

Bourne Education Trust

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines neglect as, “the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical, emotional, and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development” and that “neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide suitable education.”

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

Trust Vision

At Bourne Education Trust, we are committed to creating an inclusive culture where every pupil feels valued, supported, and a genuine sense of belonging within their school community. We believe that attendance is everyone’s responsibility and that regular, punctual attendance is a vital, well-evidenced foundation for high attainment, personal development, and successful progression to each new stage of a student’s educational journey.

Aims

Attendance is everyone’s responsibility, every role, every day, every child and young person. We aim to achieve this through our whole-trust culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Creating a learning environment in which pupils feel safe and experience a sense of belonging

- 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 and parents are aware of their legal responsibilities
- Promote positive support systems and advocate multi-agency approaches to improve attendance

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE’s statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted’s 2025 framework toolkit](#)

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Tracy Creasey	head@mead.surrey.sch.uk
Designated Senior Lead	Tracy Creasey	head@mead.surrey.sch.uk
School Attendance officer	Emma Morgan	attendance@mead.surrey.sch.uk
Named Governor for attendance	Katie Wadsworth	wadsworthk@mead.surrey.sch.uk
Trust Attendance Lead	Sue Nardonis	nardonis@pyrcroftgrange.surrey.sch.uk

The Governors of The Mead Infant and Nursery School recognise the importance of school attendance and promotes it through the school's ethos and across its policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils and parents, so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded
- 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. Prioritising attendance in strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour and combatting bullying, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- 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
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- 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
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers, as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Holding the Headteacher(s)/Head(s) of school to account for the implementation of this policy

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 penalty notices, where necessary and/or authorising nominated member of staff 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
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

Trust attendance lead

Is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust, including analysing data, trends, patterns
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries

- Leading attendance networking group for sharing of effective practice
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes

Designated senior leader responsible for attendance

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

School attendance officer

Is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/nominated member of staff (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School office staff

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the designated senior lead/staff member where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Teachers

- All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance (on Arbor) for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes

All staff

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents. Raise initial concerns regarding attendance with parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need
- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to a member of the SLT or the attendance lead
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school
- To record all attendance concerns on the schools monitoring system (CPOMS)

Parents

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

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility
- Those who have day-to-day care of the child

The school will record contact details for all parents, including non-resident parents, without requiring the consent of another parent. This information will be used for sharing attendance and other educational information unless restricted by court order.

In accordance with education law (Education Act 1996), all parents— including non-resident parents— are entitled to receive information about their child's education, including attendance information.

The school will provide attendance information to any parent recognised under education law, unless a court order specifically restricts this. Permission from another parent will not be sought or required.

The school will retain and act upon all court orders affecting parental responsibility, information-sharing, or collection arrangements. This includes Prohibited Steps Orders, Specific Issue Orders, Child Arrangements Orders, and Care Orders.

Parents are expected to:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment

- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance, and only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Work proactively with the school to understand and address any barriers to attendance. Work as a partnership to improve attendance
- Keep to any attendance improvement plans/ contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school office/designated attendance lead

Handling Parental Disputes

Where separated parents disagree about attendance-related decisions or communication, the school will follow education law and any court orders. The school will not mediate parental disputes and will act in the best interests of the child.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable in an age-appropriate way
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.
- Engage with any additional support e.g. pastoral interventions, put in place to support school attendance

Recording attendance

Attendance register

The school will record each pupil's full legal name in the admission register, as required by the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. A change of surname will only be recorded when the school receives written evidence of consent from all individuals with parental responsibility, or a court order permitting the change.

Where a pupil is subject to a Special Guardianship Order, the school will not alter the surname used for the pupil unless written consent from every PR holder is provided, or the court grants permission.

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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

We will also record:

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

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

The school day starts and children must arrive by:

Year 1 and 2 8.30am

Reception 8.40am

Nursery 9.00 am

The school day ends at:

- Year 1 and 2 3.05pm
- Reception 2.50pm
- Nursery 3.00 pm

The register for the first session will be taken at:

- Year 1 and 2 8.35am
- Reception 8.50am
- Nursery 9.00am

The register will be kept open until 30 minutes after the session begins.

- Year 1 and 2 9.05am
- Reception 9.20am
- Nursery 9.30am

The register for the second session will be taken at:

- Nursery 12.00
- Reception 11.35
- Year 1 and 2 1.15pm

The register will be kept open until 30 minutes after the session begins.

- Nursery 12.30
- Reception 12.05
- Year 1 and 2 1.45pm

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 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school office, who can be contacted via phone on 020 839 30966 or via email at attendance@mead.surrey.sch.uk Parents should leave a message or details including their child's name, class and reason for absence.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

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

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

For all known periods of absence, parents should request this using the 'Leave of Absence request form' which can be found on the school website within the "Attendance" tab in "School Information" or by requesting this directly from the school office.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Parents or pupils must record their arrival using the school's electronic system

The school recognises that occasional lateness may occur due to unforeseen circumstances. Where concerns arise, parents will be notified in writing. If lateness does not improve, a meeting with parents will be arranged.

