Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy

Adopted by Governors: Summer 2026

Date for renewal: Summer 2027



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School is a learning community based on Gospel values. We aim to develop our pupils by encouraging their growth as spiritual and moral individuals who have the confidence to make the best choices. We encourage them to aspire to achieve and to realise their full potential. We nurture our children as they grow into responsible members of our community and to develop a lifelong love of learning.

Hand in hand with God, we love, live and learn.

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1. Context

Each pupil in our care has God given gifts and talents and by having high attendance levels pupils can develop their gifts and talents to the fullest. As Catholic schools our attendance policy is based on our catholic ethos and guiding principles. As such it has the purpose of reflecting our approach to being places of safety and love in which our children are supported to be the best they can be. We believe that a large aspect of that is reliant on fostering full attendance for all children. We understand the significant impact that absence from school has on children's educational attainment, social development and life chances and, as such, strive to make every effort to support children and parents in overcoming any barriers there may be to attending school in every session.

Fostering good attendance means school and home working together to achieve the best possible outcomes.

1 Corinthians 12:12
"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body."

It should be made clear that the fostering of belonging underpins our ethos and that attendance will be managed positively by ensuring that children and families feel loved and valued. They will receive positive messages about the contribution they have to make to the school and every effort will be made to ensure that our educational offer is attractive, engaging and inclusive and that children want to be in our school.

High levels of attendance to school are associated with benefits in the development of children:

- Safety and wellbeing and the access to the support of staff with these matters.
- Development of friendships with peers and supportive relationships with adults.
- Higher levels of achievement leading to access to further education, university, apprenticeships and careers.

To support high levels of attendance, school will ensure all pupils are welcomed and supported through our culture, policies, and practices. Leaders will ensure the School is a school where pupils want to attend. We will make reasonable adjustment for pupils with SEND or medical needs affecting attendance.

School values the opportunity to work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers with regards to attendance. School will seek the involvement of other agencies as appropriate to support pupils to have high levels of attendance.

2. 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 on working together to improve school

attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The School Attendance (pupil registration) (regulations) 2024
- The Education (information about Individual Pupils) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/madeIt also refers to:

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

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The central team

The central team of the trust is responsible for:

- Regularly collecting and analysing attendance data from all schools within the MAT to identify trends, patterns, and areas of concern.
- Develop and implementing draft attendance policies and procedures that align with national guidelines and best practices.

- Preparing and presenting attendance reports to the MAT board, highlighting key issues and progress towards attendance targets.
- Ensuring all schools within the MAT comply with statutory attendance requirements and internal policies.
- Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of attendance policies and interventions, making improvements as necessary.

These responsibilities help ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and managed, contributing to better educational outcomes for all students within the MAT

4.2 The governing board

The governing board 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 authority
    - 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
- 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, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive 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 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 schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.3 The headteacher

The headteacher 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 the Senior Attendance Champion 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

4.4 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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 Maire Hayes

4.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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
- Working with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher/Senior Attendance Champion when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Maire Hayes

4.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis.

4.7 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct codes (Appendix 1)
- Transfer calls from parents/carers and pupils to senior staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

4.8 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 timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:30am 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, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

4.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session
- Be punctual to school and be fully prepared for the school day
- Be punctual for every timetabled lesson
- Register with their class group each morning

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

To encourage high attendance, our school offers a variety of incentives and rewards designed to motivate students and recognize their commitment. These incentives include additional playtime, special recognition in assembly, attendance tokens allowing them to wear their own clothes to school on a chosen day. By celebrating and rewarding high attendance, we aim to create a positive school culture where students feel valued and motivated to attend regularly.

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Support for pupils returning to school

All pupils with an attendance issue will be supported. The school **expects as a minimum 96% attendance from all pupils** but are aware this may not always be possible due to extenuating circumstances or the need to overcome short- or long-term difficulties to achieve this target.

Reduced or non-attendance at school by a child or young person is often rooted in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. Non-attendance can include not attending entirely for prolonged periods or regularly missing whole days at school. It can also include:

• not going to their classroom
• not staying in class
• not attending some lessons
• avoiding some physical spaces or people.

In all of these instances the school will take a therapeutic approach to attendance and will work closely with the child and family to identify causes of absence and to put intervention in place to remove any barriers to attendance.

