



**Nexus Education Schools Trust**

**Attendance Policy  
2025-2026  
For all NEST Schools**

**Reviewed: September 2025  
Statutory**

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# Part One

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting the 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 the trust wide, 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.
- Promoting and supporting 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/ukxi/2006/1751/contents> [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It 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

It is everyone's responsibility to work towards our trust wide target of 97% attendance in each school across the trust. Every school must ensure a strong and full rationale (including evidence) is provided around the proactive steps taken to fulfil this target.

### 3.1 The board of trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for:

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

- Making sure all schools in the trust record attendance accurately in the register and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities.
- Making sure all schools in the trust work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the trust policies and ethos.
- Making sure the trust has high aspirations for all pupils but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the trust wide processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools and appropriate training.

### **3.2 Local committee members (LCMs)**

- Holding the headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Making sure the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most, through termly attendance review meetings with each individual school.

### **3.3 The NEST central attendance team**

The central attendance team is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust.
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance.
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries.
- Reviewing advice about wider support programmes.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust.
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.

### **3.4 The headteacher**

In this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the Headteacher to also refers to any Head of School and Head of NEST Nurseries (change to Pay Policy definition of headteacher).

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to local committee members.
- Meeting regularly (minimum of half termly) with the school attendance officer and headteacher to analyse data and formulate necessary action plans in targeting attendance/absenteeism.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Applying for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary authorising designated senior leader and/or school attendance officer to be able to do so.

- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels.

### **3.5 The designated senior leader/attendance champion responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance for all pupils as well as SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- Meeting regularly (minimum of half termly) with the school attendance officer and headteacher to analyse data and formulate necessary action plans in targeting attendance/absenteeism.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

### **3.6 The school attendance officer (this may be part of the role of the designated senior leader/attendance champion)**

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends; and liaising with the senior designated leader without delay to deliver and record intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families for those that are at risk of persistent/severely being absent or where a pupil's attendance has dramatically declined.
- The school attendance team (headteacher, senior designated leader and school attendance officer) 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 (including SEND and disadvantaged pupils). This should include identifying patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance.
- Meeting regularly (minimum of half termly) with the senior designated leader and headteacher to analyse data and formulate necessary action plans in targeting attendance/absenteeism.
- 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 alongside senior designated leader to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher and senior designated leader (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

### 3.7 Class teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 9), and submitting this information to the school office at close of registers each day.

### 3.8 Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers or review the Studybugs App about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the senior designated lead or headteacher where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Phone parents/carers of absent pupils if no communication of absence has been made on the first morning of absence (first day calling).

### 3.9 Parents/carers

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/carers, 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/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return. Alternatively, please use the Studybugs App to report your child's absence.
- 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 school's senior designated lead.

### 3.10 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

Schools will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

Schools will take the 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 9 for the DfE attendance codes.

Schools 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.

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

All schools have published start and end times on their website via the school's Attendance Information Summary.

Pupils must arrive in school on time for each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken promptly at the start of each school day and will be kept open for 30 minutes after. The register for the second session will be taken promptly at the start of the afternoon session and upon completion, the register will close immediately.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office. If they do not, the school will phone the parent/carer to find out why their child is not at school. If they cannot be reached, the school will call one of the emergency contacts.

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 may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## 4.3 Planned absence - medical

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

All medical appointments will require evidence to be provided,

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. All applications for term time absence must be completed using the trust wide Absence Request Form (Appendix 5), all requests require headteacher review and signature regardless of authorisation status.

## 4.4 Planned absence – term time holidays

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless they are for exceptional circumstances. They are significantly disruptive to a child's education and parents/carers should avoid taking any term time holidays.

From September 2024 Headteachers will not be able to use the H registration code for authorising holidays in term time. Schools are not required to send a 'Notice to Improve' letter and all term time holiday will be recorded as Code G which will be unauthorized (unless deemed an exceptional circumstance).

Where unauthorised term time holiday is taken and is a minimum of five consecutive school days or more, the school can request a penalty notice. Where parents/carers are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, for example returning to school on the fourth day (before the five day minimum) or using the days before and after school holiday dates during the academic year, or repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, the local authority (LA) will exercise discretion and consider issuing a penalty notice if appropriate. Each local authority has a Penalty Notice Code in place that is reviewed annually to ensure it is in keeping with government guidelines, is reflective of the needs of schools and is fair to parents/carers.

Schools should refer to their retrospective LA guidance before requesting a Penalty Notice.

Parental applications for term time holiday absence must be completed using the trust wide Absence Request Form (Appendix 5). All requests require headteacher review and signature regardless of authorisation status.

Parents/carers of all school aged children are expected to follow the same process (including non-compulsory school age children).

Parents/carers are expected where possible to submit all requests a minimum of 4 weeks before the planned absence period. Upon receipt of a request, the school will respond in one of two written ways:

- 1) Your request has been deemed as an exceptional circumstance and the request is approved. (Appendix 5a)
- 2) Your request has been refused and a Penalty Notice may be requested if the holiday is taken. If refused either a bespoke letter or letter Appendix 5b will be sent depending on whether your child's absence is for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days).

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, a Penalty Notice may be requested and letter Appendix 6b will be sent.

If a holiday is taken without request to the school, the school may send a bespoke letter/Appendix 6a to each parent/carer informing them why the school thinks a holiday has been taken and that unless evidence of the child being ill or another unavoidable cause can be supplied within 10 school days, the absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested for unauthorised holiday during term time.

All Penalty Notices will be requested promptly and submitted to school's LA within 10 school days of the absences occurring.

The Penalty Notice request must be made after the family has taken their holiday and not before. Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £180 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## 4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they will miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also result in further absence.

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.

Pupils must arrive in school on time for each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken promptly at the start of each school day and will be kept open for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will be taken promptly at the start of the session and upon completion, the register will close immediately.

Lateness is monitored by the senior designated attendance leader and Headteacher. If the pupil is late more than 5 times in any half term period, parents/carers will be contacted to meet with the Headteacher or senior designated leader to find ways to resolve the problem.

Medical Appointments – in some circumstances we understand that medical appointments may hinder the ability to attend school on time. Parents/carers must provide the school with evidence of the medical appointment to avoid an unauthorised code being applied. Once evidence is provided the appropriate code will be applied.

(Appendix 7 to be sent to parents/carers involving lateness or penalty notices relating to persistent lates)

## 4.6 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/carer 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 will follow safeguarding procedures as necessary e.g. home visits, call 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/carer 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/carers 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: the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.
- When recording unexplained absence schools must use N code. If no reason can be obtained an O code must be used instead. Schools must record all attempts to obtain a reason and where this hasn't been possible escalate this to the Headteacher without delay. Please note: schools cannot use N codes for longer than 5 days.

