



St Mary's C of E First Academy

Primary Attendance and Absence Policy

Policy approved by the LAC (Local Academy Committee) on:

Signed  _____ Chair of LAC

Date: 18 MAY 2026

Signed  _____ Trust Headteacher

Date: 18 MAY 2026

Policy will be reviewed by the LAC by: September 2028

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**Throughout this policy any reference to 'parent/s' refers to the person or people with Parental Responsibility.*

Statement of intent

St Mary's CofE Primary Academy believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

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

Our vision and values encompass our approach for our academy and its community:

We love and value each member of the St. Mary's family as precious individuals. Our outward-looking curriculum enables everyone to embrace life in all its fullness while celebrating the everyday and the unique. Through our Christian values of belief, respect and friendship we:

'Shine as a Light in the World'. Matthew 5:16

Belief, Respect, Friendship

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

We are committed to:

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

The school's attendance officer is Miss Watts who can be contacted via office@st-marys-wheatonaston.staffs.sch.uk Staff and parents will be expected to contact the office for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices 2024

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board (Local Academy Committee – LAC) has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and LA.
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.

- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The Trust Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the LAC
- Ensuring good attendance is a priority and suitable members of staff have a role in monitoring.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them where a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school's admission register outside of standard transition times.
- Providing the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been classed as unauthorised.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Working with parents of pupils with SEND to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where pupils with SEND face barriers within school.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

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

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.

Children are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent and advising when it is expected that their child will return.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason (eg waiting for a delivery, going for a family day out, going for a haircut, term time cheap flights, parent's illness)
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the last 12 months for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for children's attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and children.

Children will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **9:00am**, and children will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, the gate will be open from **8.40am**.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am**. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The morning register will close at **9:15am**. Children will receive a mark of absence if they arrive after this time.

Children will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of that day. It is also a time for children to settle down by reading or another quiet activity so they are ready for lessons immediately after registration.

Morning registration is at **9.00am**. We encourage children to arrive into school for **8.40am**. Your child will be registered as 'late' if they arrive after **9.00 am**.

Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and are often embarrassing for your child. They also result in lost learning which builds up to have a negative impact on learning and progress. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

Arrival after the close of registration (9.15am) will be marked as an unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DFE guidance. Please note these unauthorised late absences can also result in a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority. (See Penalty Notice notes.)

All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report, should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns with other agencies.

5. Absence procedures – stages

- A) Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or email before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.
- B) Where a child is absent, our **first day contact procedures** ensure we establish the reason for your child's absence. If we do not hear from you on the first day of absence by **9.15am**, we will contact all of the numbers provided to us to establish your child's safety. If we cannot establish this confirmation of safety, we may conduct a home visit, and then seek advice from the Local Authority / Safeguarding Team / the Police as a last resort.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- C) Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Local Authority Safeguarding team / Education Welfare Worker.
 - D) If a pupil's attendance drops below **96 percent**, the Trust Headteacher will be informed and a Letter 1 will be issued in the first instance.

- E) If absence below 96% does not improve following Letter 1 and half-termly monitoring, a meeting will be held with parents and the Trust Headteacher to explore the reasons for the absence and strategies to support the child/family to improve attendance.
- F) If absence has not improved following Letter 1 and a meeting, parents will receive Letter 2. The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a child is absent due to illness; however, at this stage, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.
- G) Through all of the above, the school will work closely with the family (and any outside agencies) to support good attendance.
- H) Referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Worker

If, despite support from school, attendance difficulties cannot be improved, the school will then consider a referral to the Education Welfare Worker, Local Support Team, and Staffordshire County Council. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the Education Welfare Workers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents (under the Education Act 1996 s444 (or s4441a,) or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment.

- I) Where a pupil does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school will work jointly with the LA to carry out reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the pupil's whereabouts. In conducting these enquiries, the school and it's LA will liaise with the Home LA. If, following these enquiries, the pupil's name is removed from the school's admission register, the Home LA will be expected to investigate whether the pupil should be classified as a child missing education

Colour Coded Attendance Guidance

We have found this to be a good visual indicator to parents of the meaning of their child's level of attendance. We would like all of our pupils to achieve the 'green' category of attendance, where possible. Our aim for this high level of attendance links the importance of attendance with children's potential learning and attainment.

100% attendance	A fantastic attendance level.
96% and above	This is our target for all pupils.
Below 96%	A concern – absences can affect your child's progress with learning.
90% or less	Persistent Absentee – (as defined by the DfE). This is the equivalent of up to 4 weeks off school or more / a day off school per fortnight. Your child's attendance will be closely monitored and considered for further action. Penalty Notices can be issued for persistent absence. Note all cases are looked at on an individual basis and some children are unable to avoid lower attendance due to genuine circumstances.

6. Attendance register

The school uses Bromcom (electronic management information system) to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience

- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Trust Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Trust Headteacher in accordance with the DfE guidance, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Trust Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete a Leave of Absence Request form available from the school office and return to the school at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Where a child does not reside with both parents, it is the responsibility of the parent making the request to inform the other parent. The school will send a letter to the parent making the request informing them if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Trust Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

Holidays are NOT exceptional circumstances.

The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application.

**DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 - the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.*

Do not assume that because permission was given for someone else, you will be given permission as well. Every request will be treated on its own merits and the full circumstances will not be made public.

Alongside your request of leave for 'exceptional' circumstances, we may require written evidence/confirmation of the detail of the exceptional circumstances eg information from your employer / evidence of an exceptional one off occasion. We require the evidence of why the leave of absence cannot take place during the school 13-week holiday periods.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot always grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance may be marked as unauthorised. When this occurs, the school will send a letter stating that we suspect a holiday and give parents 5 school days to provide an explanation as to why the leave was taken and for us to consider if the leave will be authorised or unauthorised.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices are fines, only issued by the Local Support Team, on behalf of the Local Authority, for a child's unauthorised absence from school. This unauthorised absence can be due to unauthorised leave of absence, persistent absence that is unauthorised by the school or lateness after the registers have closed – marked as unauthorised.

Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence. (Per child.)

The penalty is £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid directly to the Local Authority.

Since 2024, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years, it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority will prosecute for the original offence, unless there are grounds to withdraw the notice.

St Mary's follows the Staffordshire Local Authority code of conduct for the procedures of Penalty Notices - *The LA will consider, and issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to any unauthorised leave of absence (including family holidays).*

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable and provide evidence for the appointment. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Parents travelling for occupational purposes

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any

contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The school will seek medical evidence for recording absences in a minority of cases. Where a pupil's health need means that they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, the school will seek medical evidence to better understand the need of the pupil.

9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 01:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil will only have permission to leave the school during the day with a responsible adult and must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Trust Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Absent Pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school and are in the care of a responsible adult. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Trust Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Trust Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Trust Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The Trust Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

11. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officers, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Initial informal discussions with parents
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a half-termly review.
 - Arranging meetings with parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with section 5 of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Termly letters to parents.
- Weekly class reward – Attendance Ted, our school bear, visits the class with the highest attendance for that week. This class also gets 10 minutes extra playtime.
- Agreed reward for whole year 100%

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

12. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Trust Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, staff will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance staff will work with the Trust Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

13. Persistent Absence (PA)

Definition - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the last 12 months for any reason.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school carefully monitors the attendance of these particular groups of children and will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with children and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

14. Legal intervention and penalty notices

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Whether support is available in this case: It not, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued, whilst also having considerations to the other conditions detailed in this section of the policy.
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour, or if further support or other legal intervention is more appropriate.
- Whether issuing a penalty notice in this case is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, such as if the pupil has a disability.
- Holding a formal meeting with parents
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Trust Headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

15. Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.

- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to SLT to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The LAC will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Trust Headteacher will report attendance to St Chad's Academies Trust on a termly basis and be held accountable for improving attendance and reducing PA.

17. Training of staff

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, specific staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The LAC will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The LAC will ensure dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training

regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

19. Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 per cent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found in newsletters and on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Trust Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2028.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

