St. Helen's Church of England Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

2026-2027

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Date of Policy:	**September 2026**
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Ratified by named Governor:	**Ian Chappell**
Next review date:	**August 2027**

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Part 1 - Policy

1. Introduction

Our vision is underpinned by Matthew 22 34-40 'love your neighbour as yourself'. We are a school that truly believes that we should love one another and this has inspired us when developing this policy. We recognise that life can be complex; circumstances and challenges change over time. We are committed to working in partnership with our families and others to support our children by overcoming barriers to their attendance, so that all are able to attend well and by doing so, achieve their full potential.

St Helen's Church of England Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

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

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

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- An attendance expectation of 96%
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance, so that attendance improves for individuals.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance champion is Amanda Kember, Headteacher, and can be contacted via email at office@sthelens.medway.gov.uk

Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect current legislation and guidance. The Department for Education's guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026), states that school attendance is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances."

Aims and ethos

Our school aims to meet its obligations regarding school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time and efficient education to which they are entitled St Helen's Church of England Primary School acts early to address any patterns of irregular attendance aiming to create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood, valued, and supported by all.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and partners can work together to remove any barriers affecting attendance.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, considering the individual needs of our pupils and their families who may have specific barriers to attendance. We have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At St Helen's Church of England Primary School we follow the DfE Working together to Improve School Attendance Approach:

Expect

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

Monitor

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

Listen and understand

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

Facilitate support

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

Formalise support

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

Enforce

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has day to day care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

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

Where attendance concerns arise, our first priority will always be to understand the reasons and work with families to provide support.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school encourages parents of nursery and reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age to send their children to every session that is available to them. Every child enrolled at our school is expected to attend every day they are required to, on time, so that they can achieve their full potential. We monitor and manage attendance and punctuality across all year groups and expect parents to notify the school of any absence.

At St Helen's Church of England Primary School we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend school every day unless they are not well enough to do so. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school and grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential requirements in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the world.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is **not** authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who may experience any barriers preventing regular attendance.

One of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved and as part of the wider school community.
- Raise pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Work with external agencies where required, such as health, the LA and local organisations to support our pupils, parents and school.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1 January, 1 April or 1 September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

2. Why is Attending School Regularly So Important?

Evidence shows pupils with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve better results than their peers that do not, both at Key Stage 2 tests in the Primary phase, and in GCSEs at Secondary.
Excellent attendance enables pupils to be part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging. This further supports each pupil's development socially, morally, and ethically, enhancing personal well-being.

If attendance over the school year is:	…a pupil will miss this many days:
100%	0
95%	10
90%	19
85%	29
80%	39
75%	49
70%	58

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

At St Helen's Church of England Primary School, we routinely monitor attendance data to identify trends and patterns of absence across all pupils as part of our standard procedures. We recognise that both sudden and gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may be indicative of underlying safeguarding concerns.

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, the school will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding issues to the appropriate authorities. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, and in accordance with our procedures, we will notify the Local Authority and/or the Police of any pupil who is absent from school and whose whereabouts cannot be established, despite reasonable enquiries such as, contacting all emergency contact and home visits. This action will be taken where there are concerns for the pupil's welfare or safety.

Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and wellbeing. The school recognises that unexplained, persistent, or sudden changes in attendance may indicate that a pupil is experiencing difficulties, barriers to learning, or may require additional support. For this reason, attendance is monitored as part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities and concerns will be responded to promptly and proportionately.

For further details, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy (on school website).

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026 and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement July 2026

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent' (SA).

The school will routinely monitor attendance data to identify emerging attendance concerns and take proactive action to prevent pupils from becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include monitoring the attendance of pupils who have a social worker, those subject to Child Protection plans or Child in Need, and those working with Youth Justice Services, ensuring that early help, targeted support and multi-agency collaboration are provided where appropriate.

This will include identifying the individual needs of pupils, working closely with families and relevant services to remove barriers to attendance, and, where a more formalised approach is required, working in partnership with the local authority in line with the statutory DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

The school will routinely analyse attendance data by vulnerable group, including Children in Care, previously looked after children, pupils with SEND, EHCPs, pupils eligible for FSM/Pupil Premium, Young Carers, EAL pupils, children known to Social Care, Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils and pupils with medical needs. Attendance concerns will trigger early intervention and targeted support.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity, and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing to enhance understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.
Support strategies will be reviewed regularly to assess impact and adapted where necessary to ensure they remain appropriate to the needs of the pupil and family.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers such pupils may face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

In line with DfE expectations reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period, to support pupils to reintegrate back into education and access full-time provision.
The school is committed to sharing information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and external partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

In accordance with statutory guidance, school must report to Medway Local Authority when a pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive school days without explanation, and also when a pupil has accrued 15 days of absence due to medical reasons. These reports should be made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

Part 2 - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

At St Helen's Church of England Primary School, we maintain our admissions register (also referred to as the school roll) in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register must include specific personal details for every pupil, including:

- Full name and name used at school
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- Home address
- Full names and addresses of each parent/carer
- Emergency contact details (at least two telephone number per parent/carer the pupil normally lives with)
- Date of admission or re-admission
- Name and address of the last school attended (where applicable)
- Boarding status (where relevant)
- Any additional addresses where the pupil will normally reside and the date from which they will reside there
- Details of any other school the pupil is attending concurrently

Pupils are entered on the admission register on their starting day, before or at the beginning of the first school session on that day. This is normally the first day agreed between the school and the parent/carer for the pupil to attend, or, where no day has been agreed, the first day the pupil attends the school.

A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the admissions register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations applies. Any removal outside of these conditions constitutes unlawful off-rolling.

It is essential that the admissions register is kept accurate and up to date. Therefore, St Helen's Church of England Primary School regularly requests updates from parents/carers regarding changes to:

- Home address
- Emergency contact telephone numbers
- Email addresses

The school will formally issue a data collection request 3 times per academic year. Where parents/carers do not respond to these requests, the school will take further steps to obtain accurate information. This may include direct contact, home visits, or referral to relevant agencies if safeguarding concerns arise.

For further details, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy (on school website).

Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session.

Registers will be taken at the published registration times and applied consistently for all registered pupils.

On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System (MIS) to record attendance information.

2. Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 9:00am on each school day.
Our morning register is taken at 9:00 am and will be kept open until 9:30 am
Our afternoon register is taken at 1:00 pm and will be kept open until 1:05 pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**), which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed (9:30 AM and 1:05 PM) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (**U**) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.
See DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance
and parent/carers guide to Working together to improve school attendance

2.1 Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss notable events such as assembly, tutor period, teacher instructions and introductions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day…	**Equates to days of teaching lost in one year…**	**Which means this number of lessons have been missed…**
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence, only the Headteacher can do this. However, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

3.1 Illness

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Is my child too ill for school?

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows the statutory DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent for further clarification, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP/Paediatrician directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to best support the child or young person and to be able to authorise any future absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent/carer. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent/carer on the first day, or subsequent days of absence may not be authorised.

Parents will be required to contact the school using Study Bugs, emailing the school office or via telephone (01634 220246) before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Where a pupil's attendance is affected by a physical or mental health condition, SEND, or other identified need, the school will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance. Support may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral or SEND support, and phased reintegration where appropriate.

Where illness-related absence becomes frequent, prolonged or recurring, the school will work with families and relevant agencies to identify underlying barriers and agree appropriate support to improve attendance and access to education.

In accordance with statutory guidance, schools must report to Medway Local Authority when a pupil has accrued 15 days of absence due to medical reasons. These reports should be made promptly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and support measures can be considered.

Support for children with additional needs

If your child has a learning disability or autism, these websites can help:

Mencap offers expert advice and support for children with learning disabilities, as well as their parents and carers.

The National Autistic Society provides valuable resources and support for parents or carers.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Attendance/Designated Safeguarding Lead/SENCO for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: NHS Children's Mental Health – Every Mind Matters.

Young Minds advice for parents

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.
Where to find mental health support for children

North Kent Mind offers The Medway Therapeutic Alliance, led by North Kent Mind and funded by Medway Council, they bring together a range of organisations so families can access support through one clear pathway, without needing to navigate multiple services alone.

The NHS offers advice on Mental health support for children and young people.
Action for Children helps children and families look after their mental health with simple tools and support to feel better and cope with challenges.

The Childhood Bereavement Network offers guidance on supporting a child through grief.

Visit NHS - Advice for parents for support if you think your child may have an eating disorder. The Young Minds Parents Helpline offers parents free and confidential advice via phone, email, or webchat.

Teachers, school nurses, social workers, and GPs can help you find the right support.

If have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline to talk to dedicated child protection specialists. They will be able to advise and take any necessary action. The Helpline is open 7 days a week, and can be contacted by:

visiting the website
emailing help@nspcc.org.uk or
calling 0808 800 5000.

Where to get urgent help for mental health

If you or your child are in a mental health crisis, get help straight away.

Visit the NHS urgent mental health support page to find 24/7 helplines, crisis services, and emergency support.

We recognise that some pupils may experience physical health difficulties, mental health challenges, special educational needs or other circumstances that can affect attendance. Where this happens, we will work with families and relevant professionals to provide appropriate support.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3 Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4 Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil (mobile child)[3] of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (3)"mobile child" means a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

3.5 Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an E code, for a suspension or Permanent Exclusion (PEx). The school will follow the statutory DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance.

Any suspension/permanent exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

At our school, we have robust procedures in place to respond promptly to pupil absence on the first day it occurs.

Parents/carers have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, providing a clear reason for the absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain regular contact with the school throughout any period of absence.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. Where no contact can be made, we will make contact with contacts on the emergency contact list. Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; those pupils who make their own way to school will be given priority.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Parents/carers are required to provide the school with up-to-date contact details. Parents will be asked to supply details of **at least two people** (other than parent/carers) who can be contacted in an emergency. These details will be reviewed regularly (e.g. termly) through data collection exercises, parents' evenings, and school communications.

If we are unable to make contact with a parent/carer, we will make all reasonable efforts to do so using all available contact details, including emergency contacts.

In line with our safeguarding responsibilities and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, where we are unable to establish contact and a pupil's whereabouts cannot be confirmed, we will take further action without delay. Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding children and promoting their wellbeing.

This will include making reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and welfare. These enquiries will include:

- contacting all known emergency contacts
- checking with siblings' schools or settings, where appropriate
- liaising with other professionals or agencies involved with the family, including Medway Local Authority, where appropriate

Where contact cannot be established and concerns remain, we will undertake a home visit where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

If no contact is made following a home visit, a calling card or letter will be left at the property requesting urgent contact with the school. If there is no response and concerns remain regarding the pupil's safety or welfare, we will take appropriate safeguarding action in line with local procedures. This may include referral to Children's Social Care, initiating Children Missing Education (CME) procedures, and/or contacting the Police to request a welfare check.

We prioritise follow-up for vulnerable pupils, including:

- Children in Care (Looked After Children)
- pupils subject to Child Protection Plans
- pupils open to Children's Social Care as a Child in Need
- pupils previously reported missing or at risk of going missing
- younger pupils where absence is unexpected

We will ensure that all actions taken in response to first day absence and subsequent absences are clearly recorded, including attempts to contact parents/carers, outcomes of enquiries, and any safeguarding decisions made.

The school will liaise with Medway Local Authority Attendance Officer where absence is of concern and will notify Medway Local Authority of any pupil who is absent for 10 consecutive school days, in line with statutory requirements.

Home visits form part of the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures and may be undertaken where contact cannot be established, attendance concerns escalate or the school needs to verify a pupil's welfare.

These procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and promote their wellbeing, ensuring that no child is missing education without timely and appropriate action being taken.

5. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

In line with statutory DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering

the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Attendance/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Governors. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least four weeks before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information)

Leave of absence requests for pupils to participate in protest activity, demonstrations, campaigns, marches or similar events during school hours will not normally be authorised. Such requests would not generally be considered exceptional circumstances under the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026 guidance and will ordinarily be recorded as unauthorised absence. The Headteacher retains discretion to consider the individual circumstances of each request.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in an Education Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

6. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Notices to improve

A Notice to Improve is a formal letter that the school may issue to parents when there are serious concerns about a child's attendance.

This will usually happen when a child has had 10 or more unauthorised absences (sessions) within a 10-school week period, and where the school has already worked with the family to try to improve attendance but there has not been sufficient progress.
The purpose of a Notice to Improve is to give parents a final opportunity to engage with support and improve their child's attendance, before further action is considered.

We recognise that there are often genuine reasons why a child may find it difficult to attend school. Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school will always take a support-first approach.

We will work in partnership with you to understand any barriers affecting your child's attendance and provide support that is tailored to your child and family's individual needs, rather than relying only on general school procedures.

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school must be able to demonstrate that support has been:
Individualised, targeted, and responsive, and
Not limited to universal or whole-school approaches

This means that the school will not rely solely on standard letters, general attendance messages, or routine procedures, but will provide bespoke support based on your child's circumstances. Support will be reviewed regularly and adapted over time, depending on your child's needs and level of absence.

Support will include a balance of both pastoral and academic support:
Pastoral support (removing barriers)

This may include:

- Individual mentoring or regular check-ins
- Support for emotional wellbeing or mental health
- Adjustments to the school day or transition into school
- Working closely with parents to understand family circumstances
- Involvement of Early Help or other external services, where appropriate

Academic support (supporting progress)
This may include:

- Support to help your child catch up on missed learning
- Adjustments to teaching or curriculum where appropriate
- Reassurance for pupils who may feel anxious about returning to learning
- Recognition that pupils may be working below, at, or beyond expected levels, and ensuring support reflects their individual starting point

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, we will ensure that:

- We have communicated clearly with you about attendance concerns
- We have offered appropriate and personalised support
- You understand how absence is affecting your child's progress, wellbeing, and future opportunities
- You have been given opportunities to engage with support and work with the school

If attendance does not improve despite support, the school may issue a Notice to Improve.
The notice will:

- Explain your child's attendance record
- Outline the support already provided

- Set clear expectations for improvement
- Provide a timeframe for improvement (usually between 3 and 6 weeks)
- Explain next steps if attendance does not improve
- During this period, the school will continue to support your child and maintain regular contact with you, while monitoring attendance closely.

If attendance improves, we will continue to support your child to maintain this progress.

If there is not enough improvement, any further unauthorised absence recorded may result in a referral by the school to Medway Local Authority seeking enforcement action, including legal sanctions such as an Education Penalty Notice or prosecution.

A Notice to Improve will not usually be issued unless the school can clearly evidence that:

- Appropriate support has been offered and reviewed
- Support has been individual to your child's needs, not just general school approaches
- The school must be able to show that support has been targeted, personalised, and responsive before moving to any formal or legal action.

All support and actions taken will be carefully recorded.

Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

7. Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, Alternative Provision or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, with the alternative setting.

Attendance data will be reviewed at least weekly by attendance staff and regularly by senior leaders to ensure emerging attendance concerns are identified promptly.

The school retains overall responsibility for the attendance, safeguarding and educational outcomes of pupils attending alternative provision. Attendance, safeguarding, engagement and progress information will be reviewed regularly throughout the placement and recorded as part of the school's quality assurance processes.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

8. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's 'Home to school travel and transport' guidance document.
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

9. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

In line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. This includes contacting the school on each day of their child's absence, providing a clear reason for the absence, and keeping the school updated where absences are ongoing.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. The impact of support strategies will be reviewed regularly and adjusted where necessary to ensure they remain effective and proportionate. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Attendance Lead/Headteacher to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

Where we are unable to establish contact with parents/carers or there are ongoing concerns about a pupil's absence, we will make reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and welfare, including undertaking a home visit where contact cannot be made.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance, we may refer a case of poor school attendance to Medway Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils and that we have warned the parent/carers that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of warning letters and school records will be shared with Medway Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes.

Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will demonstrate that we have taken appropriate steps to warn parents/carers that they are at risk of receiving An Education Penalty Notice or other legal sanction, including by issuing formal letters and a Notice to Improve prior to referral to Medway Local Authority.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

10. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables (RTT)

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the best interests of the pupil, a temporary reduced timetable may be considered to support the pupil's access to education, reintegration into school, or to meet an identified need. Any reduced timetable must be agreed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, other relevant professionals and agencies.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible (max 6 weeks), and subject to regular review, with a clear reintegration plan in place to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

The school will review the arrangement regularly with the pupil, parent/carer and relevant professionals to ensure it remains appropriate and continues to be in the pupil's best interests and is progressing towards a return to full-time education.

Attendance registers will be completed in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE guidance. Sessions that form part of an agreed reduced timetable will normally be recorded using Code C2 (Leave of Absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable). Where a pupil is receiving education through another approved arrangement, attendance will be recorded using the appropriate statutory attendance code.

Where a pupil has a social worker, the school will ensure they are informed and involved in the reduced timetable process. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will liaise with Medway Local Authority to ensure that the provision and support specified within the plan are reviewed as appropriate.

Our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to Medway Local Authority (LA) reducedtimetables@medway.gov.uk in line with Medway LA Reduced Timetable Policy.

11. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly.

It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child. Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school their parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

Escalation Procedures for Poor School Attendance Example may differ to your school's internal procedure; however, schools must be mindful of evidence that is required to submit to Medway LA for legal proceedings to commence for poor school attendance via Medway LA Attendance Referral Form 2026-2027.

School sends letter of school's expectations at beginning of the academic year to all parent/carers

School to send falling attendance letter to parent/carers



School to send letter with invite to attendance meeting to discuss current interventions and support in place, parent/carer and pupil able to raise any concerns.



Attendance meeting - discuss any further academic or pastoral support/interventions to be implemented.



School to send letter to parent/carers, annotating whether they attended or not and detailing all academic/SEN and pastoral interventions/interventions in place. If parents/carers did not attend, advise they should contact to arrange a meeting to raise any concerns. Warning that medical evidence is required for future absence to be considered for authorisation, and that further absences school will consider issuing a Notice to Improve.



Further decline in attendance, unauthorised sessions recorded, school to issue a Notice to Improve, clearly annotating all support/interventions in place, the time period for improvement, 3-6 weeks.



Further decline, unauthorised absence recorded.



School to consider requesting enforcement from Medway LA, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a penalty notice to Medway Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to Medway Local Authority may be a penalty notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance, for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised

holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended and can only be issued by a headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a local authority officer or the police. They must also be issued in line with Medway Local Authority Code of Conduct.

See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information

Please note that Penalty Notices carry fixed amounts and payment deadlines. They cannot be paid in instalments.

The Headteacher has the responsibility for authorising any absence. Parents/carers cannot authorise any absence however, parents/carers can provide reasons for absence for the school to consider.

The local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, following receipt of the penalty notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

• **First offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

• **Second Offence** (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

• **Third Offence** and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

N.B Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in an Education Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, **during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion** (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days.

12. Children Missing Education (CME)

St Helen's Church of England Primary School will add and remove pupils from the admissions register in accordance with Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 applies.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil may be missing education or has potentially moved out of Medway Local Authority, we will consult with our Local Authority Attendance Officer within five school days. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts. These may include:

- Conducting a home visit
- Contacting schools attended by siblings
- Liaising with the allocated social worker/keyworker, where the family is known to Social Care/Family Solutions/Early Help

If the pupil's location remains unknown, or it is confirmed that they have left Medway, the school will complete and submit a Children Missing Education (CME) referral form to the Local Authority Attendance Officer within ten school days.

This process is aligned with statutory safeguarding duties and reflects the expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Improve School Attendance. It also supports Medway LA Children Missing Education policy, and commitment to identifying, tracking, and supporting children missing education, ensuring that all pupils receive suitable education provision

13. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, we will attempt to contact parent/carers by text, email, telephone or letter to establish the reason for a child's absence. Once the reason for absence is known, we will record it as authorised or unauthorised in line with statutory guidance. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 2 school days, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised using Code O. Unexplained absence will therefore become unauthorised if a satisfactory reason is not provided within this timeframe.

If we have concerns about a pupil's absence and are unable to make contact with parent/carers, we will contact all emergency contacts provided. In addition, where appropriate and proportionate, we will contact siblings' schools, early years settings, or other professionals or services working with the family where we reasonably believe they may have information to help establish the pupil's whereabouts and ensure their safety.

14. Direction Off-site (Off-site Direction)

We, as the home school, may use off-site direction as a short-term, time-limited intervention to support a pupil's behaviour. This involves the pupil attending another school, such as alternative provision or another setting, while remaining on our school roll.

During this period, the pupil will usually be **dual registered**. We will notify parents in writing of the placement, including the reason, expected duration and intended outcomes, and will ensure regular review meetings take place.

Attendance will be recorded in line with statutory guidance: typically, **Code D** will be used where the pupil is attending another school under dual registration; **Code B** may be used where the provision is approved educational activity without dual registration; and where a pupil does not attend the agreed provision, this will normally be recorded as **Code O (unauthorised absence)**. **Code E** will only be used where absence is due to a suspension.

15. Managed Moves

A managed move is a voluntary and permanent transfer of a pupil from this (home) school to another mainstream school, used as an early intervention to support improved outcomes and avoid suspension or permanent exclusion. Managed moves will only take place where this is in the pupil's best interests and must be agreed by all parties, including parents, both schools and the admission Local Authority. The home school will ensure parents are fully informed and involved in decision-making and must not place pressure on families to consent.

Where a managed move is agreed, the pupil will be removed from this school's roll and admitted to the new school, meaning the pupil is **single registered**.
Managed moves cannot be used on a trial basis; any temporary placement must be arranged through off-site direction.

16. Reporting to Parents

We will report attendance on an annual basis in the child's end of school report. During parent consultations school attendance will also be shared. Parents have daily access to their child's attendance on the Arbor app.

Where a child's attendance falls below expected, for whatever reason, our school will contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Attendance and reasons for absence will be recorded in Arbor. This will include who called and the reasons given.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The Governing Board recognises that regular school attendance is essential to securing good educational outcomes, safeguarding pupils and promoting their wellbeing. The Board will actively promote the importance of good attendance across the school's ethos, policies and strategic priorities and will hold the Headteacher to account for the effective implementation of this policy.

The Governing Board will review attendance information at least half-termly, including whole-school attendance, persistent absence, severe absence, punctuality and the attendance of vulnerable groups. This review will include analysis of trends, patterns and emerging concerns, enabling governors to provide appropriate support and challenge and ensure that attendance improvement remains a whole-school priority.

Governors will receive regular attendance reports which include attendance, persistent absence and severe absence data, together with analysis of key vulnerable cohorts, including Children in Care, previously looked after children, pupils with SEND and EHCPs, pupils eligible for FSM/Pupil Premium, pupils with a social worker, young carers, pupils with medical needs, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and any other groups identified by the school.

The Governing Board will provide strategic support and challenge regarding the effectiveness of attendance systems, processes, policies and interventions. Governors will seek assurance that attendance concerns are identified early, that barriers to attendance are understood, and that appropriate support and multi-agency working are in place to improve outcomes for pupils and families.

The Governing Board will ensure that attendance is appropriately reflected within the school's safeguarding, SEND, inclusion, behaviour, wellbeing and wider school improvement arrangements. It will also seek assurance that staff receive appropriate training and that the school complies with its statutory duties in relation to attendance, safeguarding and pupil registration.

The Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school and for promoting a whole-school culture that recognises the importance of good attendance. They are responsible for monitoring school-level attendance and absence data, identifying trends and patterns, and reporting attendance information to governors.

The Headteacher/Principal will ensure that attendance is prioritised across the school and embedded within safeguarding, SEND, wellbeing and inclusion practices. They will ensure that attendance concerns are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity and that appropriate support is in place for pupils and families experiencing barriers to attendance.

The Headteacher/Principal is responsible for ensuring that staff receive appropriate attendance training, that statutory attendance duties are met, and that effective partnership working takes place with parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies where required.

The Headteacher/Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and may request penalty notices or other legal interventions, where appropriate, in accordance with statutory guidance and local procedures.

The Attendance Lead will provide strategic leadership of attendance, oversee attendance data analysis, coordinate targeted support, monitor vulnerable groups and ensure implementation of this policy.

Attendance Lead / Champion (Senior Leader with Responsibility for Attendance)

The Attendance Lead provides strategic leadership for attendance and promotes a culture of high attendance across the school. They are responsible for monitoring and analysing attendance data to identify trends, patterns and groups of pupils who may require additional support, including pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), Pupil Premium pupils, pupils with SEND or an EHCP, Children in Care, pupils with a social worker, pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), young carers and other vulnerable groups.

The Attendance Lead oversees attendance interventions and escalation processes, works with pupils, families and partner agencies to remove barriers to attendance, and chairs formal attendance meetings where appropriate. They ensure that attendance is considered within safeguarding, SEND, inclusion, pastoral and wellbeing processes and that support is targeted, timely and regularly reviewed to improve outcomes for pupils.

The Attendance Lead reports attendance trends and outcomes to senior leaders and governors and works in partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies to support pupils whose attendance is causing concern

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Work alongside the attendance lead to identify barriers to attendance early and implement a 'support first' approach.
- Continually monitor the attendance of the vulnerable groups.
- Carry out or coordinate welfare checks where attendance concerns raise safeguarding issues
- Liaising with social workers, Early Help, health professionals and other agencies where attendance concerns are linked to safeguarding, SEND, mental health, family circumstances or neglect concerns.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher/attendance lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls, home visits and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the Attendance/DS Leads and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.

Class Teachers

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

Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Office staff will ensure the attendance lead is informed of any urgent attendance related concerns.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared and ratified by the governing body.

20. Links with other policies/procedures

This policy is linked to our Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Inclusion Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEND Graduated response, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

21. Attendance codes

School Attendance codes 2026-2027

Present/Authorised Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes (no fixed abode)
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)