# Excalibur Academies Trust

## Attendance Policy

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[Note this is a centralised policy which is localised by each of our academies. Please see the localised policy for each academy on their websites.]

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## Review

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| Annually | September 2026 | James Barnes | July 2027 |

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# Attendance Policy and Procedures for EASTON ROYAL ACADEMY

## Part A – Policy:

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Attendance is a priority for Excalibur Academies Trust. We are committed to empowering excellent attendance. We recognise the importance of using data insights, boosting attendance by partnering with parents, carers, and our communities, to ensure the highest levels of safeguarding and wellbeing. The trust's shared values 'ambitious, empowering and ethical' drive support for our wider attendance strategy.

1.2 It is the aim of EASTON ROYAL ACADEMY is that students should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of students and is an integral part of our school.

1.3 Some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents/carers and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

1.4 The principles of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

| **Support first approach** | |
|---|---|
| **Expect** | Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students 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 students 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 students and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues. |
| **Formalise support** | Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also |

| | |
|---|---|
| | in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order. |
| **Enforce** | 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 student's right to an education. |
| **The key principles of partnership working, as set out above, are in line with *Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024.*** | |

# 2. Aims

2.1 Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by ensuring every student has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

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

2.3 This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2.4 We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

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

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

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

2.7 We will do all we can to encourage our students to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any student who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

2.8 Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – or ask the school for printed copies.

2.9 We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all young people, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents/carers.

2.10 By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

2.10.1 Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.

2.10.2 Raise our student's awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

2.10.3 Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents/carers, students and staff.

2.10.4 Work in partnership with parents/carers, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.

2.10.5 Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

2.10.6 Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.11 Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in young people missing a significant number of lessons.

| **Attendance during school year** | **Days lost in a year** | **Which is approximately** |
|---|---|---|
| 95% | 9.5 Days | 2 Weeks |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 90% | 19 Days | 4 Weeks |
| 85% | 28.5 Days | 6 Weeks |
| 80% | 38 Days | 8 Weeks |
| 50% | 95 Days | 20 Weeks |

# 3. Safeguarding and Attendance

3.1 Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all students as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a student's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any student is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the student's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

# 4. Legislation and Guidance

4.1 This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

4.1.1 The Education Act 1996

4.1.2 The Children Act 1989

4.1.3 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

4.1.4 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

4.1.5 The Education and Inspections Act 2006

4.1.6 The Sentencing Act 2020

4.1.7 The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

4.1.8 The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

4.1.9 The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

4.1.10 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

4.2 The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

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

5.2 The school will ensure that data is monitored and analysed weekly for attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families, including by identifying early indicators of poor attendance and changes in attendance at individual pupil, cohort and year group level so that schools can intervene early. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and year groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026)

# 6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

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

6.2 We will support students and parents/carers 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 students and parents/carers to access any support they may need voluntarily.

6.3 Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

6.4 Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents/carers to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these

students face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

6.5 Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support students to reintegrate back into education to access full-time provision.

6.6 The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

# 7. Staff Training on Attendance

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

7.1.1 the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,

7.1.2 the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers

7.1.3 the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,

7.1.4 and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to students who need it.

7.2 For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include:

7.2.1 the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,

7.2.2 and any additional training that would be beneficial to support students and student cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

# Part B – What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

## 1. Contents of the Admissions Register

1.1 The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every student in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter student on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent/carer, that the student will attend.

1.2 A student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

1.3 It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, they are a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents/carers to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

## 2. Contents of Attendance Register

2.1 The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every student. Please refer to Working Together To Improve School Attendance for the code descriptors and also appendix 1 of this document. The school must record whether each student is:

2.1.1 Attending

2.1.2 Absent

2.2 Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard young people, improve attendance and is supported by the use of our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

## 3. Attendance and absence codes

3.1 Attending the School (and Lateness)

3.1.1 The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session of every school day, at the same time for all registered pupils

3.1.2 Students are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a student leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

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

3.1.4 The relevant Executive Principal will meet with parents/carers of those students who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

3.1.5 Our students must arrive by 08:40 am on each school day.

3.1.6 Our morning register is taken at 08:40 am and will be kept open until 09:10 am

3.1.7 Our afternoon register is taken at 13.15 pm

3.1.8 Our register is kept open for 30 minutes as stated in *Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024*

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

3.1.10 If a student arrives after the register has closed (09:10am) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the student is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

# 4. Effects of Late Arrival at School

4.1 When a young person arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Young people can often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

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

| **Minutes late per Day** | **Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year** |
|---|---|
| 5 mins | 3 Days |
| 10 mins | 6 Days |
| 15 mins | 9 Days |

| | |
|---|---|
| 60 mins | 36 Days |

# 5. Attending a place other than the school

5.1 Students are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

5.1.1 Code K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

5.1.2 Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

5.1.3 Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

5.1.4 Code W: Attending work experience

5.1.5 Code B: Attending any other approved education activity

5.1.6 Code D: Dual registered at another setting

5.2 Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of students attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the student. Our school should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the student's absence using the relevant absence code.