This may include strategies such as:

- Ensuring that all pupils have at least one adult at school who knows their strengths and concerns well - this is especially important at times of transition
- Building a school culture that recognises all emotional reactions as normal and helps pupils feel safe to express their emotions
- Supporting the child or young person in developing effective emotional regulation strategies
- Providing quiet or safe spaces for pupils to access if they are experiencing intense emotions
- Providing opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision-making in the school, helping them feel that their voices are valued and heard
- Working to reduce everyday stressors in the classroom for pupils who easily become overwhelmed
- Checking in regularly with pupils to see whether any agreed adaptations or strategies are working and useful and adjusting if not.
- 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, and a multi-agency intervention will be facilitated to support an improvement in attendance.

6.2 Support for pupils with poor mental health

Our school is committed to supporting the attendance of pupils with mental health difficulties, including anxiety and depression. We recognize that these challenges can significantly impact a student's ability to attend school regularly. In response to this we:

- Create a supportive and inclusive school environment where students feel safe and understood.
- Provide training for staff to recognize signs of mental health issues and to respond appropriately. Sometimes this response may be to refer to external agencies with more expertise.
- Develop individual support plans in collaboration with parents and carers for students experiencing mental health difficulties. These plans may include flexible attendance arrangements, such as part-time schedules or gradual reintegration into the classroom, to accommodate the student's needs.
- Maintain open communication with families to monitor progress and adjust support as necessary.

6.3 Support for pupils with SEND

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) face unique challenges that can significantly impact their school attendance. Research indicates that children with SEND are more likely to experience higher rates of absenteeism due to factors such as health issues, lack of appropriate support, and increased social vulnerability. To address these challenges and close the national attendance gaps, our school adopts a holistic and inclusive approach. This includes:

- Developing individual learning plans tailored to each student's needs,
- Providing access to specialised support services, and

- Ensuring that all staff are trained to recognize and respond to the specific requirements of SEND students.

In instances in which pupils identified with a SEND need are not meeting attendance requirements, their learning plan will strive to address these barriers and provide adequate support to remove these barriers.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is a school priority and is so closely linked with attainment and progress that the school has embedded systems to ensure it is systematically monitored. Attendance is tracked in real time and interventions for any unknown absence will be swift. Larger analysis of attendance data will be done through several different lenses to enable us to highlight any emerging trends relating to the attendance of a child, a group of children or absence linked with specific lessons, days or periods in the day.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) regularly 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 has granted the DfE access to its management information system so that 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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to staff 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

7.4 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 school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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 including the possible offer of a Family Help Plan
- 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

7.5 Children missing in Education

A child is considered "missing from education" when they are not registered at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise, such as through homeschooling, for a significant period. This can include prolonged unexplained absences or a failure to enrol in school at the appropriate age.

According to the statutory guidance on children missing education, we have several key responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.

1. We must maintain accurate and up-to-date attendance records for all pupils.
2. If a child is absent without explanation, we will contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence and continue to make every effort to locate the pupil. A home visit will take place, if contact is not made then the pupil will be registered as missing in education by day 10.
3. Any consecutive absence on or above 20 days will result in the school following s.19 Education Act 1996 process where the Local Authority will be responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age.
4. We will be continuously assessing the safeguarding risk associated with the absence and, if considered high, we will contact the police and/or social care.
5. We are also required to share information with local authorities and other relevant agencies to help identify and support children missing from education.

This collaborative approach ensures that children receive the necessary support to return to education and reduces the risk of harm or exploitation.

7.6 Attendance and safeguarding

Regular school attendance is a crucial safeguarding measure, serving as a vital protective factor for children. Poor attendance can be an early indicator of various safeguarding concerns, necessitating prompt and thorough investigation.

Legal Framework and Safeguarding Responsibilities

The school adheres to the following legislation and guidance with specific focus on safeguarding:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Children Act 1989 and 2004

As per these documents, the school has specific safeguarding responsibilities related to attendance:

- Identify and respond to patterns of absence that may indicate wider safeguarding concerns
- Report children missing education (CME) to the local authority within agreed timescales
- Investigate unexplained absences promptly as a potential safeguarding issue
- Ensure robust procedures to identify and support pupils at risk of harm

In these instances, processes in the School Safeguarding Policy will apply.

8. Recording attendance

8.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto 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
- 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.

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 at 08:45am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 08:50 and will be kept open until 09:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

8.2 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 08:30am or as soon as practically possible. The two ways of contacting us are via the My Child at School app or by calling the school on01536 203805

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school 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.

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.

8.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

8.4 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

8.5 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 contact a range of agencies to ensure the safety of the pupil, including the local authority and the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or the EIPT team.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

- Identify whether the pupil and/or their family needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will escalate through punitive and legal measures including the issuing of notices to improve, issuing of penalty notices or any other legal intervention as is appropriate as outlined in section 9 (below).

