with regard to the pupil's circumstances and relevant background context. The Principal will make the decision on behalf of the academy, applying this policy fairly and consistently.

Should you request leave of absence for more than one child, at different academies, Principals are likely to discuss the application together and will attempt to reach one decision. Sometimes this involves academies outside of Eastern Multi-Academy Trust. Our Principals are expected to make the decision based on the child in their academy and the supporting evidence available. Our Principals cannot be held accountable for the decision taken by a Principal in another academy.

In some Year groups, due to teacher and statutory assessments and controlled assignments, no absences will be authorised during certain periods, e.g. SATs and exam periods.

The academy will seek to respond to applications within five working days, though this is not always possible. Please remember that we must have sufficient advance notice to consider applications. All absences taken without prior authorisation cannot be authorised after the event.

There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision not to grant leave of absence. Concerns about whether the academy followed its policy or considered the application properly may be raised through the academy's complaints procedure.

14. Attendance and Absence Codes

For every registration session, academies must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code for every pupil on the admission register. The codes distinguish pupils attending the academy, attending approved education elsewhere, absent with leave, unable to attend because of an unavoidable cause, unauthorised absence and administrative circumstances. The current codes are set out in the local policy appendix.

1. Unauthorised absence
   This includes absence recorded using Code G, N, O or U where the statutory criteria for an authorised code are not met. Code N is temporary and must be replaced with the appropriate code within five school days.

2. Authorised absence / unable to attend
   The statutory codes specify the circumstances in which absence is authorised or a pupil is unable to attend for an unavoidable cause. Academies must apply the relevant code criteria rather than relying on a general category of authorised absence.

   Illness, medical or dental appointments, religious observance, certain leaves of absence, suspension or permanent exclusion without alternative provision, and specified unavoidable causes must be coded in accordance with the national code descriptions. Medical evidence should not be routinely required for illness.

3. Approved educational activity / education off site
   Where a pupil is attending approved education away from the academy, the correct attending code must be used (for example B, D, K, P, V or W). Academies must have arrangements to confirm attendance with the provider and use the appropriate absence code if the pupil does not attend the provision.

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

Where a pupil is receiving education off site or is dual registered, the Academy will liaise with the other education provider to confirm attendance for each relevant session and ensure that the attendance register accurately reflects the pupil's attendance.

15. The Registration System

All EMAT academies must keep the admission and attendance registers electronically using the academy's approved management information system. The national attendance and absence codes defined by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 must be used. The current codes are reproduced in the local policy appendix.

16. Record Preservation

Attendance and admission registers are legal records. Every entry must be preserved for 6 years from the date the data was entered. Where an entry is amended, the register must retain the original entry, amended entry, reason, date of amendment and the name of the person making the amendment.

17. Register Security

Registers or attendance marking sheets if used must be safely stored. Registers must not be left open on computers or tablets and should be treated securely following GDPR regulations.

18. Attendance Targets

Trust academies will set ambitious attendance priorities informed by their context, national expectations and comparative data. The Senior Attendance Champion will oversee improvement activity. Academies will monitor weekly patterns and trends, undertake frequent pupil-level analysis and complete thorough half-termly, termly and full-year analysis, including key pupil cohorts and punctuality.

19. Governance

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole academy approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. Therefore, all trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of attendance and promote it across the academy's ethos and policies.
- Ensure academy leaders fulfil attendance expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and focus improvement efforts on the pupils and cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure academy staff receive adequate training and professional development on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across academies.

20. Documents Used to Support this Policy:

- Key documents: Working together to improve school attendance (DfE statutory guidance, July 2026); School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024; Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended in 2024; Children missing education statutory guidance; and Keeping children safe in education 2026.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory academy age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

> [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and [b] To any special needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at academy or otherwise.
>
> For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory academy age and are registered at academy is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend academy.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The principal statutory requirements relevant to this policy include:

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024.

Absences during Term Time

Parents/carers have duties under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education and, where registered at an academy, attends regularly.

Leave of absence must be managed in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current DfE statutory guidance. Exceptional-circumstances requests must be considered individually and should not be subject to blanket rules that automatically grant leave.

Academies will record absence using the national codes and will only grant leave where the relevant statutory criteria are met. Parents/carers should request leave in advance wherever required and should not make travel arrangements on the assumption that leave will be granted.

Parents/carers are encouraged to consider the impact of absence on learning and wellbeing. Where leave is not granted, absence taken will normally be recorded using the appropriate unauthorised absence code.

Unauthorised absence may lead to support, a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or other legal intervention in accordance with the National Framework and the relevant local authority Code of Conduct.

Penalty Notices.

Penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution and are intended to change parental behaviour where support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate (for example, in many unauthorised holiday cases).

A penalty notice may be issued by a Principal, an authorised deputy or assistant principal, a local authority officer or the police. EMAT academies will follow the relevant local authority Code of Conduct and local referral/issuing arrangements.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions can be consecutive or non-consecutive and the 10-week period may span terms or school years.

Reaching the national threshold does not mean that a penalty notice is automatic. Each case must be considered individually, including whether support is appropriate and whether a penalty notice is likely to improve attendance.

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve should usually be used before a penalty notice. The improvement period will follow the relevant local authority Code of Conduct and will be between 3 and 6 weeks.

Where support is not appropriate, such as for an unauthorised holiday in term time, a penalty notice may be considered without a Notice to Improve, subject to the National Framework and local Code of Conduct.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation for repeat offences

Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within that period and alternative action, which may include prosecution, must be considered.

- For the first penalty notice to a parent in respect of a particular pupil, the charge is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years is charged at £160, payable within 28 days.
- If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within the 3-year period, the academy and local authority will consider alternative legal intervention in line with statutory guidance and the local Code of Conduct.

Previous penalty notices, including unpaid notices that proceeded to prosecution, are taken into account for the escalation process, except where a notice was withdrawn.

Where a pupil has moved academy or local authority, checks should be made, where reasonably possible, for relevant penalty notices issued in the previous 3 years.

Separate penalty notice provisions apply where a parent allows an excluded pupil to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of suspension or permanent exclusion. These are outside the attendance National Framework.

All decisions and processes will comply with the relevant local authority Code of Conduct and current statutory guidance.

Working together to improve school attendance - DfE statutory guidance, July 2026

Attendance support and legal intervention

Support first

Where absence is a concern, academies will work with pupils and parents to understand barriers and provide or facilitate appropriate support. Where necessary, support may be formalised through an attendance contract or other multi-agency plan.

Notices to Improve

Where the national penalty-notice threshold has been met, support is appropriate, and previous support has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve should usually be issued before a penalty notice. The notice will set out the attendance concerns, support available, the required improvement and the improvement period in line with the local authority Code of Conduct.

Other legal interventions

Where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate, the academy and local authority may consider the range of legal interventions available, including penalty notices, attendance contracts, education supervision orders, prosecution and, where relevant, parenting orders. The intervention selected will reflect the circumstances of the case and statutory guidance.

Who is responsible for compliance of this policy?

The Academy Committee/Interim Executive Board is responsible for local oversight of attendance and for providing challenge and support around attendance, persistent and severe absence, and the impact of the academy's attendance strategy. Particular attention should be given to pupils and cohorts whose attendance is lower, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, looked-after children, pupils with a social worker, young carers and pupils with health-related barriers.

The academy's Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for reporting on attendance to the Academy Committee or IEB and for ensuring that the academy's systems, support and improvement strategy are effective.

The Principal is responsible for reporting on attendance to the Academy Committee through the Principal's Report and at Challenge & Support meetings. The Director of Education and School Improvement Director provide challenge and support around attendance data, strategy and impact across the Trust.

The Director of Education is responsible for reporting on attendance to the Board of Trustees and relevant Board committees.

Model Local Policy to be used by all EMAT academies

Attendance Policy Annex

[INSERT ACADEMY NAME]

ACADEMY
LOGO

Approved by:	[Name]	Date: [Date]
Last reviewed on:	[Date]	
Next review due by:	[Date]	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to academy attendance through our whole-academy culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend academy

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

This policy will be published on the academy website, shared with parents/carers when pupils join the academy, and brought to families' attention at the start of each academic year and whenever it is updated.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026). It also reflects the statutory framework governing attendance, registration and parental responsibility measures, including:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended in 2024

This policy also refers to the current DfE school census guidance, Children missing education statutory guidance, Keeping children safe in education 2026, and the relevant local authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of academy attendance across the academy's policies and ethos
- Making sure academy leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

If you have a link governor for attendance, or a committee responsible for attendance, add details of their role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Considering and, where appropriate, referring or issuing penalty notices in line with the local authority Code of Conduct

3.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is a designated senior leader and is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of attendance and absence data, including weekly patterns, pupil-level analysis and key cohorts
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Senior Attendance Champion is [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address].

3.4 The attendance officer

The academy attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns to the Senior Attendance Champion and Principal
- Working with the local authority School Attendance Support Team and other partners to address persistent and severe absence

- Advising the Principal/[role] on when support should be formalised and when legal intervention, including a Notice to Improve or penalty notice, should be considered

The attendance officer is [insert name] and can be contacted via [telephone number and/or email address].