## 4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The trust wide expectation is that all schools regularly inform parents/carers (see definition of 'parent/carer', as used in this policy, in section 3.9 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

Parents/carers are encouraged to be proactive and download the Studybugs App so that all attendance/absence percentages can be viewed live, without delay.

All schools are required to report each child's attendance to parents/carers as follows:

- Every pupil on an annual basis
- All pupils who are below 92% attendance on a half termly basis.
- All pupils below 90% without delay to obtain a proactive collaborative approach to rapidly improve attendance

***The above approach applies to all pupils including those of non-compulsory school age.***

# 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 will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

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

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

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

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via school office and school website. 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/carer(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/carer(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 schools 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.

For further information please ensure this section of the policy is read in conjunction with the National Framework for Penalty notices outlined in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (pages 56 – 61).

## Penalty notices

The headteacher or senior designated leader, local authority or the police can request a Penalty Notice for parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Before requesting 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/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/carer who requested 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 issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same pupil, the parent/carer must pay a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice **cannot** be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, a referral to the LA for legal investigation or court action will be taken instead.

Where a child has moved school between boroughs, the escalation of penalty notices still applies, e.g, if a 1<sup>st</sup> penalty notice was obtained in one borough and the threshold is met for a 2<sup>nd</sup> penalty notice in a different school which is in a different borough, the process continues. All schools should request attendance history on all new children at the school. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent/carer pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers 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/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are 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/carer must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## Notices to improve

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

Outlined below are the expectations for every school in the trust:

- A strong ethos for good attendance on a daily basis
- A strong understanding of good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.
- There is a strong understanding of the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance.
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue.
- Have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies where needed.
- Ensure the senior designated attendance lead is expected to set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff. They should have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school. It is an ongoing responsibility, and the senior designated lead is also expected to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Building a strong understanding with parents/carers about what 'good' attendance looks like. This means schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing.
- Ensuring parents/carers have a realistic understanding of what 'good' attendance looks like. Schools are expected to share the following with parents/carers:
  - The trust's attendance target of 97%.
  - The individual pupil's percentage attendance in conjunction with a meaningful context e.g. total number of days missed or an average of how many days missed per week.
- Ensure where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works alongside and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

Outlined below are recommended positive attendance communications/incentives:

- Children and families are regularly informed about the value of good attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance and punctuality may be celebrated through newsletters and assemblies e.g. identifying the class with the highest attendance each week.
- Certificates may be awarded termly to children with high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance is promoted through meetings with families and letters as and when needed.
- Families joining the school are reminded of the school's focus on good attendance and punctuality.
- Families are encouraged to discuss barriers to good attendance and punctuality with the school.
- The school will work with families to break down barriers to good attendance and punctuality.

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

When supporting pupils who are returning to school, the usual processes relevant to any attendance case apply:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)

- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.
- In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil.

They should:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents/carers.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

## 7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods.

It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. School staff play a critical role in communicating attendance expectations to parents/carers. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

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

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.

Schools will refer to DfE's non-statutory guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance for case study examples where applicable.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, schools are expected to:

- Work in partnership with parents/carers to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.

- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents/carers.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

If the child has an education health and care plan, school staff should:

- Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Where possible agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents/carers.
- Where needed, work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.
- Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.
- Where parents/carers do not engage in support, schools should work with the local authority or other local partners to formalise that support and as a last resort, enforce attendance through legal intervention.
- Schools should ensure data is regularly monitored for pupils with long term illnesses and or special educational needs or disabilities including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

### 7.3 Working with other agencies

Attendance is everyone's business so in many of these cases school will not be able to fully support a pupil without the assistance of a range of other agencies.

Schools are expected to:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.
- Where external support is provided work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

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

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time, and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

## 7.5 Part time timetables

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent/carer the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents/carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.
- Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.
- If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.
- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

## 8. Attendance monitoring

All schools will monitor attendance on a weekly basis with an in-depth analysis carried out by the school's attendance officer a minimum of half termly. The NEST central attendance team has a trust wide overview of the attendance across all schools and share this with the board of trustees at each trustee meeting (four per academic year).

The statutory persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Schools must follow the trust's graduated approach outline in part two of this policy when targeting attendance/ absenteeism.

### 8.1 Monitoring attendance

In all cases, schools are expected to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence should also be central to school, trust, and local authority level strategies for improving attendance.

The school attendance officer will monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends. They will ensure they liaise with the senior designated leader to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.

The school attendance team (headteacher, senior designated leader and school attendance officer) will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) a minimum of half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level (including SEND and disadvantaged pupils).

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The NEST central attendance team and LCMs will review (minimum of termly) the robust approach that schools have towards monitoring and supporting attendance.

### 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- 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 severe 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 local committee members and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place 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 trust's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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 and part two of this policy).

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 12 months by the NEST central team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

Home/school agreement

## Part Two – School Guidance and Graduated Approach

### 11. Trust wide approach

It is everyone's responsibility to work towards our trust wide target of 97% attendance in each school across the trust. Every school must ensure a strong and full rationale (including evidence) is provided around the proactive steps taken to fulfil this target.

#### 11.1 Consistency across schools

Ensuring all schools across the trust have consistency is integral to creating a strong ethos and culture around good attendance. Outlined below are the required steps that all our schools are expected to follow which do not and should not replace any expectations outline in statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) :

- Implement all requirements outlined in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)
- Follow the National Framework for Penalty Notices outlined in [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- Ensure the school has a named senior designated attendance leader and attendance officer who is known by all staff and parents/carers.
- Ensure all roles and responsibilities outlined in part one of this policy are adhered.
- Ensure that the trust wide graduated approach to tackling absence is followed consistently and this is not possible, liaise with the attendance central team without delay.

#### 11.2 School attendance information summary

Each school has a School Attendance Information Summary (SAIS) that provides key attendance information linked to the school:

- Start and end of school day
- Start and end of first and second session, including when registration opens and closes.
- Contact information for key personnel:
  - Senior Designated Attendance Lead - telephone and email
  - Office Attendance Lead – telephone and email
  - Headteacher – telephone and email

Every school is expected to publish this on their website.

#### 11.3 Studybugs App

All schools are expected to promote the use of Studybugs by supporting parents/carers in downloading the app and using this to monitor their child's attendance on a regular basis. It is a trust wide ambition to have all parents/carers and schools using Studybugs for attendance reporting and monitoring **by September 2025**.

#### 11.4 Reporting to parents/carers

All schools are expected to report to parents/carers as follows:

- Every pupil on an annual basis by electronically sharing their child's registration certificate for review.
- All pupils who are below 92% attendance on a half termly basis through the use of the trust wide attendance letters (checking which is applicable).
- All pupils below 90% without delay to obtain a proactive collaborative approach to rapidly improve attendance through the use of the trust wide attendance letters (checking which is applicable) and meeting parents/carers informally.
- Follow the trust and local authority's escalation procedures for tackling poor attendance as required.

***The above approach applies to all pupils including those of non-compulsory school age.***

## **11.5 Collaborative partnership**

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All schools should work together to:

**Expect** - Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers 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/carers 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/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues such as parental mental health.

**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** - 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.

## **11.6 Communicating to parents/carers**

All schools are expected to follow the trust's graduated approach outlined in section 12 (including template letters). This is to ensure trust wide consistency when targeting attendance and to enable a fair and transparent approach to be embedded in all our schools.

## **11.7 Attendance Contracts**

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent/carer and either the school and/or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents/carers cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school or local authority to offer an attendance contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but an attendance contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution.

A meeting must be held to implement an attendance contract. The meeting should explain the purpose of an attendance contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances. The parent/carer(s) should be asked to outline their views on the pupil's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting should allow them to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance.

Where a parent/carer fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts should be made to contact them and arrange another meeting but all attempts at support should be recorded.

One attendance contract may be arranged with all parents/carers, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent/carer then separate attendance contracts for each parent/carer should be arranged.

All attendance contracts should contain:

- Details of the requirements the parent/carer(s) is expected to comply with.
- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent/carer(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent/carer that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and should be tailored to the needs of the individual parent/carer and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly.
- Requiring the parent/carer to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority.
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered.
- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the pupil at school level.

The support provided to help the parent/carer satisfy those requirements may include:

- Provision of a lead practitioner to support the family.
- Signposting or referrals to wider local authority or health services that might support the family (e.g. housing needs, drug and alcohol support).
- Signposting or referrals to voluntary and community sector programmes or support (e.g. foodbanks or community support groups).
- Formal interventions such as family group conferencing, peer mentoring or literacy classes.
- Support and advisory services (e.g. benefit support).
- Formal parenting programmes (e.g. a course with a specified number of sessions).

Attendance contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual attendance contract should set out the duration it will be in place, and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed.

Once the requirements and support elements of the attendance contract have been agreed, the school and/or local authority and the parent/carer should write up the contract together and sign it. The attendance contract should be written in language that the parent/carer can easily understand (including a translation where necessary). All parties, including other partners working with the family, should be given a copy.

**Appendix 3b School's Attendance Contract must be used as a template for schools but may be adapted where necessary.**

## 11.8 Education Supervision Order

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority should have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent/carer.

## 11.9 Keeping a clear chronology

All schools must keep a clear chronology throughout each stage of supporting attendance which may be requested by parents/carers and other professionals. Schools may decide on how this chronology is kept but it must be clearly dated, unbiasedly recorded and quickly accessible without delay.

### 11.10 Non-compulsory school age

Pupils are classed as compulsory school age the term after their 5th birthday. Schools must still track, record and instill good attendance practice as per compulsory age pupils upon them starting a school setting. Non-compulsory pupils' attendance will be tracked and reported the same as compulsory school age pupils. Schools must follow stage 1 and 2 of the trust's graduated approach for these pupils but will not be able to proceed with issuing any formal sanctions until the pupil is of compulsory school age.

## 12. The Graduated Approach to Absence

Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents/carers and pupils. Schools should treat all pupils and parents/carers with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

All schools are expected to follow the trust wide graduated approach unless they are actively working with the Local Authority in which case they should follow their procedures:

| <b>Expect</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school create a welcoming culture and environment that allows children to gain a sense of belonging and achieve their potential through good and regular attendance</li> <li>Parents/carers support the school and share attendance and attainment aspirations</li> <li>Parents/carers follow the attendance policy and absence reporting procedure</li> <li>Parents/carers provide medical information to support absence for illness when attendance falls below 90%</li> </ul> | <b>Number of unauthorised days</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Identify and Monitor</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance data identifies patterns of poor attendance</li> <li>No medical information provided- prescription, antibiotics, or appointments</li> <li>Stage 1 letter sent to parents/carers- raising awareness</li> <li>Informal conversations with parent/carer to explore possible concerns</li> <li>Early intervention considered as a support first approach</li> <li>Early Help considered</li> </ul>                                                                             | <b>7.5 DAYS</b><br><b>96%</b>      |
| <b>Listen and Understand</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance has not improved- absences have continued</li> <li>Stage 2 letter sent to parents/carers- cause for concern</li> <li>Meeting with head of year or other staff member offered to parents/carers</li> <li>Explore barriers and agree a plan to remove them</li> <li>Consider SEND concerns or medical/ mental health barriers</li> <li>Consider the support of external services</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <b>15 DAYS</b><br><b>92%</b>       |
| <b>Facilitate Support</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child now persistently absent</li> <li>Stage 3 letter sent to parents/carers- invitation to school meeting</li> <li>Meeting with parent/carer chaired by senior attendance lead/ chair of governors</li> <li>Child offered opportunity to discuss concerns- pupil voice</li> <li>Review of previous support offered to parent/carer</li> <li>SEND, Medical or Pastoral plan review</li> <li>Early Help offered or team around the family arranged</li> </ul>                          | <b>19 DAYS</b><br><b>90%</b>       |
| <b>Formalise Support</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance contract completed by school</li> <li>Continued internal and external plan of support</li> <li>Notice to improve issued to parents/carers</li> <li>A multi-disciplinary approach considered</li> <li>Referral to MASH/Area Safeguarding Team where appropriate</li> <li>Referral to local authority attendance service for statutory action</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     | <b>28.5 DAYS</b><br><b>85%</b>     |
| <b>Statutory Intervention</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request local authority final attendance panel (pre court meeting)</li> <li>Education supervision order considered</li> <li>Attendance contract in place for 6 weeks</li> <li>Parent/carer to adhere to specific actions and provide information or evidence</li> <li>School to continue support</li> <li>Local authority to address referrals made to council services</li> </ul>                                                                                                    | <b>38 DAYS</b><br><b>80%</b>       |
| <b>Enforce</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider Educational Neglect</li> <li>Prosecution to protect the pupil's right to education is considered – when other options have been exhausted</li> <li>School and local authority continue child and family support</li> <li>Parent/carer is encouraged to provide evidence to substantiate absences or return child to full attendance</li> <li>Parent/carer is advised to seek legal advice</li> </ul>                                                                         | <b>38+ DAYS</b>                    |

## 12.1 Stage 1 – 96% to 92%

Stage 1 should be used at the headteacher's discretion. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes problematic, schools should draw on their knowledge of the family and pupil. Schools are expected to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance.

Schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Stage 1 approach will be implemented where a child's attendance is falling and is between 96-92%:

- Support the pupil and parent/carer 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 the pupil and parents/carers to access any support they may need voluntarily.
- These actions should be regularly (minimum of half termly) discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

**Stage 1 letter should be sent. (Appendix 1)**

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## 12.2 Stage 2 – Below 92%

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school explore the need to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners. Schools must reflect on the following:

- Current needs and barriers that are individual to the pupil.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate. This may include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Meeting with pupils (age appropriate) at risk of persistent absence and their parents/carers to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. (This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support).
- If an attendance contract would be necessary in targeting attendance.

Where engagement in support is proving challenging, schools should hold more formal conversations with the parents/carers (and pupil where they are old enough to understand).

Regularly scheduled meetings with the school's senior attendance leader (minimum of half termly) which may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

These meetings should clearly explain the consequences of persistent absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but should also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

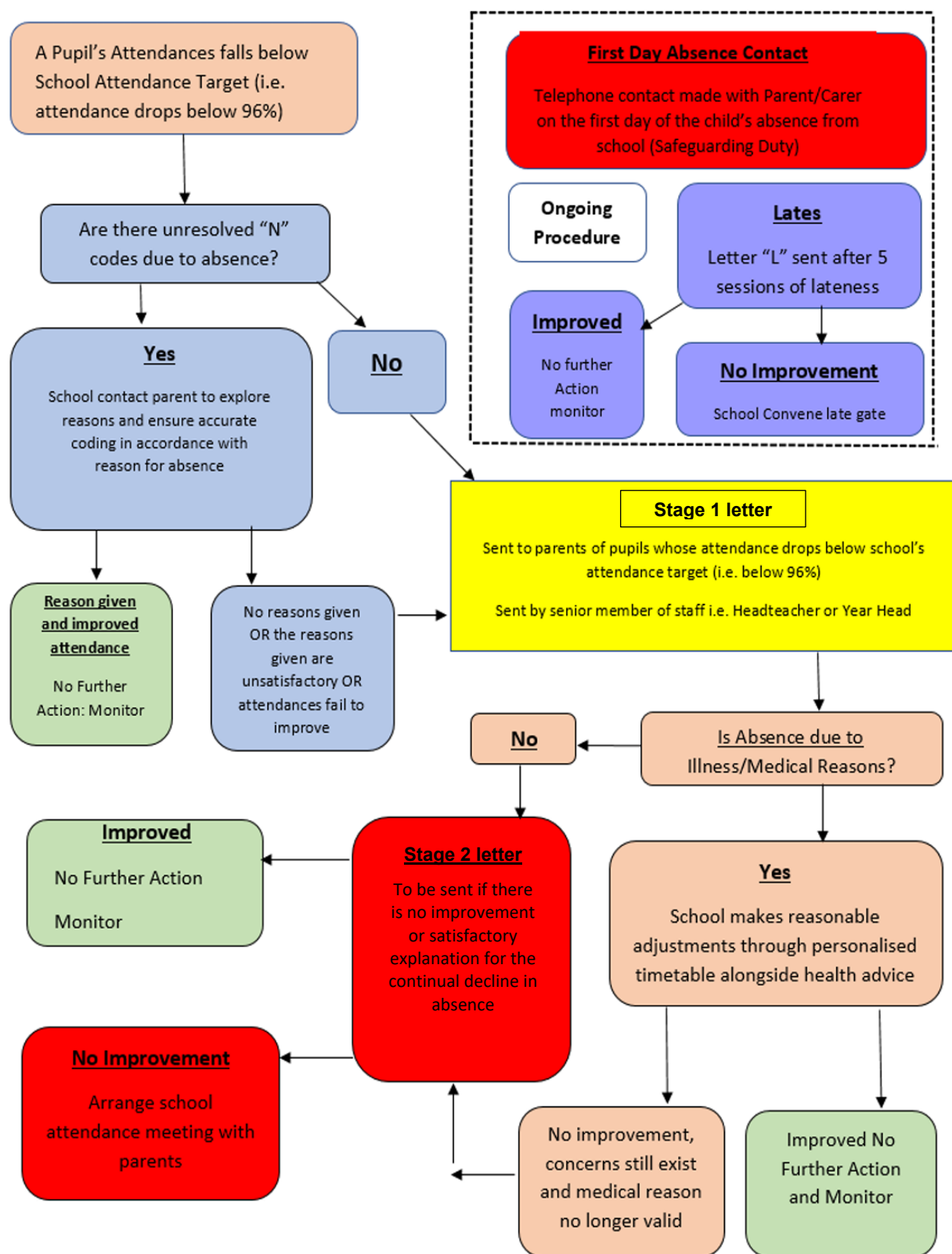
**Stage 2 letter should be sent. (Appendix 2)**

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**Please seek further clarification from your Local Authority attendance team if you are unsure**

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## Stage 1 and 2 Intervention Model



### 12.3 Stage 3 – 90% or below (working with local authority)

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, all schools should work with the local authority to decide on the best course of action. This may include:

- Formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract

**Where this process has been decided as the best course of action, a Stage 3 letter should be sent (Appendix 3)**

**Appendix 3a letter should be sent if an attendance contract is agreed.**

**Appendix 3b School's Attendance Contract should be used as a template for schools but may be adapted where necessary.**

- Formal support in place in the form of an education supervision order.

**Where this process has been decided as the best course of action, support must be requested from the local authority who can support the school in corresponding with parents/carers.**

- Issue a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents/carers' behaviour.

**Where this process has been decided as the best course of action, support must be requested from the local authority who will support the school in corresponding with parents/carers. (Appendix 4 letter may be sent)**

Schools must follow and adhere to the National Framework for penalty notices as well as processing a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice via the local authority's current channels e.g. online portal.

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### 12.4 Stage four below 90% (continued decline in attendance from stage 3)

Schools may intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

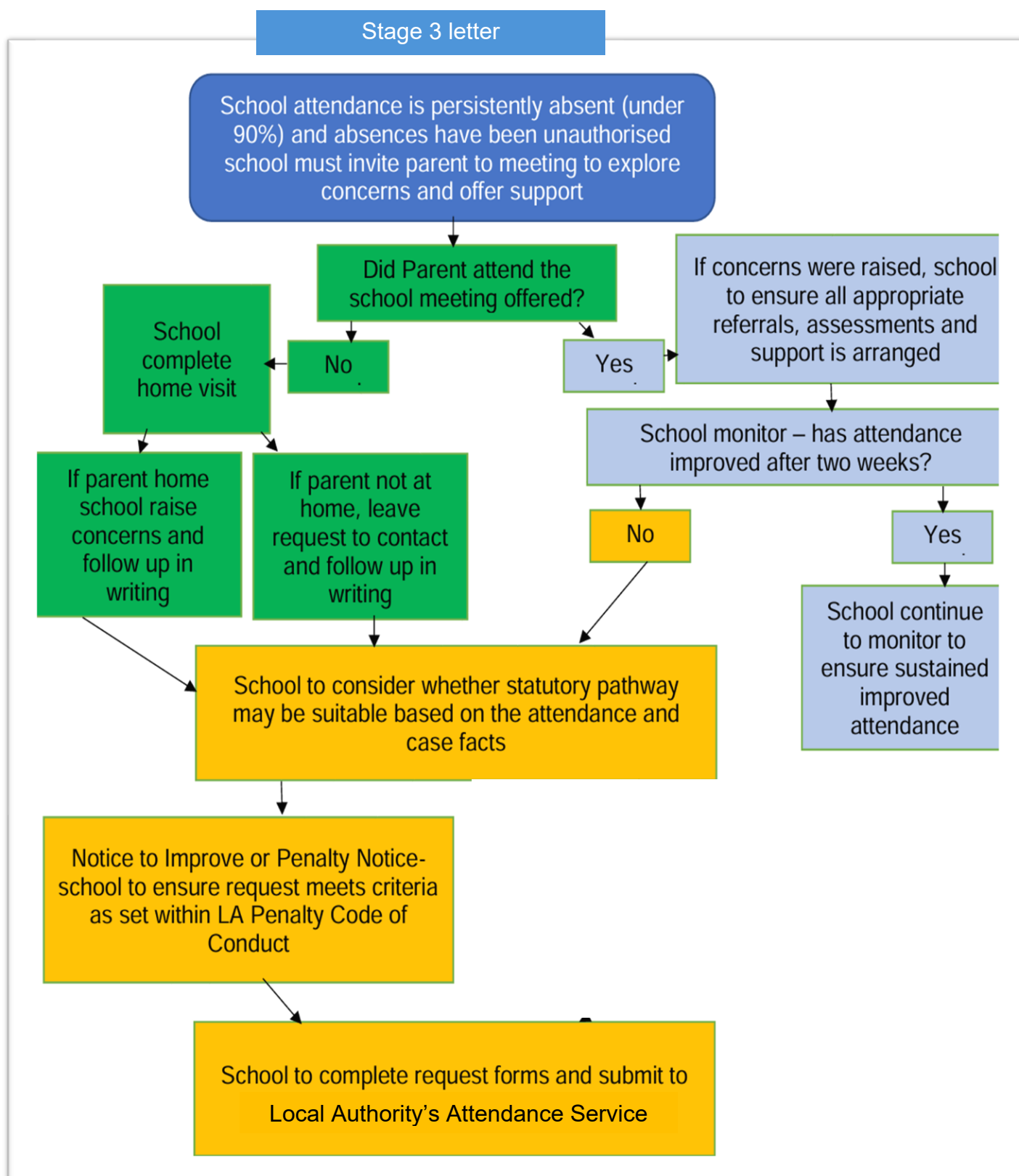
Working in conjunction with the local authority, schools must explore whether to prosecute parents/carers where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

**Schools must seek support from their individual local authority as well as adhering to the National Framework for Penalty Notices. (Appendix 4 may be sent subject to LA advice being sort prior)**

**All correspondence to parents/carers at stage four should be advised on/provided by the local authority.**

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## Stage 3 and 4 Intervention Model



## **Statutory Intervention**

If all avenues have been exhausted by schools to work effectively with parents/carers to improve attendance sufficiently, schools must move forward to working with the Local Authority following all statutory intervention procedures.

### 13. Notice to improve and penalty notices

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent/carer or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents/carers a final chance to engage in support.

A Notice to Improve must be sent to each individual parent/carer, even if they reside together at the same family address. Each Local Authority attendance service will advise on the template letter for schools to use at this stage. LA produced letters ensure a consistent approach across the local authority and includes all legal references as relevant. Schools must not change the template letter but should add specific details where indicated to ensure it is appropriate to the child and parent/carer.

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency.

Penalty Notices can be issued under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or Section 36 of the Children's Act 1989 each local authority is responsible for issuing Penalty Notices to parents/carers. A penalty notice can only be considered when absences are unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence codes may include one or a combination of the following:

- Code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday)
- Code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established)
- Code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies)
- Code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

The national framework for penalty notices sets out that in relation to non-attendance, a maximum of two penalty notices per child, per parent/carer can be issued within a rolling three year period. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those three years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. The changes to the national framework do not include penalty notices issued when a child is found in a public place whilst on an exclusion.

A Penalty Notice would not normally be issued without a Notice to Improve being issued first. The exception to this would be a holiday being taken in term-time.

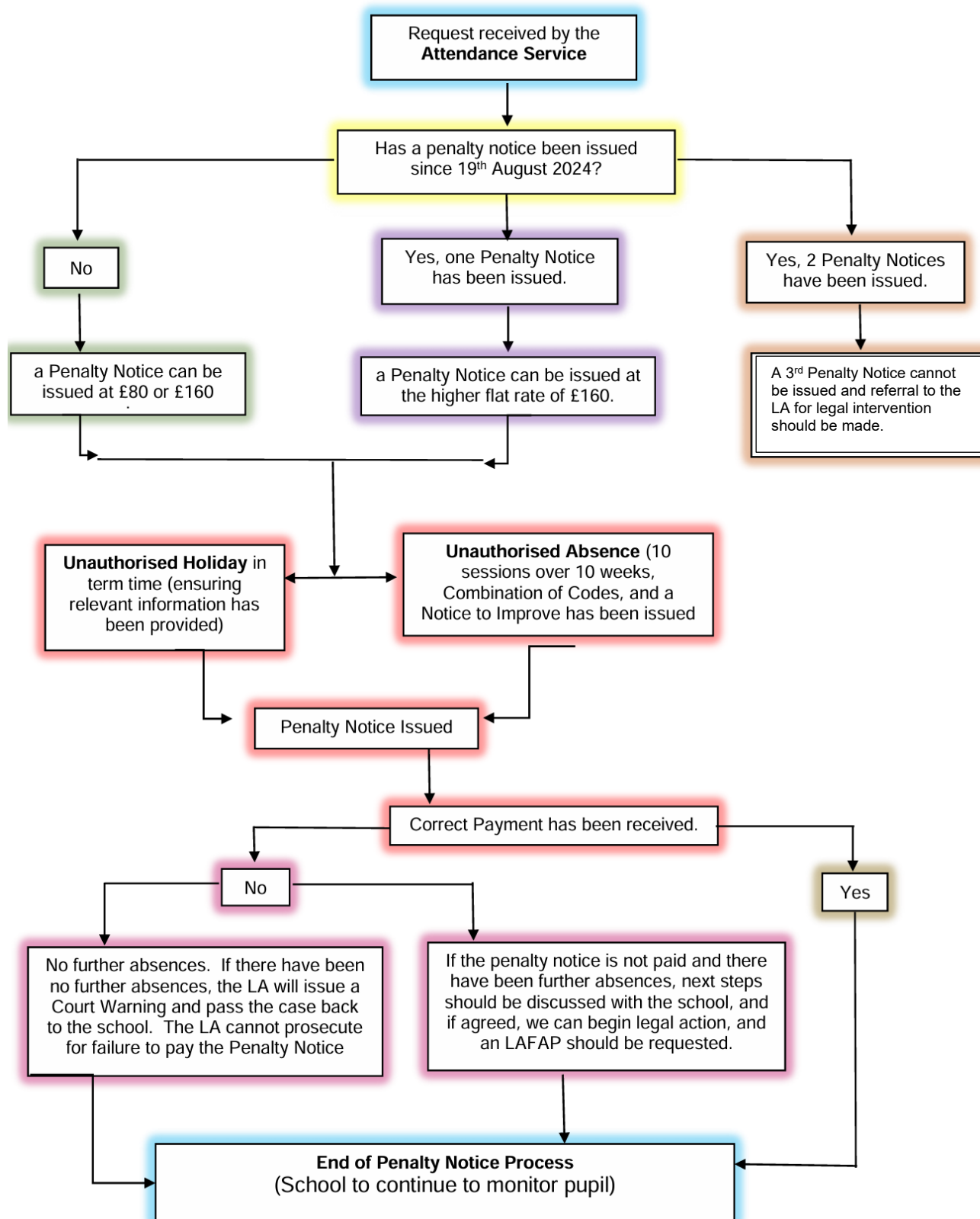
Headteachers should be certain that a Penalty Notice is appropriate before making the request and must provide the supporting documents as requested within the referral form. Parents/carers will be directed back to the school where concerns or questions are raised regarding the reasons why the Penalty Notice has been issued. Requests are made directly by Headteachers, and the Attendance Service reviews each request on its own merits and subsequently only issue a Penalty Notice (PN) where the service feels it is appropriate and justified. When the local authority has reviewed the request but cannot issue the Penalty Notice, Headteachers will be advised by email.

#### Holidays in term time

Changes to the registration codes introduced in August 2024 removed the authorised holiday code. This means from September 2024 Headteachers will not be able to use the H registration code for authorising holidays in term time. A Notice to Improve letter is not required to have been issued by the school when an unauthorised holiday of a minimum of five consecutive school days or more has been taken during term time (G code has been recorded).

Where this is applicable, the school can request a penalty notice without having to issue a Notice to Improve letter to parents/carers. The local authority will exercise discretion and consider issuing a penalty notice if appropriate.

## Penalty Notice Flowchart



## Appendix 1 – Stage 1 Letter – 96%-92%

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### Absences from school

We are writing to let you know that your child's attendance has recently declined and is currently ...%, which means they have missed ... days of school.

If there is something that is affecting your child coming to school, please talk to their class teacher as we may be able to help. We want to make sure that we support you to help your child come to school every day.

### Did you know:

*If a child has 95% attendance at the end of the school year, this means they have missed 10 days over the school year, which is 2 weeks of learning and 45 lessons!*

| 190 Days of Education | 10 days missed        | 19 days missed        | 29 days missed                                | 37 days missed        | 47 days missed        |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                       | 180 Days of Education | 171 Days of Education | (Half a term missed)<br>161 Days of Education | 153 Days of Education | 143 days of Education |
| 100%                  | 95%                   | 90%                   | 85%                                           | 80%                   | 75%                   |

If your child's absence has been authorised, then please do not worry. This letter is just to let you know your child's current attendance percentage.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Letter – below 92%

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

We are writing to let you know that your child's attendance has declined further and is currently ...%, which means they have missed ... days of school. We are concerned about the impact this is having on their education.

### Did you know:

*If a child has 90% attendance at the end of the school year, this is the equivalent to missing 19 days over the school year, which is 4 weeks of learning and 95 lessons!*

| 190 Days of Education | 10 days missed        | 19 days missed        | 29 days missed<br>(Half a term missed) | 37 days missed        | 47 days missed        |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                       | 180 Days of Education | 171 Days of Education | 161 Days of Education                  | 153 Days of Education | 143 days of Education |
| 100%                  | 95%                   | 90%                   | 85%                                    | 80%                   | 75%                   |

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and welfare, and we would like to support you to improve their attendance. We recognise that it can be hard to be in school every day for a range of reasons.

To support, you are invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting on [date] at [time] to discuss any challenges that you may be facing, bring any medical evidence to support your child's absence and discuss how we can work in partnership to help improve [child] attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, please contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged. Unfortunately, if you do not attend this meeting and [name] absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority for further action.

We look forward to working with you to improve your child's attendance. This will have a positive impact on their learning.

We will look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,  
Headteacher

### Appendix 3 – Stage 3 Letter – 90% or below

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

We are writing to inform you that your child's attendance is now...%, which moves them into the **'Persistently Absent'** category. This is very concerning, and it will have a significant impact on your child's education.

#### Did you know:

*If a child has 85% attendance at the end of the school year, this is the equivalent to missing 29 days over the school year, which is 6 weeks of learning and 145 lessons!*

*This is the same as missing a whole half term of school!*

|                              |                       |                       |                                               |                       |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>190 Days of Education</b> | <b>10 days missed</b> | <b>19 days missed</b> | <b>29 days missed</b><br>(Half a term missed) | <b>37 days missed</b> | <b>47 days missed</b> |
|                              | 180 Days of Education | 171 Days of Education | 161 Days of Education                         | 153 Days of Education | 143 days of Education |
| 100%                         | 95%                   | 90%                   | 85%                                           | 80%                   | 75%                   |

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and welfare. You are invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting on [date] at [time] to discuss any challenges that you may be facing, bring any medical evidence and discuss how we can work in partnership to help improve [child] attendance. At this meeting we will also be exploring how an Attendance Contract can provide effective support to improve your child's attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, please contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged. Unfortunately, if you do not attend this meeting and [name] absence continues to deteriorate, we may need to make a formal referral to the local authority to explore the need for statutory intervention.

We look forward to seeing a significant improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

### **Appendix 3a – Stage 3 Attendance Contract Letter**

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

Thank you for attending the School Attendance Meeting on [date].

We hope you found this meeting beneficial and that the actions discussed and agreed have a positive impact on your child's attendance.

Please find attached a copy of your Attendance Contract.

Our school attendance team will liaise with you directly to review the impact this contract is having on [name] attendance and organise regular review meetings with you directly.

We have to make you aware that if [name] absence continues to deteriorate, we may need to make a formal referral to the local authority to explore the need for statutory intervention.

Thank you for your co-operation. We look forward to seeing a significant improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 3b – Stage 3 Attendance Contract

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>    |  |
| <b>Current Attendance:</b> |  |

| Enter the name of the pupil(s) |  |                    |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| <b>Name of pupil:</b>          |  | <b>School:</b>     |  |
| <b>Date of Birth:</b>          |  | <b>Year Group:</b> |  |
|                                |  |                    |  |
| <b>Name of pupil:</b>          |  | <b>School:</b>     |  |
| <b>Date of Birth:</b>          |  | <b>Year Group:</b> |  |

| <b>Invitees: (List all at meeting)</b> | <b>Role &amp; Organisation:</b> | <b>Attended? (Y/N)</b> |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
|                                        |                                 |                        |
|                                        |                                 |                        |
|                                        |                                 |                        |
|                                        |                                 |                        |

| <b>Family Information: Details siblings should be requested if the school does not hold this information.</b> |  |                |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| <b>Siblings:</b>                                                                                              |  |                |  |
| <b>Name:</b>                                                                                                  |  | <b>Name:</b>   |  |
| <b>DoB:</b>                                                                                                   |  | <b>DoB:</b>    |  |
| <b>School:</b>                                                                                                |  | <b>School:</b> |  |

| <b>WHY ARE WE HERE?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact on this CYP's academic progress, social development, behaviour, and emotional well-being – what are we seeing/not seeing in school?</li> <li>The support offered by the school to date?</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

| <b>SCHOOL VIEWS –<br/>WHAT SUPPORT HAS WORKED/WOULD WORK/WHY?</b>                | <b>SCHOOL VIEWS –<br/>WHAT HAS NOT WORKED/WOULD NOT WORK/WHY?</b>                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ul> |

| <b>PARENT/CARER VIEWS</b> – What would they like to happen? What support do they feel is required? | <b>CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S VIEWS</b> – How do they feel about school? Can they explain barriers to attendance? What would they like to happen? What support do they feel they need? |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                                                             |

| FAMILY NETWORKING:                                       |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Are there friends and family who can support the family? | Yes / No |
| Comments:                                                |          |

| OTHER KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED: (Please ensure you record any other issues/key points not captured above) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>                                                   |

| ATTENDANCE CONTRACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |          |                     |                                                 |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--|
| Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) Ensure actions support the family and child and note all support and actions on-going and new. Additional boxes can be added as required.                                                                                                                                    |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| What action will be taken?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | By When? | Who is responsible? | How will we know it is working? (Child focused) |  |
| This plan is the attendance contract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 1.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 5.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| I understand that, as parent/carer, I am legally responsible for ensuring my child's regular attendance at school. I agree with the content of these minutes and the plan, and it has been explained to me that this is an attendance contract, although not legally binding. Failure to adhere to the plan could result in a Notice to Improve being issued. |          |                     |                                                 |  |
| Signed:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |          | Review Date:        |                                                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                     |                                                 |  |

## Appendix 4 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

### Unauthorised absence

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance at school has not significantly improved. They have missed the following days of school:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (5 or more days). In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will now be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and we would like to support you to improve their attendance. You are therefore invited to attend a School Attendance Meeting on [date] at [time] to discuss any challenges that you may be facing and how we can work in partnership to help improve [child] attendance. At this meeting we will also be exploring how an Attendance Contract can provide effective support to improve your child's attendance too.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged. Unfortunately, if you do not attend this meeting and [name] absence continues to deteriorate, we will be seeking support from the local authority to explore the need for statutory intervention.

Thank you for your co-operation. We look forward to seeing a significant improvement in your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,  
[Name]  
Headteacher

## Appendix 5 – Absence Request Form

### Notes to parents/carers

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for **exceptional circumstances**. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child, you must seek the consent of the parent/carer who does, and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider requests from that parent/carer and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave
- The time and duration of the leave
- Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
- Your child's record of attendance
- **Learning that will be missed. It is not possible to send work away with the child.**

**WARNING: IF THE SCHOOL REFUSES YOUR REQUEST AND THE CHILD IS STILL TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL, THIS WILL BE RECORDED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND MAY MAKE YOU LIABLE TO A £80/£160 FINE.**

To the Headteacher:

|               |  |       |  |     |  |
|---------------|--|-------|--|-----|--|
| Name of child |  | Class |  | DOB |  |
| Name of child |  | Class |  | DOB |  |

to be authorised as being absent from school from ..... to ..... inclusive

|                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reason for request for absence during term time, clearly explaining the exceptional circumstances:</b> |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>                                                                  |

Signature of Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

☐ Authorised .....School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

☐ Absence dates \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

☐ Unauthorised .....School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

|                                    |  |                                                           |  |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Learning that will be missed       |  | No exceptional circumstances                              |  |
| The time and duration of the leave |  | Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods |  |
| Current attendance %               |  |                                                           |  |

Signed by Headteacher ..... Date .....

## Term Time Absence

**Important:** please read carefully the information below.

**Warning:** If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a £80/£160 Penalty fine, per parent/carer, per child.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by taking your holidays during school holidays.

| The Fact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | The Law                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents/carers may ask for term time leave for their child/ren. However, it is important that parents/carers carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed.</p> <p>Children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and may lead to a <b>£80/£160 fine per parent/carer, per child</b>.</p> | <p>The law does not say that parents/carers have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.</p> <p>However, in <b>exceptional circumstances</b> school may authorise, in advance. Please note requests for periods of leave that linked to holidays are <b>not deemed exceptional circumstances</b>. The request for leave must come from a parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll and inform the local authority unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent/carer to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that <b>Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances</b>. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.</p> <p><b>Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents/carers have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.</b></p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if possible)</li> <li>• Days of religious observance</li> <li>• Exceptional circumstance, such as bereavement</li> <li>• Seeing a parent/carer who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>• External examinations</li> <li>• When Traveller children go on the road with their parents/carers where the school is informed beforehand</li> </ul> | <p><b>Other absence from school will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For any type of shopping</li> <li>• Looking after siblings or unwell parents/carers</li> <li>• Minding the house</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Resting after a late night</li> <li>• Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>• Because holidays are cheaper in term time</li> <li>• More than one day for a family wedding</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

**The law requires schools to be open for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.

## Appendix 5a – Accepting a request for a leave of absence

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Your request for a leave of absence**

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I am able to agree to your request.

[Add any pupil/family specific reasons for this approval here e.g. 'I am sorry to hear]

We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please understand that whilst I have approved this request on this occasion, it does not guarantee that similar requests from you or other parents will be approved in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

## Appendix 5b – Declining a request for a leave of absence

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Your request for a leave of absence**

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I am afraid I cannot consent to your request and this absence will be marked as unauthorised.

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and regular attendance is essential to their successes.

Please be advised if you choose to proceed with this unauthorised absence, the school may seek support from the local authority to explore the need for statutory intervention.

Please note that each request is different, and this decision cannot be compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and it will not affect decisions in the future.

Yours sincerely,  
Headteacher

## Appendix 6a – After an unauthorised holiday (where the school has not been informed beforehand)

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Unexplained absence**

I'm writing to inform you that we have reason to believe that [name] was out of school between [date] and [date] for a term-time holiday.

You did not inform us of your child's intended absence. If no evidence of [name] being ill or another unavoidable cause can be supplied within 10 school days, the absence will be unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be requested for unauthorised holiday during term time.

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and regular attendance is essential to their successes.

I have the authority to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances, and unfortunately a holiday is not considered to come under those circumstances. We request that you consult the school before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from school.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 6b – After an unauthorised holiday (Statutory School Age Only)

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Holiday absence**

I'm writing with regards to your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

As a school, our main concern is your child's education and regular attendance is essential to their successes.

I have the authority to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances, and a holiday is not considered to come under those circumstances. Although you consulted the school before taking this term-time holiday, the school informed you that this would not be authorised.

*Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) for questions to consider when making this decision):*

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice.

When you receive the notice, you must pay:

£80, if it's paid within 21 days

£160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

*Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached:*

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in our school attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

Continue with:

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,  
Headteacher

## Appendix 7 – Concern about punctuality

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [Name of Parent/Carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Punctuality concerns**

We are writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

They arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

They also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

- [date]
- [date]
- [date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time].

Please note all children who arrive after registration closes will be marked using the U Code which will detrimentally affect your child's attendance percentage.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child does not miss learning. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice, if your child arrives late after the register closes in 10 sessions (5 days) in a rolling period of 10 weeks.

To support, you are invited to attend a Punctuality Meeting on [date] at [time] to discuss any challenges that you may be facing and how we can work in partnership to help improve [child] punctuality.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

Thank you for your co-operation. We look forward to seeing a significant improvement in your child's punctuality.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

Headteacher

## Appendix 8 – Improved attendance

(Please note each parent/carer must receive an individually addressed letter, regardless of who the child lives with)

«date\_of\_printing»

«addressee»

«address\_block»

Dear [name of parent/carer]

Re «forename» «surname»

### **Well done [name]!**

We are writing to inform you that [name] has done a great job of improving their attendance at school!

Since [date], their attendance rate has improved from [percentage] to [percentage] - this is equal to [number] days of education no longer being missed.

Well done to [name] and to you at home for your support.

*[If you have any schemes to reward pupils for improving their attendance, explain how the pupil will be rewarded here.]*

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## Appendix 9 - Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

| Code                                           | Definition                                                                          | Scenario                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>I</b>                                       | Present (am)                                                                        | Pupil is present at morning registration                                                                                               |
| <b>\</b>                                       | Present (pm)                                                                        | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                                                                             |
| <b>L</b>                                       | Late arrival                                                                        | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                                                                          |
| <b>Attending a place other than the school</b> |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>K</b>                                       | 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 |
| <b>V</b>                                       | Attending an educational visit or trip                                              | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school                                                              |
| <b>P</b>                                       | Participating in a sporting activity                                                | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school                                                        |
| <b>W</b>                                       | Attending work experience                                                           | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement                                                                                      |
| <b>B</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                     |
| <b>D</b>                                       | Dual registered                                                                     | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered                                                         |
| <b>Absent - leave of absence</b>               |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>C1</b>                                      | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school                                           |
| <b>M</b>                                       | Medical/dental appointment                                                          | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                                                                            |
| <b>J1</b>                                      | Interview                                                                           | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment                                                           |
| <b>S</b>                                       | Study leave                                                                         | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination                                                              |

|                                                                      |                                             |                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>X</b>                                                             | Not required to be in school                | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend                                                                               |
| <b>C2</b>                                                            | Part-time timetable                         | Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable                                                                                 |
| <b>C</b>                                                             | Exceptional circumstances                   | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances                                                                 |
| <b>Absent - other authorised reasons</b>                             |                                             |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>T</b>                                                             | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes                              |
| <b>R</b>                                                             | Religious observance                        | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance                                                                                      |
| <b>I</b>                                                             | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)                                                     |
| <b>E</b>                                                             | Suspended or excluded                       | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made                                                |
| <b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b> |                                             |                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Q</b>                                                             | 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         |
| <b>Y1</b>                                                            | 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 |
| <b>Y2</b>                                                            | Widespread disruption to travel             | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency                |
| <b>Y3</b>                                                            | 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                    |
| <b>Y4</b>                                                            | Whole school site unexpectedly closed       | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)                                                      |
| <b>Y5</b>                                                            | Criminal justice detention                  | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:                                                                                                     |

|                                      |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      |                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul> |
| <b>Y6</b>                            | Public health guidance or law               | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law                                                                                              |
| <b>Y7</b>                            | Any other unavoidable cause                 | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Absent - unauthorised absence</b> |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>G</b>                             | Holiday not granted by the school           | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school                                                                                                                           |
| <b>N</b>                             | Reason for absence not yet established      | Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes                                                                                                                             |
| <b>O</b>                             | 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                                    |
| <b>U</b>                             | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session                                                                                                                |
| <b>Administrative codes</b>          |                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Z</b>                             | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>#</b>                             | Planned whole-school closure                | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays                                                                                                             |