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

5.4 If a student is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the student attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual students, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a daily basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

# 6. Absent – Leave of absence

6.1 A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which

means the student absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

6.1.1 Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

6.1.2 Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

6.1.3 Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

6.1.4 Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

6.1.5 Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

6.1.6 Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

6.1.7 Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

6.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

6.2.1 Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a young person to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

6.2.2 If a student must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent/carer or another authorised adult, and signed out using the school's electronic system of recording students who may be required to leave school before the end of the school day. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental/carer confirmation.

6.2.3 Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card/letter/email – only then will the absence be authorised.

6.3 Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable

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

6.3.2 If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a student with a full-time education due to the student's needs, we will work with the student, parent/carer and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the student's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

6.3.3 Any use of a part-time timetable should be kept under review by the school, in discussion with the student and their parents/carers, to establish whether it continues to be in the best interests of the student.

6.4 Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

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

6.4.2 Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other **absence** for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with made by the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

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

6.4.4 Parents/carers should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about

possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols.

6.4.5 All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and the young person's Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6.5 Absent – other authorised reasons

6.5.1 Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

6.5.1.1 Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

6.5.1.2 Code R: Religious observance

6.5.1.3 Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

6.5.1.4 Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

6.5.2 Mobile pupil – Parent travelling for occupational purposes

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

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

6.5.2.3 Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are

subject to the same rules as other young people in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.5.3 Religious Observance

6.5.3.1 Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents/carers' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

# 7. Illness

7.1 Parents/carers should notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. When illness is reported by parents/carers, details of the actual symptoms should be given, e.g. 'my child has a high temperature'. When details are not given of actual symptoms e.g. 'my child is ill', schools may choose to unauthorise the absence(s).

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

7.3 Where illness absence is long-term or recurring, we shall work with families and other agencies to identify barriers to attendance and put support in place to address them.

7.4 The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)' 2026 which states
'Schools may request reasonable evidence where they have genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or when they are seeking to support pupils with prolonged or repeated patterns of illness. In such cases, medical evidence may play a role in supporting schools to better understand the pupil's health needs, inform what reasonable adjustment may need to be made and/or to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question.'

7.5 We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent/carer to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school

may seek parental/carer permission to contact the student's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual student.

7.6 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

7.7 Where a student has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s/carer/s aware of this expectation in advance.

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

7.9 In the case of absence please contact the school on the morning of each and every day of absence. You may contact the school regarding absence by:

7.9.1 Phoning the school on 01672 810477

7.9.2 Emailing the school on admin@eastonroyal.excalibur.org.uk

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

# 8. Absence due to medical conditions

8.1 Ambitions for children and young people with medical conditions to attend school should be the same as for any other pupil. Schools should have sensitive and non-judgmental conversations with students and their families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs. This support could include reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and/or support where mental health issues affect attendance. Schools should take a 'support first' approach when considering strategies to increase attendance.

8.2 Where students require frequent medical appointments or additional support interventions, these should be scheduled outside of the main school day wherever possible. School should work with the student and their parents/carers and the relevant healthcare professionals to the understand frequency, likely timings and length of medical appointments so that advance planning can help to minimise the impact on the student's education.

# 9. Mental Health and Wellbeing

9.1 Parents/carers who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the relevant Achievement Co-ordinator/Achievement Manager for further information on the support available.

9.2 Parents/carers should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

## 10. Students taken ill during the school day

10.1 If a student needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the student must be collected from the school office by a parent/carer or another authorised adult and signed out using the school's electronic system of recording students who may be required to leave school before the end of the school day. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental/carer confirmation.

## 11. Suspensions

11.1 Where a student is required to leave the school site due to a suspension, the school will follow the DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

11.2 If a student is present during registration and leaves the school site after the register has closed, their attendance record will reflect that they were present for that session. A separate record will be kept indicating the time that the student left the school site.

## 12. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

12.1 In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record students as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

12.1.1 Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements

12.1.2 Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

12.1.3 Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

12.1.4 Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

12.1.5 Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

12.1.6 Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

12.1.7 Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

12.1.8 Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

# 13. Absent – unauthorised absence

13.1 Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

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

13.3 Unauthorised absence includes:

13.3.1 Absences which have never been properly explained

13.3.2 Students who arrive at school too late to get a present/late mark

13.3.3 Shopping

13.3.4 Birthdays

13.3.5 Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered

13.3.6 Day trips

13.3.7 Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school).

13.3.8 In the case of term time leave - if a student is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised.

13.4 Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

13.4.1 Code G – Holiday not granted by the school

13.4.2 Code N – Reason for absence not yet established

13.4.3 Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances

13.4.4 Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

# 14. Administrative codes

14.1 Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

14.1.1 Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register

14.1.2 Code #: Planned whole school closure

# 15. First Day of Absence Response

15.1 Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents/carers by text, e-mail or telephone to try and establish the reason for a student's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will record the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code.

15.2 If we are concerned about a student's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s/carer/s, we may contact the student's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the student's whereabouts.

15.3 If we are not notified of the absence of a Child in Care, we will attempt to contact parents/carers by text, e-mail or telephone to try and establish the reason for a student's absence and if we are still not able to confirm the reasons for absence, we will inform the student's social worker and Virtual School of the absence concern.

15.4 Parents/carers will be asked to supply details of **at least three** people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on a regular basis through parents/carers evening events/newsletter reminders/personal data update requests.

15.5 If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the student, we may undertake our own 'safe and well' checks and/or request a Welfare Check from the police. Where 'safe and well' checks cannot take place at the family's home address, schools should consider using alternative strategies to ensure the well-being and safety of pupils. These may include conducting checks via MS Teams/Zoom (or similar), conducting checks at neutral venues (e.g. local cafes/parks) or supporting external agencies to conduct checks on behalf of the school.

# 16. Support for low School Attendance (other than unauthorised term-time leave)

16.1 Sometimes students can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents/carers and students to be open and honest with us about the reason

for the student's absence. If a young person is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent/carer to give in to pressure to let the young person stay at home. This can give the impression to the young person that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a student is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support student and parents/carers in the best way.

16.2 When we have concerns about the attendance of a student, we will do our best to make the parent/s/carer/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents/carers do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the student's relevant Achievement Co-ordinator/Achievement Manager to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

16.3 If our school refers a case of low school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s/carer/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

16.4 We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where low attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents/carers fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s/carer/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

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

## 17. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

17.1 Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered student at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents/carers who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent/carer but may have day to day care of the young person.

17.2 Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents/carers and young people. Each case is considered individually.

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

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

17.5 Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a student's irregular attendance.

17.6 A student's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

17.6.1 A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent/carer, per student payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent/carer, per student if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent/carer, per student if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.

17.6.2 Prosecution. Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Wilshire Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: Attendance and behaviour - Wiltshire Council or ask the school for printed copies.)

17.7 Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent/carer with responsibility for the student and are issued for each student with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents/carers with responsibility for the students, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

17.8 In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools.

17.9 Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

17.9.1 Parenting contracts

17.9.2 Education supervision orders

17.9.3 Attendance prosecution

17.9.4 Parenting orders

17.9.5 Fixed penalty notices

## 18. Children Missing Education (CME)

18.1 Our school will add and delete students from roll in line with the law. A student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

18.2 The school will follow Wiltshire's Education Welfare Service resource page | Right Choice (wiltshire.gov.uk), and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: pupilmove@Wiltshire.gov.uk

## 19. Following up Unexplained Absences

19.1 Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents/carers by email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a student's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a student's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s/carer/s, we may contact the student's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the student's whereabouts.

## 20. Reporting to Parents/Carers

20.1 Parent/carers are informed of their child's attendance levels via My Child at School (MCAS) which is available to all parents/carers and through the academic reports we publish twice in each academic year for every student at the school.

20.2 Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school will contact the parents/carers to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

## 21. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

21.1 Once we receive communication regarding a student's absence, this is recorded on the school's information management system Bromcom. The reason for absence e.g. Illness, is recorded using the agreed DfE codes.