8.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels and will work with parents to ensure that attendance of pupils is high.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence

9.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

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

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Taking part in a regulated sports event
- 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.

'Exceptional circumstances for school absence' refer to rare, significant, and unavoidable events that justify a student's absence from school. These circumstances are typically one-off events that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Examples include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care for a child looked after by the Local Authority, or a housing crisis that prevents attendance. Schools assess each request individually, and the decision to authorize an absence under exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of the school principal or headteacher.

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

Any request should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 10 school days of notice before the absence. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- 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
- 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

9.3 Sanctions

Our school will work in conjunction with the local authority to make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as *irregular attendance* and will consider a referral to the local authority for consideration of legal action.

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.

In severe cases of non-compliance with attendance expectations and/or lack of positive reaction to penalty notices the local authority may bring a prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000 or a prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the local authority in conjunction with 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

10. Processes relating to absence

The school absence process, informed by research from the Children's Commissioner and other recent studies, emphasises early intervention and a proactive, supportive approach. When a student begins to show signs of frequent absenteeism, the school will promptly contact parents or guardians to discuss the issue and understand any underlying causes. If absences continue, a formal letter will be sent home, followed by a meeting with parents to develop a tailored support plan.

10.1 Absence management process

Primary

Trigger	School Action	Communication for unauthorised absence	Communication for authorised sickness absence
Every day	Parent to call school phone call by 8:45 to inform of absence Admin update registers between 8:30 – 9:30 with all parental messages By 9:00 all teachers registers have to be complete, leaving those who are absent, blank for the office to complete the coding. All children who are absent with no parental		

	contact by 9:00am are subject to a phone call between 9:00 – 9:30 If there is no contact – CME processes begin		
Procedures for unauthorised absences			
Day 3 equivalent	As day 1 process above plus a letter sent home highlighting concerns with falling attendance.	**Letter 1 - Automatic**	
Day 6 equivalent	As day 1 process above plus a meeting with parents/carers with FSW in which barriers to attendance are ascertained and an EHA offered.	**Letter 2 – Automatic** **Letter 3 follows meeting**	
Day 10 equivalent	As day 1 process above plus a meeting with parents is facilitated with IL in which an attendance contract is facilitated.	**Letter 4 – Automatic- BCC GS** **Letter 5 follows meeting – Saved Template Completed attendance contract attached.**	**Meeting with parents/carers to discuss absence and to offer support.** **Letter to follow the meeting outlining the agreed support.** **Ongoing monitoring of further absence**
Review after 6 weeks			
If attendance is over 90% within the 6-week review period then there is no further escalation and process starts again as above. **Letter 6**	If attendance is below 90% within the 6-week review or if there is a significant period of absence which means 90% is now unattainable within that period then a further meeting is called in which parents are warned that there is likely to be a referral to EIPT and penalty notices instigated if there is no improvement. **Letter 7**		
	Review after a further 4-week period		
If attendance is over 90% for the 4-week review period above then no further escalation. **Letter 8**	If attendance is below 90% within the 4-week review or if there is a significant period of absence which means 90% is now unattainable within that period then a further meeting is called in which parents are Informed that they have been referred to EIPT or equivalent and penalty notices instigated if there is no improvement. **Letter 9**		
Procedures for authorised absences			

Below 96%	Where a child's absence drops below 96%, a letter will be sent home to parents informing them
92% or below	When a child's absence reaches 92%, a letter will be sent to parents informing them that we will be monitoring their child's attendance for at least 4 weeks.
90% or below	A letter will be sent to parents requesting a meeting and a Parent contract will be put in place which will be reviewed every six weeks, or earlier if necessary.

11. 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 governing board.

12. Links with other policies

Several school policies are closely linked with the attendance policy, ensuring a comprehensive approach to student wellbeing and academic success. These include:

1. **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**: Ensures the safety and wellbeing of students, addressing any issues that might affect attendance.
2. **Behaviour Policy**: Outlines expectations for student conduct, which can influence attendance and engagement.
3. **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy**: Provides support for students with mental health challenges, promoting regular attendance.
4. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy**: Ensures that students with additional needs receive appropriate support to attend school regularly.
5. **Parental Engagement Policy**: Encourages active involvement of parents in their child's education, which can positively impact attendance.
6. **Anti-Bullying Policy**: Creates a safe and supportive school environment, reducing absenteeism due to bullying.
7. **Health and Safety Policy**: Ensures a safe school environment, which is essential for regular attendance.
8. **Homework Policy**: Supports academic engagement and reinforces the importance of regular school attendance.
9. **Exclusion Policy**: Manages exclusions in a way that minimizes disruption to a student's education and attendance.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

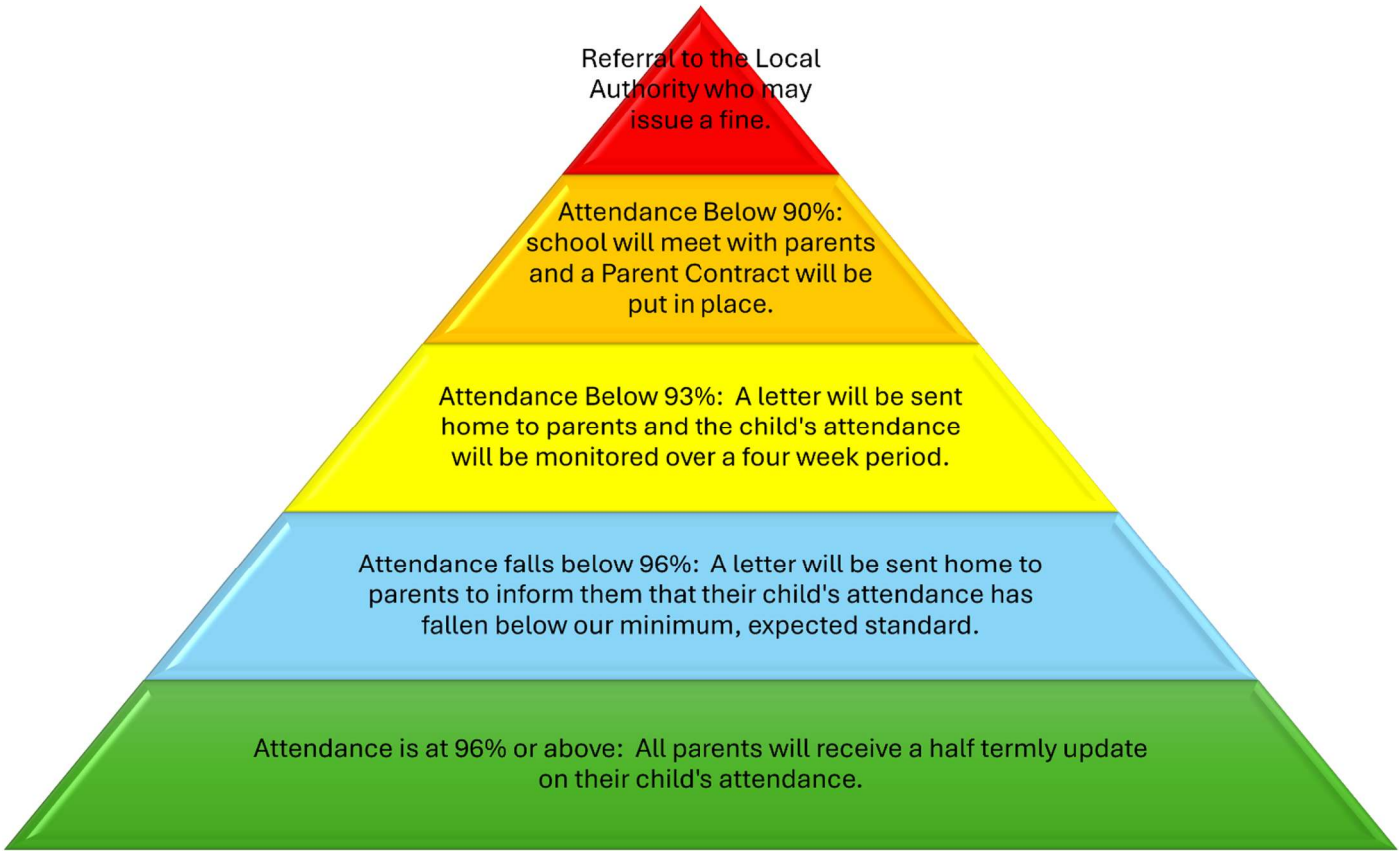
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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: • 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


Referral to the Local Authority who may issue a fine.
Attendance Below 90%: school will meet with parents and a Parent Contract will be put in place.
Attendance Below 93%: A letter will be sent home to parents and the child's attendance will be monitored over a four week period.
Attendance falls below 96%: A letter will be sent home to parents to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen below our minimum, expected standard.
Attendance is at 96% or above: All parents will receive a half termly update on their child's attendance.