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 we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts by 12 noon, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed and this may result in external agencies being contacted or a home visit to ascertain that the child is safe
- If there is no response from a home visit, all efforts will be made to establish the safety and well-being of the child/ren. This may involve working with other agencies e.g. children services and the police
- For any child whose family are known, by the school, to be currently working in partnership with Children's Services an additional phone call to the named Social Worker/Family Support Worker will also be made. Equally, for any children where the school has significant concerns that are not currently

working in partnership with Children's Services, an additional phone call into CSPAR may be made. The school may also seek further advice from the Inclusion Service (IS) and/or any other professional service it feels is appropriate.

- 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. Inform the school DSL
- 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 other legal intervention

Ten Days' Absence:

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

See guidance [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

Reporting to parents

- Parents can access their child's attendance record via Arbor and are reminded termly to do this
- Attendance data forms part of a pupil's educational record under the Education (Pupil Information) Regulations 2005 and will therefore be shared with any parent who requests it. The school will not require a solicitor's letter or the consent of another parent before fulfilling such a request

Data sharing

While pupils aged 13 or over may exercise data rights under the UK GDPR, parents retain the right to access the educational record (including attendance information) until the child is 18, unless disclosure would cause serious harm to the child or another

individual.

Authorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#).

These circumstances are:

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

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

"Rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur."

Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)]
- Weddings of close family member
- Exams e.g. ballet/musical instrument
- Religious observance
- Exceptional educational opportunities such as participation in elite sporting or performing arts events

Planned Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

The school will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised.

The Mead Infant and Nursery School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should: -

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Headteacher but is still taken.
- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days. When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

The 1996 Education Act also sets out the circumstances in which a pupil has not failed to attend school regularly and therefore the parent has not committed an offence.

Parental consent

For routine school activities, consent will normally be sought from the resident parent. However, for decisions that may have long-term or significant impact, the school may seek consent from all parents with parental responsibility or care, in line with DfE guidance.

Other reasons for authorised absence

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (if necessary, supported with medical evidence)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- If the pupil is representing the country, county or club in a sporting event (letter of evidence required)

Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

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

Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and celebrate improved attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

All Trust schools offer a welcoming, inclusive environment where every pupil is valued. At the heart of our ethos is the development of secure, trusted relationships between staff and pupils. These relationships foster a strong sense of belonging, which in turn encourages pupils to attend regularly and engage fully in school life.

Strong attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Supporting pupils with low attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor/falling attendance. Decisions will be made on a school level and in line with local authority guidance

Universal Offer

Schools are expected to regularly monitor attendance of all pupils and have robust daily processes to follow up absence.

- Phone calls home to discuss reasons for absence
- Informal conversation with the pupil when they return to school after an absence
- Raise attendance concerns with key school staff and any external professionals working with the pupil

Informal Support

- Letter of concern sent to parents, pupil's attendance tracked weekly
- Phone call with parent and class teacher or attendance officer to discuss any issues and explore why absences are ongoing
- If absences are due to illness. Liaise with health. Consider implementing an Individual Health Care Plan
- Meet with the parents, class teacher and attendance lead to ensuring barriers to attendance are explored and complete an attendance assessment form
- Implement rewards and recognition for any improvements, regular catch ups with the child
- Raise concerns with appropriate staff i.e., SENCO, Senior Leadership, Attendance Lead, SAS can be contacted for guidance if needed
- Signpost parents and/or make referrals for support to other agencies as appropriate
- Issue a letter of expectations regarding attendance to parents

Attendance Assessment form

The attendance assessment will support schools to explore and record family dynamics and who is living in the family home. It will also help schools to investigate barriers to regular attendance and where additional support might be required to address the barriers.

Formal Support

Parents/carers will be invited to a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss attendance concerns and put in place a formal Attendance Contract.

Schools should:

- Invite key professionals (health, social care, SEND etc) to the meeting to ensure any out of school barriers can be addressed.
- Consider alternatives i.e., reduced timetables, change to classes, ELSA, etc
- Consider issuing of a Notice to Improve letter
- Where parents do not attend initial meeting, they should be given at least 1 further opportunity to meet before issuing a Notice to Improve letter
- Raise for discussion at Targeted Support Meeting or seek advice from Surrey Attendance Service (SAS).

Attendance Contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parents (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful; we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parents in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

Notice 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

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or designated member of staff, authorised by the headteacher), 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, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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

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

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

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

If 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.

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). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parents must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance. 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.

The Mead Infant and Nursery School places a strong emphasis on developing secure, trusted relationships with parents and carers and works closely with them to understand each child's individual circumstances. By adopting a personalised approach and working in partnership with families and relevant external agencies, the school puts targeted strategies in place to remove barriers to attendance. These may include flexible start times, phased returns, adapted timetables, reasonable adjustments in the classroom, enhanced pastoral support, emotional check-ins, safe spaces, and support from key adults. Clear communication, regular review meetings and consistent routines help pupils feel safe, included and supported, enabling positive and sustained improvements in attendance and wellbeing.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

Set out your approach towards pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health. Include how you work with families, adjustments the school may make, and the additional support you provide.