3.5 [Class teachers/form tutors]

[Class teachers/form tutors] are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the academy office [insert when this needs to be done, e.g. on the same day].

3.6 Academy [admin/office] staff

Academy [admin/office] staff will:

- Take calls from parents [and pupils] about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system
- Transfer calls from parents [and pupils] to the [head of year/pastoral lead] in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time
- Call the academy to report their child's absence before [time, e.g. 9am] on the day of the absence ([add if your academy expects this] and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy, where reasonably possible, with more than one emergency contact number and promptly update any changes to contact details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the academy day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- [Primary academies] Attend academy every day on time
- [Secondary academies] Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep the admission and attendance registers electronically and place all pupils onto the appropriate registers in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

We will take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils. On each occasion the appropriate national attendance or absence code will be entered for every pupil.

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- The appropriate statutory attendance or absence code for every registered pupil, regardless of age
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will preserve every entry in the attendance and admission registers for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

The academy day starts at [time] and ends at [time]. Pupils must arrive by [time] each day.

The morning register will be taken at [time] and kept open until [time]. The afternoon register will be taken at [time] and kept open until [time]. The length of time the register is open will be the same for every session and will not exceed 30 minutes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by [time] or as soon as practically possible by calling the academy [admin/office] staff (see also section 7).

Add details of notification procedures for your academy.

Where a pupil is unable to attend because of sickness, the academy will use Code I where the statutory criteria are met. A parent/carer's notification will normally be sufficient unless there is a genuine and reasonable reason to seek further evidence.

Medical evidence will only be requested in a minority of cases. The academy will not operate blanket rules requiring medical evidence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness, or where prolonged or repeated illness means further information is needed to understand the pupil's needs, make reasonable adjustments or plan support. The academy will be flexible about the form of evidence requested.

Where the academy has genuine and reasonable grounds not to accept illness as the reason for absence, it will discuss this with the parent/carer and record the absence using the most appropriate code. Parents/carers will be informed of the decision.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

Add details of how parents should request leaves of absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of academy hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of academy for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Add details of how your academy identifies and responds to ongoing punctuality issues.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Adapt the following to match your academy's day-to-day process for following up on absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may [insert measures, e.g. contact police]
- Identify the correct reason for absence and whether the relevant code is classified as authorised or unauthorised
- Enter the correct attendance code as soon as the reason is established and no later than five school days after the session. If Code N remains unexplained after that point, it will be replaced with Code O.
- Continue appropriate contact while absence remains unexplained, taking safeguarding action where necessary and involving the local authority or other agencies where appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Adapt the following to explain when and how your academy reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance and absence, including how time missed and the impact on learning will be communicated clearly.

The academy will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence [for example, via half-termly written reports]. Information will be made understandable by explaining time missed and, where appropriate, the impact on learning rather than relying only on a headline percentage.

4.7 Pupils absent due to ill health, SEND or disability

The academy will work in partnership with pupils and families to understand individual barriers and provide appropriate support. This may include pastoral support, reasonable adjustments (including formal reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where applicable), a time-limited phased return and work with health, SEND, social care or local authority services. The attendance ambition remains high for every pupil, while recognising that some pupils will need additional support to attend regularly.

Where a pupil is recorded using Code I and there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 consecutive school days, or will reach 15 school days of illness absence cumulatively in the school year, the academy will make the required sickness return to the local authority.

Where remote education is used for an absent pupil, it will be a last resort after reasonable adjustments have been considered and will form part of a wider plan to support the pupil's return to academy. The pupil will still be recorded as absent using the most appropriate national attendance code.

4.8 Temporary part-time timetables

A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests. It will not be used to manage behaviour. It must be agreed with the parent/carer, form part of a wider support, health care or reintegration plan, include regular review dates and have a proposed end date. Where relevant, the pupil's social worker and/or the local authority responsible for an EHC plan will be involved. Code C2 will be used only where its statutory criteria are met.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Leave of absence will only be granted in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE statutory guidance. These include specified purposes such as a regulated performance or employment abroad, an interview, study leave for a public

examination, an agreed temporary part-time timetable, and other leave for exceptional circumstances. Where leave is discretionary, the Principal will consider each request individually and determine its duration.

The academy will not apply a blanket definition that automatically grants leave. Academy-specific information on how requests are made and considered: [add academy process here].

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least [insert number of weeks] before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via [insert where parents can access the form]. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Mobile child travelling with a parent for occupational purposes - Code T applies only where the pupil is a mobile child of compulsory school age, the parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business, and the pupil is travelling with them. The academy will apply the current statutory criteria, including the DfE guidance on what constitutes no fixed abode, and will not routinely seek proof unless there is genuine and reasonable doubt. Where the family is travelling in England, continuity of education, including dual registration where appropriate, will be supported.

You can add further examples here, for example:

- Any academy-specific examples or information that help parents understand how exceptional-circumstances requests are considered (without creating an automatic entitlement): [add if required]
- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests - [add academy process, if applicable]. Schools are not obliged to offer flexi-schooling. Where it is agreed and absence for the sessions not attended is authorised, Code C will be used; flexi-schooling must not be confused with a temporary part-time timetable.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Penalty Notices.

Penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution and are intended to change parental behaviour where support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate.

Under legislation, a penalty notice may be issued by the Principal, an authorised deputy or assistant principal, a local authority officer or the police. This academy will follow the relevant local authority Code of Conduct and local process.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The threshold can be met by any combination of unauthorised absence and may span different terms or school years.

When the threshold is met, the academy will consider each case individually. Reaching the threshold does not make a penalty notice automatic.

Where support is appropriate but previous support has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve should usually be issued before a penalty notice. The improvement period will be between 3 and 6 weeks in accordance with the local authority Code of Conduct.

Where support is not appropriate, for example in many cases of unauthorised holiday absence, a penalty notice may be considered without a Notice to Improve, subject to the National Framework and local Code of Conduct.

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a rolling 3-year period.

- The first penalty notice is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years is £160, payable within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first. Where the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time, alternative action, which may include prosecution, will be considered.

Previous penalty notices are taken into account in the escalation process, including unpaid notices that proceeded to prosecution, but not notices that were withdrawn.

If a pupil has moved school or local authority area, checks should be made where reasonably possible for relevant penalty notices issued during the previous 3 years.

Separate penalty notice provisions apply where a parent permits an excluded pupil to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of suspension or permanent exclusion. These do not form part of the attendance National Framework.

All penalty notice decisions will be made in accordance with the relevant local authority Code of Conduct, statutory guidance and the Equality Act 2010.

Working together to improve school attendance - DfE statutory guidance, July 2026

The academy and local authority may use legal intervention where attendance support is not appropriate, not successful or not engaged with. The aim is to secure regular attendance, not simply to issue a financial penalty.

Penalty notice payments are made directly to the local authority. If a notice is unpaid after 28 days, the local authority must decide whether to prosecute for the original offence or withdraw the notice.

Other legal interventions may include attendance contracts, education supervision orders and prosecution, depending on the circumstances of the case.

When considering a penalty notice, the academy will consider:

- Whether the national threshold has been met and whether support is appropriate
- Whether support has been provided and has worked or been engaged with, or whether support would not have been appropriate
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and whether Equality Act duties and individual circumstances have been considered

The academy will liaise with the local authority before a penalty notice is issued or requested, in line with local procedures.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Explain your academy’s strategies for promoting and improving attendance. Any recognition or incentives should be used sensitively and without discrimination and should recognise improvement as well as high attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

Explain how your academy monitors and analyses attendance and absence data, including the local cohorts that will be routinely reviewed and how analysis informs targeted support.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The academy will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends, alongside frequent pupil-level analysis and deeper half-termly, termly and full-year analysis

- Identify pupils and cohorts requiring support, including early indicators of deteriorating attendance and punctuality

The academy will benchmark attendance at whole-academy, year-group and cohort level against local, regional and national information and, where useful, similar schools. Analysis will be shared with the Academy Committee and used to identify priorities and evaluate impact.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence frequently to identify pupils and cohorts who need additional support and intervene early, rather than waiting for persistent absence
- Look at historic and emerging patterns, including attendance codes, days of poor attendance, punctuality and, where relevant, lesson attendance, and develop strategies in response
- Review relevant cohorts in the academy's context, which may include pupils with SEND or disabilities, pupils with a social worker, looked-after pupils, young carers, pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with long-term medical conditions

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of academy, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of academy.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to identify pupils at risk of, or experiencing, persistent and severe absence and act early
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at academy
- Provide or facilitate access to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance, and formalise support with the local authority where appropriate
- Add anything else that is part of your strategy

Explain any additional academy procedures for addressing unauthorised absence, including local attendance meetings, letters or monitoring arrangements.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed whenever DfE or local authority guidance materially changes and, as a minimum, [insert frequency] by [name/job title of individual]. The academy will seek the views of pupils and parents/carers when reviewing its approach. At every formal review, the policy will be approved through the academy's governance arrangements.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following national attendance and absence codes reflect the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current DfE guidance. Academies should consult the full statutory guidance where the correct code is uncertain.

Code	Definition	When used
/	Present - morning	Present when the morning register is taken.
\	Present - afternoon	Present when the afternoon register is taken.
B	Other approved educational activity	Attending another place for an approved educational activity; record the nature of the activity.
C	Leave - other circumstances	Absent with leave for another circumstance meeting the statutory criteria.
C1	Regulated performance/employment	Absent with leave to take part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
C2	Temporary part-time timetable	Compulsory-school-age pupil absent with leave because an agreed temporary part-time timetable does not require attendance.
D	Dual registered	Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered.
E	Suspended/permanently excluded	Absent because suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made.
G	Unauthorised holiday	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.
I	Sickness	Unable to attend because of sickness; not for medical or dental appointments.
J1	Interview	Absent with leave to attend an employment interview or admission interview at another educational institution.
K	LA-arranged education	Attending education elsewhere arranged by the local authority; record the nature of the provision.
L	Late before register closes	Arrives after registration starts but before the register closes.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Absent with leave to attend a medical or dental appointment.
N	Reason not yet established	Reason is not yet established; replace with the correct code within five school days.
O	Other/unknown unauthorised absence	Absent in other or unknown circumstances where no authorised code applies.
P	Approved sporting activity	Attending an approved supervised sporting activity elsewhere.
Q	Lack of LA access arrangements	Unable to attend because the local authority has not made required access arrangements.

Code	Definition	When used
R	Religious observance	Day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
S	Study leave	Absent with leave to study for a public examination.
T	Travelling parent	Mobile child travelling with a parent in the course of the parent's trade or business.
U	Late after register closes	Arrives after the register has closed and no other absence code is more appropriate.
V	Educational visit or trip	Attending an approved educational visit or trip.
W	Work experience	Attending a work experience placement.
X	Non-compulsory school age	Absent with leave because the pupil is not of compulsory school age and is not required to attend that session.
Y1	Transport not available	Unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance and normally-provided transport is unavailable.
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption caused by an emergency.
Y3	Part of premises unusable	Unable to attend because part of the premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil cannot be accommodated elsewhere on site.
Y4	Unexpected whole-school closure	Unable to attend because the whole school is unexpectedly closed for a session that was due to take place.
Y5	Detention by justice system	Unable to attend because the pupil is subject to a sentence of detention.
Y6	Public-health restriction	Unable to attend because attendance would be contrary to or prohibited by law or guidance relating to infection or disease.
Y7	Other unavoidable cause	Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause; record the nature of that cause.
Z	Prospective pupil	Name entered in advance of the agreed start date; not collected in the school census.
#	Planned whole-school closure	No session is planned, for example a holiday or INSET closure; not collected in the school census.

Upwell Academy

Attendance Policy Annex

September 2026

Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team
Author	Chris Harris, Principal

Approved by

Consultation Group	Senior Leadership Team
Approval Committee	Academy Committee
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1.1	Updated reference to legislation and government guidance. Updated strategies for promoting attendance	Senior Leadership Team	September 2026

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Asking the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with

SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Chris Harris and can be contacted via office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the principal when to ask the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Sophie Webster and can be contacted via office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Safeguarding Team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

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

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

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence

codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

The school day starts at 8:35am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in class by 8:35am on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45pm and will be kept open until 1:00pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than five days, or if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a child is absent in the week before or after a school holiday, the Safeguarding Team will visit the pupil's home to see the child as per our safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
Please contact the school office via telephone 01945 773220 or email office@upa.eastern-mat.co.uk and provide proof of the appointment if possible.
However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours when possible. When this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil is regularly late, the school will contact the parent/carer, to see if a solution can be reached

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text the parent for a reason for absence in the first instance.
- If there is no response to the text message, the office will call the pupil's parent/carer mid-morning on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school's Safeguarding Team will visit the pupil's home to speak with parent/carers.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Call the parent/carer each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with - issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school attendance officer regularly monitors pupil attendance and reports to the principal. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. A letter will be sent home for any child **with less than 92% attendance**, along with a copy of the child's herringbone. If the absence is due to recurring illness, the school will complete a joint protocol medical form with the parent, to request the relevant information from the child's GP. If the child's absence drops below 90% and there is no medical reason, the school will notify the parent/carer that no further absence will be authorised and will refer to the local authority's attendance team.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

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

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website.

The principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has

agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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

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

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

5.3 Penalty notices

There is now 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. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the Local Authority to use legal measures.

5.4 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

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

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

6.1 Attendance Awards:

The academy will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- Weekly, class with the best attendance gets to sit on the benches for Celebration Assembly
- Weekly, class with the best attendance gets to choose the music for the Celebration Assembly

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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

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

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Academy Committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence.

Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as **'severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
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Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)

Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays