Attendance Policy

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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 Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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 Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) 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 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/madeIt also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees' School Improvement Committee and the school's Local Academy Committee.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- 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
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools]
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- School Improvement Committee only: Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the senior teacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents 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 through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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 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 Ricky Emms and can be contacted via 01327 260527.

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 headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/senior teacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Lucy Slade and can be contacted via Tel: 01926 476600/Direct line 01926 742087

3.5 **Class Teachers**

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

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 class teacher/head 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 8.50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 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
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the head who can be contacted via 01327 260527.

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 8.50am and ends at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

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 8.50am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school. Emails is an additional ways to contract.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

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

Parents should contact the school as soon as possible and put a request to the school in writing.

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

The pupil's parent 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 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

We monitor attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis. If we notice any patterns or trends, or identify a decline in attendance or punctuality, we will contact parents and ask to arrange a meeting. This meeting will be supportive and will look for ways we can support you in helping your children attend school on time.

If punctuality continues to be a concern, we will ask for advice from our attendance officer and will look to draw up an action plan.

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:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact other known relatives, social workers or the police.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team 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, with support from our attendance officer we may 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 will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

Any children who are of a concern (drops below 95%) will receive a letter with a detailed breakdown of their attendance on a termly basis.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a circumstance that is 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. Examples of this could include, but not limited to: funerals of close family relations, weddings of close family relations, exceptional sporting events in which the pupil is taking part, exceptional activities such as performing arts, in which the pupil is taking part, armed forces personnel who are returning for operational tours, and after times of crisis or trauma.

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, we will not grant a leave of absence 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, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The headteacher 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.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), 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.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action.

This could include:

- a Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine

- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000

- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. 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 for unauthorised absence 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 could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000. Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

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

We celebrate school attendance on weekly basis in our celebration assembly.

If we issue an attendance contract, we celebrate the successes of this with the parents and children, through a meeting, certificates and other school rewards as deemed necessary.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The most important part of this is to work out what the individual child/family requires to support with school attendance. This would include a detailed Assess, Plan, Do, Review document which will allow us to pinpoint the specific actions required.

Support that can be offered could include, but is not limited to:

- Transport support
- Counselling
- Nurture groups
- Reduced timetable
- Reduced pressure on the school curriculum and time table
- Individual sessions with a teaching assistant
- SEND assessments

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

The process would follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle as detailed above.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We would maintain contact with the parents and child during any periods of lengthy absence and would work closely with any professionals who may be involved with the family. We would work closely with any occupational therapists to ensure we create the correct environment for the child to return to school in a safe manner.

Once again, we would have to follow an individualised programme by creating and Assess, Plan, Do, Review document on each occasion.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 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.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The Trust and 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

8.3 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 governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order 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

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The Trust and 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)
- We will use the letter templates as provided by the Local Authority to support us in this process.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local academy committee.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

- Behaviour policy

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

Appendix 2 – WNC Attendance Process

As you are aware, our in-house legal team are now undertaking the provision of legal advice and representation for the Education Department. As part of this, from 1st April 2024 schools are now required to submit a S9 witness statement with all attendance contacts (term time absence/irregular attendance) where legal action is being considered and follow the new process. Please see process below.

1. The child does not attend school regularly as defined within the school's policy.
2. School staff submit a contact form to the School Attendance Support Service with a section 9 witness statement from the Head Teacher (or a member of school staff authorised by the Head Teacher) and exhibits to include;
    - Attendance certificate showing the past 6 weeks of attendance from the date of the referral, this is not including any half terms.
    - Attendance certificate for academic year to date
    - Pupils registration/admissions certificate
    - Any request for leave (holiday referral only)
    - Any response to request for leave (holiday referral only)
    - Any medical evidence in relation to the absence (this can include medical evidence from home country)
    - Any documented communication with parents/carers (letters, attendance contract, chronology)
    - Completed S.9 witness statement (attached). If any information is missing or unknown (e.g. parents' date of birth) Please note as unknown. We will accept referrals without parents DOB. However, DOB are required if the case proceeds to court. We would advise where possible trying to obtain parents DOB and this could be requested as part of schools' parent contract meeting paperwork. (Following feedback from schools since the changes came into place on 1st April 2024, the school S9 witness statement has been amended. Please delete any previously saved copy). When completing this statement you will be asked to show any dates that you are unable to attend court, please could select your term dates. You are only required to select 6 months from the date of referral.

Please note, all documents must be uploaded in PDF or image format, this is a legal requirement to stop any information being altered. Therefore, no Word documents can be uploaded.

Please see attached exhibits explained document if you have any queries.

WNC website will be amended for September to account for changes and the documents now required when submitting a referral for irregular attendance.

3. The School Attendance Support Service to review the school's evidence and then contact the parent if appropriate to investigate the matter further.
4. If the School Attendance Support Service assess there to be sufficient evidence to prosecute for an offence of irregular attendance, they may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) as an alternative to prosecution at this stage. If the FPN is paid in full, the case is concluded at this stage in respect of that specific period of absence.
5. If the FPN is not paid, the team may choose to proceed to prepare a file for prosecution either by way of Single Justice Procedure (SJP) Notice for a s.444(1) offence, or by way of requesting a summons is issued by Legal Services for a s.444(1A) offence.

Appendix 3 – Exhibits explained

School S9 witness statement - exhibits explained (please ensure exhibits are labelled)

Exhibit HT1 – Pupils registration.

The exhibit should be the extract from the admissions register (not attendance register) that shows all of the below information. This can be provided as a print out, or a screen shot which has been printed out. This can usually be found on the front page on the pupils record on the schools records database.

Under regulation 4 (a) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and, from 19th August 2024, by regulation 5 (1) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which will replace the 2006 regs as of that date the school should be keeping a record of:

- The child's name in full
- The child's sex
- The particulars of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, an indication of that fact and a note of at least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency;
- Where the pupil will normally reside with a parent at a specified other address in the future, whether in addition to or instead of the address at which the pupil currently normally resides.
- Day, month and year of birth of child
- Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school
- Name and address of the school last attended, if any and if the parent has said that the pupil—
    - is also registered at another school; or
    - will be attending a specified other school in the future,
    - the name of that other school and the first date on which the pupil attended or is due to attend that school, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to obtain that information

Exhibit HT2 – Schools attendance policy

Schools' attendance policy should include school's definition of irregular attendance. School should also state their expectation for overall attendance. Please see examples below.

"If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action.

"School expectation is 96% attendance."

Exhibit as HT3 – Attendance record

Attendance record showing minimum of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

Exhibit as HT3 – Attendance record

Attendance record showing the academic year to date and that it falls below school's expectation.

Exhibit HT5 – communication with parents

Term time absence contacts to include; request for leave, response to request advising absence would be unauthorised, chronology of communication with parent/carer.

Irregular attendance contacts to include; Evidence of actions taken – letters issued, notes of meetings held, Parent Contact Meeting (PCM) chronology, offer of Early Help Assessment (EHA) Evidence that the parent or carer has been notified that they may receive a penalty notice or prosecution.

Appendix 4 – Witness Statement

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

(Criminal Procedure Rules, r. 16.2;

Criminal Justice Act 1967, s. 9)

STATEMENT OF **Full Name (person completing the statement)**

Yes/ No

Age of witness (if over 18, enter "over 18"): ……

This statement (consisting of xx pages) **is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.**

I am Name and I work for School Name. I am completing this statement in my capacity as Job Title / Position with regard to our pupil, Name of child, DOB: XX/XX/XXXX aged XX , who registered with this school on Date of registration and who's home address is State full home address of the child . I Exhibit a copy of the pupils' registration as **Exhibit HT1**

The school's attendance policy states that "pupils must attend school no less than X % of the time within a period of X weeks. Attendance that falls lower than this is classed as irregular." I exhibit a copy of the school's policy as **Exhibit HT2**

Name of child has been absent from school on the dates shown on the attendance record, which I **Exhibit as HT3.** The attendance record covers an x week period in accordance with our attendance policy, to show that the attendance has fallen below the required % of attendance in the timeframe. From xx/xx/xxxx to xx/xx/xxxx Name of child has had X% attendance with X% unauthorised.

Name of child attendance record for the academic year to date, which I **Exhibit as HT4,** shows that the attendance has fallen below the schools expectation of X%

attendance. School expectation is X% attendance as per our attendance policy. I exhibit a copy of the school's policy as **Exhibit HT2**

I can confirm that the absences marked with xxxx were unauthorised and that no permission was given for the child to be absent at these times. I also confirm that the school were not made aware of the absence being for reason of religious observance, ill health, medical appointments, or the inability to travel to school.

I contacted Name of parent / both parents contacted who is / are the responsible parent(s) of the pupil on give all dates and methods of contact. During these contacts the parents(s) said that. state what the parents said on each date. I Exhibit all the email exchanges / letters / messages / voice mails/ attendance contracts (select as appropriate) between us as **Exhibit HT5**

On the x date, having increasing concerns for the education of the child, I referred the case to the School Attendance Support Service at West Northamptonshire Council for investigation and enforcement.

Signed: …… ……..... (witness)

Date: ……

(*To be completed if applicable*: …… ……. being unable to read the above statement I, ……of ……..., read it to him/her before he/she signed it.

Signed: …….. …….. **Date**: ……..)

The following page is non disclosable and contains dates to avoid.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – DO NOT DISCLOSE

Name _____ Date of birth _____

Position _____

Case Reference Name of Pupil Date _____

Dates to be avoided (**In the event you might be called to provide your witness statement evidence in person at court, these dates will be taken into account by the court when listing the case for a hearing date**). **Delete dates of non-availability of witness.**

Month of: January							Month of: February							Month of: March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				
Month of: April							Month of: May							Month of: June						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				
Month of: July							Month of: August							Month of: September						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				
Month of: October							Month of: November							Month of: December						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31					29	30	31					29	30	31				

Name of contact point (if different from above) _____

Address

_____

_____

Work 'phone no. _____

Work Email _____

If the person making this statement would have any special needs if they were required to attend court, give details (e.g. language difficulties, visually impaired, restricted mobility) _____

_____

If the person making the statement needs additional support as a vulnerable or intimidated witness, give details: _____

_____

Does the maker of the statement consent to its use for other purposes such as civil proceedings (e.g.: child care proceedings).

Yes ☐

No ☐

STATEMENT TAKEN BY (print name)

_____

Section _____ Time taken _____ Place _____

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – DO NOT DISCLOSE