## 22. Roles and Responsibilities

22.1 The school's named Senior Attendance Champion is Beck Stubbs, Executive Principal

22.2 All staff at the school receive annual training on promoting high attendance for all students. All staff are aware of the school's aim to develop a whole school culture to enable high attendance, through high expectations, positive communication and support.

22.3 The school regularly monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts that require support to improve their attendance. Effective strategies will be utilised to target the identified students/cohorts in need of attendance support.

22.4 Vulnerable cohorts are a particular focus of the monitoring and analysis of attendance and absence data. These cohorts include students who are disadvantaged, SEND and/or with social care involvement.

22.5 The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for the overall monitoring and analysis of attendance and absence data. They will be supported by other key members of the school's attendance and data teams to ensure data is accurate and regularly updated.

22.6 The Senior Attendance Champion will ensure data is shared with staff and will delegate the actions to be taken from the data analysis with relevant school staff and where necessary external agencies.

## 23. The Trust Board and Academy Committees

23.1 The Trust Board is accountable for monitoring attendance for the whole Trust. It holds the Executive to account for the effective implementation of this policy. The Executive in turn hold the principal to account for implementation at school level. The Academy Committee receive attendance data through the SEF.

## 24. The Executive Principal

24.1 The Executive Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring and reporting school-level absence data.

24.2 The Executive Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## 25. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

25.1 The DSL is made aware of overall attendance and absence analysis through the sharing of regular attendance and absence updates. The DSL is aware of individual attendance and absence concerns through the school's method of recording of safeguarding concerns re attendance using the school's CPOMS system.

## 26. Attendance Officer

26.1 The Attendance Officer:

26.1.1 Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level.

26.1.2 Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.

26.1.3 Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.

26.1.4 Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team) and advises the Principal as requested.

## 27. Class Teachers

27.1 Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class Teachers are also responsible for promoting high attendance for all students through supporting a whole school culture of high attendance through high expectations, positive communication and support.

## 28. Office Staff

28.1 In addition to absence notifications being communicated with the school via email, school office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system. In addition, school office staff are expected to support the recording of student's attendance/absence when a student arrives late after registration closes and when a student may need to leave the school before the end of the school day e.g. to attend an arranged medical/dentist appointment.

## 29. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

29.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing in line with the Trust Scheme of Delegation and policy framework or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance.

## 30. Links with other policies

30.1 This policy is linked to the following internal school/EAT policies:

30.1.1 Anti-Bullying Policy

30.1.2 Behaviour Policy

30.1.3 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

30.1.4 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

30.1.5 SEND Policy

30.1.6 Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy

## 31. Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

31.1 Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024) Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

31.2 Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

31.3 Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

31.4 Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023) Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

31.5 Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023) Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (publishing.service.gov.uk)

31.6 Keeping Children Safe in Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

31.7 School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE July 2026) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

31.8 School census guidance and regulation https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

31.9 Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE May 20026) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

# Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

| **Attending** | |
|---|---|
| / \ | Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session |
| L | Late arrival before the register is closed |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity |
| W | Attending work experience |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| D | Dual registered at another school |
| **Absent – Leave of absence** | |
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. |
| M | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** | |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes |
| R | Religious observance |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes** | |
| Q | Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** | |
| G | Holiday not granted by the school |
| N | Reason for absence not yet established |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed |
| **Administrative Codes** | |
| Z | Prospective pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole school closure |

# Appendix 2 – Our setting's graduated response to attendance

Pre phase 1 – parents are informed of their child's attendance and relevant comparative information on a data report x3 each year.

Phase 1 – parents will receive a letter from school when their child's attendance falls to 90% or below, giving their child's attendance certificate and letting them know their child meets the criteria for 'persistent absence'. Support offered.

Phase 2 – at the next attendance review (6 weeks), if attendance has not improved, parents will receive a second letter requesting an in-person meeting to discuss attendance and support.

Phase 3 - at the next attendance review (6 weeks), if attendance has not improved, parents will receive a third letter requesting an in-person, minuted meeting to put a formal attendance plan in place with a review date.

Phase 4 - at the next attendance review (6 weeks), if attendance has not improved in line with the action plan, parents will receive a fourth letter requesting a second in-person, minuted meeting to review and adjust the plan as needed.

Phase 5 – at the next attendance review (6 weeks), if attendance has not improved in line with the action plan, parents will receive a letter to let them know school will make a referral to Wiltshire Education Welfare Services. Education Welfare Services will then contact parents directly and put further attendance goals and support in place.