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

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with other the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the universal support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs and barriers to attendance

Schools are required by law to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions.

This duty is detailed in Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and statutory guidance entitled Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions has been

produced by the Department for Education to assist schools in understanding and complying with this legislation.

The key points detailed in the guidance indicate that:

- Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- Local governing committees must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions
- Local governing committees should ensure that school leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents/carers to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are effectively supported

Ensuring that pupils who cannot attend school because of health needs receive a good education There are a wide range of circumstances in which a child or young person who has health needs can receive an education which meets their needs, either through attending school with some support or where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside school.

However, where a child cannot attend school because of health needs and they will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, BET schools will, in consultation with parents/carers, contact the local authority and make a Medical Needs Referral.

The local authority is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children who cannot be provided with suitable education because of illness (unless the local authority considers that a pupil's condition means that full-time provision would not be in his or her best interests). The local authority's duty is set out in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and in the statutory guidance, ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

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

The school will proactively communicate with pupils and families when they are absent from school. Before returning to school a meeting will be held with families to discuss how the transition back into school will be managed. External agencies may be involved, if that is the best provision for the pupil. Return to school will be carefully monitored.

Attendance monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data using the Department of Education Attendance Tool weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

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

The school 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 Local Governing Committee

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that have 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 persistence or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the Local governing Committee and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other trusts and 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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The 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

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Supporting pupils who cannot attend school due to medical conditions
- Mental Health and well-Being Policy
- EYFS policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusion’s Policy

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This policy is written with reference to:	Working Together to Improve Attendance
Next review:	Spring 2029 or sooner if government legislation, statutory and/or non-statutory guidance changes
Changes to this policy:	Trust wide model policy newly introduced

Appendix 1 Specific attendance barriers

Absence for pupils in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence or when a child is absent without notification, we will follow the school's attendance procedures.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check

Absence for pupils in Reception

Compulsory school age is when a child must be in full-time education. Legally, a child in the UK must be in education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June the school year that they turn 16. Most children will start school full-time in the September after their 4th birthday. This would effectively mean a child turns 5 years of age during their first academic year.

If a pupil who is non-compulsory school age is absent from school their absence is coded X (not required to be in school). However, we closely monitor attendance in Reception Class as it is essential that we support parents/carers to establish a secure pattern of attending school every day. Each day is a learning day and in Reception the foundations for all areas of the curriculum are laid and give pupils the best start to a successful educational journey through school.

Part-time timetables

Part-time timetables in exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with a temporary part time timetable. A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- Have a proposed end date that considers the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period
- Report to the local authority (PMOOE)

Alternative Provision

The school will remain responsible for a pupil's welfare during their time at an alternative provider. When placing a pupil with an alternative provider, the school will obtain written confirmation that the provider has conducted all relevant safeguarding checks on staff and will satisfy itself that the placement is meeting the pupil's needs. Those responsible for the commissioning of alternative provision will be aware that pupils in alternative provision will often have complex needs – they will be mindful of the additional risk of harm that these pupils may be vulnerable to.

Flexi schooling

This is a formal agreement between a school and a parent/carer that allows a child to be educated partly at school and partly at home. This arrangement can be requested by the parent; it is schools' decision whether to agree to the request. Schools should discuss all requests with their allocated Attendance, Advice and Intervention Officer (formerly known as Inclusion Officer).

It is important to highlight that **flexi schooling is not the same as elective home education (EHE)**.

Flexi schooling: The child remains on the school roll and attends school part-time. The school retains responsibility for the child's education and attendance during the agreed school days.

Linked document [Flexi-School Agreements - August 2025 \(2\).pdf](#)

Elective Home Education

Parents may choose elective home education (EHE) for their children.

Elective Home Education: The child is removed from the school roll, and the parent assumes full responsibility for the child's education at home.

In some cases, EHE can mean that children are less visible to the services needed to safeguard and support them. In line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, each school within the trust will ensure it informs their LA of all deletions from the admissions register when a pupil is taken off roll. Where a parent has expressed their intention to remove a pupil from a school within the trust for

EHE, the school, in collaboration with the trust, LA and other key professionals, will coordinate a meeting with the parent, where possible, before the final decision has been made, particularly if the pupil has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker

EBSA

The definition and understanding of EBSA

- EBSA refers to severe difficulty attending school due to emotional distress
- Distinguish EBSA from truancy or parentally condoned absence
- Recognise EBSA as a complex issue involving child, family and school factors

The school will consider:

- Early identification and monitoring
- Information gathering and assessment
- Collaborative planning and intervention
- Working with child, parents and staff
- Legal Framework
- Transition and support
- Whole school approach

Appendix 2: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law

Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays