RMGS
Attendance Policy

September 2026

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Contents

1 Aims 4

2 Legislation and guidance 4

3 Roles and responsibilities 5

3.1 Local Governing Body 5

3.2 The headteacher/head of school 7

3.3 The Trust Attendance lead/Best Practice Attendance team 7

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance 8

3.5 The school attendance officer 9

3.6 Class teachers and/or form tutors 10

3.7 School admin/office staff 10

3.8 Parents 10

3.9 Pupils ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

4 Recording attendance 11

4.1 Attendance register 11

4.2 Unplanned absence 12

4.3 Planned absence 13

4.4 Lateness and punctuality 13

4.5 Following up unexplained absence 13

4.6 Reporting to parents 14

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence 15

5.1 Approval for term-time absence 15

5.2 Sanctions 16

Penalty notices 17

Notices to improve 18

6 Strategies for promoting attendance 18

7 Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school 19

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance 19

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND 19

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy/unavoidable period of absence 19

8 Attendance monitoring 20

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance 22

8.1 Monitoring attendance 22
8.2 Analysing attendance 22
8.3 Using data to improve attendance 23
8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence 23
9 Monitoring arrangements 24
10 Links with other policies 24

1 Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026), through our whole-trust culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance that every child is in school every day that the school is open.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Schools will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (updated July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the national framework changes applying from August 2024

It also refers to:

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

This policy also complies with our Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Local Governing Body

The local governing body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authorities
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
    - Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
    - Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
    - Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
    - Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or

cohorts who need it most, through regular monitoring and reports in Governor meetings (3 times per academic year).

- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, support school leaders in the development of an action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The legal requirements for keeping registers
    - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Having an awareness of sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust through the Best Practice group which provides regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Holding the headteacher/head of school to account for the implementation of this policy
- Appointing a Link Governor for Attendance

3.2 The headteacher/head of school

The headteacher/head of school is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary and/or authorising Mrs Emma Horstrup and Mrs Jess Caro to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The Trust Attendance lead/Best Practice Attendance team

The Trust Attendance lead/Best Practice Attendance team is responsible for:

- Supporting consistent implementation of this policy across all Trust schools
- Analysing Trust and school-level attendance, persistent absence and severe absence data to identify strengths, emerging risks and priorities
- Supporting schools to interpret MIS, DfE and View Your Education Data (VYED) attendance information, including Attendance Summary and Similar Schools Comparison Reports

- Providing targeted support to schools where attendance is below expectation, where pupil-group gaps are significant, or where improvement is not sufficiently rapid
- Supporting leaders to complete attendance self-evaluation, identify a small number of priorities and develop focused improvement plans
- Carrying out attendance reviews where appropriate, including review of systems, leadership oversight and samples of persistent and severe absence cases
- Reviewing progress against agreed actions and helping schools adapt approaches where impact is limited
- Leading the Trust Attendance Best Practice Team and sharing effective practice, resources and professional development across schools
- Acting as a central contact point for attendance queries and signposting schools to DfE, local authority and other external support where appropriate
- Providing Trust leaders and Trustees with an overview of attendance trends, strengths, risks and improvement priorities

Accountability for attendance remains with the Headteacher/Head of School and the school's Senior Attendance Champion. The Trust Attendance Lead provides challenge, guidance, capacity-building and additional support to help schools implement this policy effectively.

The Trust Attendance Lead is Mr Adrian Oldershaw and can be contacted via oldershawa@aletheiatrust.org.uk

3.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

Each school must have a designated a senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') who is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Emma Horstrup

3.5 The school attendance officer

The school attendance officer at each school is responsible for:

- Carrying out first day calling for children where no reason for absence has been provided.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher/head of school
- Working with other agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/member of staff authorised by the headteacher, when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Jess Caro and can be contacted via telephone number and/or email address.

3.6 Class teachers and/or form tutors

All class teachers and/or form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis.

3.7 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls and respond to emails/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer/ head of year/pastoral lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Carry out first day calling for children where no reason for absence has been provided.

3.8 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before time, e.g. 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Keep to any attendance contracts/agreements that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting <insert name/role, such as head of year, pastoral lead or family liaison officer>, who can be contacted via telephone number and/or email address

4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

Schools will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Schools will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school day starts at 8.35am and ends at 3.05pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 9.05am– not longer than 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.20pm and will be kept open until 12.50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by time, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school Absence Team, who can be contacted via telephone number (01634 308609) and/or email address (absencereporting@rmet.org) or by messaging via Arbor (Guardian In App message service).

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for absence evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence (for example, appointment card, screenshot of appointment reminder etc.)

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

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence in advance of the requested absence in writing to the Attendance Officer. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- All "late" students need to enter through reception to sign in.
- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If persistent lateness to school or lessons is identified, it will be followed up, promptly. Schools will work with the pupil and their family to identify the reasons for the persistent absence and offer appropriate support.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit OR contact the Local Authority for advice.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Local Authority.
- Where the school feels there is a safeguarding concern, they may contact the police or Children's Social Services to carry out a welfare check
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or action other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.8 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels in various ways throughout the year.

The school will also include attendance data on pupil reports and at Parent Consultations and it may be available on school-based apps.

5 Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The headteacher/head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

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

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with this policy, in writing to the headteacher/head of school. Additional evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Where a child has no fixed abode, absence may be authorised when parent(s) are travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers (this is not an exhaustive list). Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school

- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)

- Attending provision arranged by the local authority

- Attending work experience

- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to help improve attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

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

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

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

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

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

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

Notices to improve

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

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

Excellent attendance is expected of all students attending [name of school]. We use rewards as well as interventions to promote the importance of attendance. A variety of strategies are used to work with both parents/carers and our students.

The school's approaches include:

- Letters and certificates
- Celebration assemblies
- Reward points

7 Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

At Rainham Mark Grammar School we take an individualised approach towards pupils with complex barriers to attendance. We work with parents and the student to identify in-school barriers and agree strategies to improve attendance on a case-by-case basis e.g. EBSA. We will draw on our own inclusion team and pastoral leaders to support the student and make use of appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

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

Rainham Mark Grammar School we take an individualised approach towards pupils who are absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their SEND. We work with parents and the student to identify in-school barriers and agree strategies to improve attendance on a case-by-case basis e.g. using EBSA or ELSA. We will draw on our own inclusion team and pastoral leaders to support the student and make use of appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

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

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

At Rainham Mark Grammar School we take an individualised approach towards pupils who are returning to school after a lengthy absence. We work with parents and the student to identify in-school barriers and agree strategies to reintegrate back into school life. These situations are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. We will draw on our own inclusion team and pastoral leaders to support the student and make use of appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

Pupils on Personalised (reduced) Timetables

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

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible. Our school will submit all signed reduced timetable agreements to the Local Authority (LA) in line with LA policies.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Rainham Mark Grammar School will add and remove pupils from the admissions register in accordance with Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name may only be lawfully removed from the register if one of the specific conditions outlined in Regulation 9 applies.
Where the school has concerns that a pupil may be missing education or has potentially moved out of their Local Authority, we will consult with our Local Authority Attendance Officer within five school days. In line with safeguarding responsibilities, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts. These may include:

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

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

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

Please see a list of support agencies in Appendix 2

8 Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence daily.

Parents and carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to contact the school every day before time if their child is absent from school.

The school will always contact parents/carers on the first day of absence (first-day calling).

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continues, Schools will consider involving a School Liaison Officer from Kent/Medway County Council.
Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

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

The severe absence threshold is 50%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 50%, the pupil will be classified as a severe absentee.
At this point, contact will be made with external agencies and Children's Social Services.

Pupil-level absence data is collected and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Attendance data is used for monitoring and tracking to identify individual pupils or groups whose absence may be a cause for concern. This enables us to monitor closely and support necessary improvement.

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 95% to 96% attendance - emerging concern. Review patterns and causes early, communicate with families where appropriate and put proportionate support in place before absence becomes persistent.
- 90% to 94.9% attendance - increased concern. Review the pupil's attendance history and barriers, agree targeted actions with the family and monitor impact closely.
- Below 90% attendance - the pupil is persistently absent and requires a clear, regularly reviewed plan. At or below 50% attendance - the pupil is severely absent and should receive intensive, coordinated support, including external agency involvement where appropriate.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE.

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

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The Trust/school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools
- The Trust Attendance Lead will use this analysis to identify schools, cohorts and pupil groups that may benefit from additional support and to coordinate Trust-wide improvement activity.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The Trust/school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The Trust/school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

9 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of Trustees.

10 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

- Other

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The school will use attendance codes in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current Department for Education guidance. Attendance codes will be applied consistently across the Trust and reviewed whenever national guidance is updated.

Present and Approved Educational Activity Codes

Code	Description
/	Present at school during morning registration
\	Present at school during afternoon registration
L	Arrived late before register closed
B	Attending an approved off-site educational activity
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
P	Participating in an approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience

Authorised Absence Codes

Code	Description
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment

E Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made

I Illness (including physical and mental health illness)

J1 Interview for employment, college or another educational setting

M Medical or dental appointment

Q Unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Parent travelling for occupational purposes

X Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend

Unable to Attend Due to Exceptional Circumstances

Code	Description
Y1	Transport normally provided is unavailable
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of the school premises unexpectedly closed
Y4	Whole school unexpectedly closed
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Other unavoidable cause affecting the pupil

Unauthorised Absence Codes

Code	Description

G Holiday or leave of absence not authorised by the school

N Reason for absence not yet established (must be amended within 5 school days)

O Absent in other or unknown circumstances

U Arrived after the register closed

Administrative Codes

Code Description

Z Prospective pupil not yet on admission register

Planned whole-school closure (e.g. school holidays, INSET days, polling station closure)

Use of Attendance Codes

The school will ensure:

- Attendance codes are applied in accordance with DfE guidance.
- Appropriate evidence is retained where required.
- Registers are amended within statutory timescales.
- B, K and Y7 codes are supported by appropriate notes and records.
- Attendance coding for alternative provision and off-site education complies with current DfE requirements.
- Attendance code usage is periodically audited to ensure consistency and compliance.

Appendix 2: Support Agencies

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

Support for children with additional needs

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

- Mencap offers expert advice and support for children with learning disabilities, as well as their parents and carers.
- The National Autistic Society provides valuable resources and support for parents or carers.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

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

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: NHS Children's Mental Health – Every Mind Matters or Young Minds advice for parents

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

Where to find mental health support for children

- The NHS offers advice on Mental health support for children and young people.
- Action for Children helps children and families look after their mental health with simple tools and support to feel better and cope with challenges.
- The Childhood Bereavement Network offers guidance on supporting a child through grief.
- Visit NHS - Advice for parents for support if you think your child may have an eating disorder.
- The Young Minds Parents Helpline offers parents free and confidential advice via phone, email, or webchat.
- Teachers, school nurses, social workers, and GPs can help you find the right support.

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

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

Where to get urgent help for mental health

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

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

Appendix 3 – School Process for Managing Attendance including Escalation Procedures

Start of term

1. Expectations for all staff shared by **TRUST ATTENDANCE LEAD (*TAL*)**
2. 'First Week All Week' communicated widely by **SCHOOL**
3. Attendance policy shared to all by **SCHOOL** and **SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION (*SAC*)**
4. A0. Attendance Guidance Letter & T0. Attendance Overview shared to all by **SCHOOL** to all families.

Daily

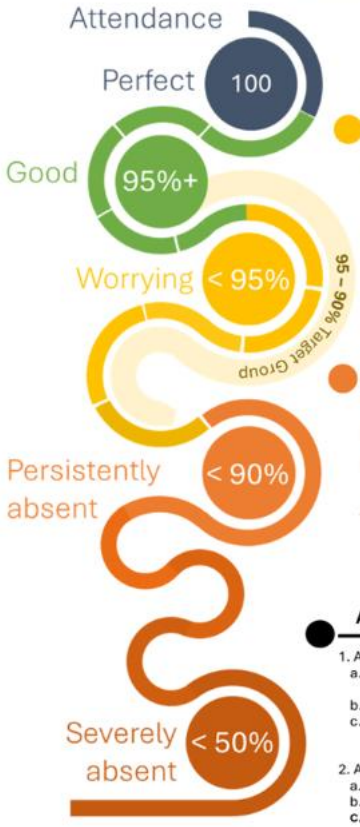
1. Registers completed by **TEACHERS**
2. Checking of registers by **ATTENDANCE OFFICER (AO)**
3. **ALL STAFF** are aware and share any school refusal behaviours, difficult transitions etc.
   a. **ALL STAFF** including **PASTORAL STAFF** engage with pupil & family to support

Weekly

1. Review of attendance tiers completed with AO & **SENIOR ATTENDANCE CHAMPION (SAC)**
2. Send T1.i. Weekly Attendance Update to all families by **SCHOOL**
3. **AO / SAC** share attendance updates with relevant form / pastoral staff

Termly

1. 'First Week All Week' communicated widely by **SCHOOL** & send T1.ii. Well Done First Week
2. Reshare A0. Attendance Guidance Letter & T0. Attendance Overview to all families
3. **AO / SAC** Identify and share the Attendance Tiers for the pupils
4. **AO** to send T1.iii. Well done 100% and T1.iv. Well done above 96% to relevant pupils.



Tier 1 - *Pupil Good or At Risk of not being good*

1. **AO / SAC** Identify '*At Risk Of Not Being Good*' pupils nearing 95%.
2. send T1.v. Target Group email to relevant pupils as early warning.

Tier 2 – *Pupils At Risk of being Persistently Absent*

1. **AO** sends T2.i. At Risk Advisory Letter
2. Set Two-week review for **AO** to monitor.
   a. Improvement seen – send T2.ii. Improvement seen letter
   b. No improvement seen – Arrange meeting with parent & send T2.iv. Attendance Support Surgery Invite letter
3. **Attendance Support Surgery** to listen and understand.
   a. Formalise support and A2. Attendance Contract agreed
   b. Send T2.iv. Medical Evidence letter.
4. Set **four-week review** for **AO** to monitor.
   a. Improvement seen – send T2.ii. Improvement seen letter
   b. No improvement - Consider **Early Help** & send T2.iii. No Improvement Seen and T2.iv. Attendance Support Surgery Invite letter to reengage and review contract.

Tier 3 – *Pupils reach Persistently Absent thresholds*

1. **AO** sends T3.i. PA Letter and arrange meeting with parent and send the T3.ii. Attendance Support Invite letter.
2. **Attendance Support Meeting** with **SAC** to listen and understand.
   a. Formalise support and A2. Attendance Contract reviewed and agreed.
3. Set **four-week review** for **AO** to monitor.
   a. Improvement seen – **AO** send T3.iii. Improvement seen letter
   b. No Improvement seen – **AO** send AX.vi. Notice to Improve
4. Set a **four –week review meeting** with **SAC**
   a. Improvement seen – **AO** send T3.iii. Improvement seen letter and extend Notice to improve and reissue the revised A2. Attendance Contract.
   b. No Improvement seen – **AO** send T3.iv. No Improvement seen Letter and make a referral issuing AX.vii. Referral to AASSA (*LA specific*)

Absence Procedures

1. Absence from school request applied for:
   a. Approved - **Principal** clarifies the exceptional circumstances and **AO** send AX.i. Absence Approved letter
   b. Not Approved – send AX.ii. Absence Declined
   c. If absence is taken, on return of pupil send AX.iii. Unauthorised Absence and within two-week of the return, send AX.iv. Penalty Notice – unauthorsed Holiday (M) or AX.iv. Official Referral Form (B) (*Kent is an online referral*).
2. Absence from school not applied for:
   a. **AO** to attempt contact with home on all numbers.
   b. **Second Day** home vist from **DSL/ SAC / PASTORAL TEAM** or **HSSW**
   c. Leave TX. Contact School Letter including **SOCIAL CARE REFERRAL** if no contact is made.
   d. Send AX.v. Suspected holiday letter
   e. Within two-week of return of pupil complete send AX.iv. Penalty Notice – unauthorsed Holiday (M) or AX.iv. Official Referral Form (B)