Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Document Reference Number (if already used)	
Title	Attendance and Punctuality Policy
Policy Owner	Jo Howell and [school attendance lead]
Version	1.1
Approved Date	07.07.26
Approving Body	Trustees and SSC
Next Review Date	August 2027

Version control

Version	Last modified	Last modified by	Document changes
1.1	June 2026	Jo Howell	Updated content and language in line with latest DfE guidance; removal of inconsistencies.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Key school information – Grange Park Primary School 3
3. Legal requirements 5
4. Roles and responsibilities 5
5. Day to Day Process for Registration and Responding to Absences 10
6. Absence coding 11
7. Promoting and incentivising good attendance 13
8. Tracking and monitoring attendance 13
9. Vulnerable pupils including those with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities 15
10. Leave of absence 16
11. Persistent and Severe Absence 17
12. Children Missing Education 17
13. Re-integrations and temporary reduced timetables 18
14. Escalation of procedures and legal intervention 18
15. Removal from Admissions Register and Elective Home Education 20
16. Concluding points 21
17. Appendix 1 – Grange Park Primary School's process for addressing Elective Home Education (EHE) requests 22
18. Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form 23
19. Appendix 3 – Example Attendance Risk Register 25
20. Appendix 4 – Attendance Risk Register Snapshot - Proforma 26
21. Appendix 5 – Punctuality Risk Register Snapshot – Proforma 26
22. Appendix 6 – Absence data chart 27

1. Introduction

For any pupil to meet their full potential academically, a consistently high level of attendance is crucial. At this school, we aim to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance for all, thereby enabling every pupil to take full advantage of the educational opportunities, both academic and social, which are available to them.

In line with our ethos, this school is committed to providing the best possible education for our pupils, ensuring equal opportunities for all. Our intention is that each individual feels valued and supported. Our emphasis is on building excellent working relationships with pupils and ensuring a calm, orderly, safe and stimulating learning environment where all pupils want to be and where they are keen and ready to learn.

This policy outlines the various strategies we employ to promote excellent attendance which include creating a pleasant working environment, engaging and motivating pupils, ensuring early intervention when attendance begins to raise concerns and instigating further intervention when attendance remains a concern, including working in partnership with parents[1], the local authority and other external agencies, where necessary.

We see improving attendance as everyone's responsibility; effective communication and a joint approach to working are vital. We understand that barriers to accessing education are often complex, both within and beyond the school, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. We will work to build a positive relationship between home and school which can be the foundation of good attendance. We will ensure that parents are kept well-informed about the link between attendance and attainment, challenging views where there are misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like and ensuring that when academic progress is at risk, this message is clearly reiterated and support is put in place to help remove potential barriers from emerging.

This policy is fully compliant with *Working together to improve school attendance* (DfE August 2024) and should be read alongside the Ofsted report *Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence* and the following DfE guidance:

- *Children Missing Education*
- *Keeping children safe in education*
- *Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions at school*
- *Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school*
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK
- *Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance*
- *Alternative provision statutory guidance*

It should also be read in conjunction with the school's *Behaviour Policy*[2], which sets out school systems for managing behaviour, including that relating to attendance and punctuality.

2. Key school information – Grange Park Primary School

DAILY ROUTINES[3]

[1] For the purpose of this policy, the term 'parent' is used to indicate all who have parental responsibility for, and/or day-to-day care of, a child. It also includes any parent who does not live with the child.
[2] Sometimes called *Behaviour and Relationships Policy* or similar. For the purpose of this document, the term *Behaviour Policy* is used.
[3] The procedures outlined in this policy also apply to all non-compulsory school age children, unless otherwise indicated.

Students are welcome on to school site from 8.00 am if they are attending 'Breakfast Club', or from 8:30 am for all other students. The school day starts at 9.00 am. Students are encouraged to be on site no later than 8:55 am and are expected to be heading to their classroom, where they will be greeted by their teacher and welcomed into their classroom from 8:45am so that the register can be taken promptly at 9:00am and then the Phonics and Love to Read sessions can begin.

The school gates are locked at 9:10 am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as late (L). The official register opens at 8:45 am and closes at 9:30 am. Any student arriving after that time will be coded as U, an unauthorised late mark which counts as an absence. The afternoon registration session opens at 1:00 pm for children in Key stage 1 and 1:30 pm in Key Stage 2.

If a student is habitually late into school just before the 9.30 am cut off, the school may take the decision, in liaison with parents, to amend the cut off time for that student as a measure to help improve punctuality and attendance.

PUNCTUALITY

The school wants all students to appreciate the importance of punctuality. At Grange Park, we hold a 'Perfect Punctuality' week every term to encourage ALL students to be at school on time. The class with the highest percentage will receive a whole class reward as an incentive. Parents will be reminded that lateness after registers have closed (and for which an acceptable reason is not forthcoming), will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and if ongoing, may result in prosecution.

KEY ATTENDANCE STAFF

The Strategic Leader with responsibility for the strategic approach to attendance is Mrs Zoe Meredith , Deputy Headteacher, who can be contacted via zoe.meredith@taw.org.uk

Parents should report absences as soon as possible when known and ideally before 8:30 am on the morning of absence by calling the school's Attendance Clerk, Mrs Hartley, on 07341777814, leave a message on the school answer machine on 01952 387490 or by emailing parents.grangepark@taw.org.uk

Where parents require further support to enable their child to attend school, they should contact their child's class teacher. If further support is required, alternatively call the school office to arrange a meeting with Mr Thorpe, Mrs Meredith or Mrs Marshall and we will discuss what support we can put in place to improve student attendance. We may also work collaboratively with the School's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance falls below 90%.

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

3. Grange Park Primary School will always prioritise providing support over legal action. However, we recognise that it is our duty to ensure every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. As such, it is our policy to make a referral to the local authority where we feel parents have not engaged with the advice and support offered and their child has continued to acquire unauthorised absence marks, despite interventions having been put into place by the school. Legal requirements

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. There is a legal requirement placed on all parents to ensure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where a parent has decided to register their child at school, there are additional legal duties placed upon them to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This policy conforms to the aforementioned legal requirements, as detailed in section 7 of *The Education Act 1996*, and to the requirements outlined in the latest guidance document entitled *Working together to improve school attendance, (August 2024)*. This includes adherence to the requirement that all pupils, regardless of age, are placed on the admission register and must have their attendance recorded in the attendance register.

This policy also has due regard to all relevant legislation and other statutory guidance including, but not limited to that listed above in section 1, in addition to the following legislation:

- *Equality Act 2010*
- *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory guidance and legislation. The trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the School Standards Committees and to the headteachers of each trust school.

The **School Standards Committee** and **Strategic Leadership Team** in each school have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting these colleagues in ensuring success.

The trustees of Community Academies Trust ensure that attendance remains a constant focus across all trust schools by:

- recognising the importance of attendance and actively promoting it through trust ethos and policies;
- ensuring the trust and each school meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to attendance and continue to have high aspirations for each pupil;

- reviewing attendance data at trust and individual school level, providing support and challenge as required;
- ensuring staff receive adequate attendance training and that best practice is shared between trust schools.

The trust will:

- devise and regularly review the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*;
- agree and review attendance and punctuality targets with schools at least annually;
- provide advice and support to schools on attendance matters, as required;
- ensure admissions and attendance registers are kept electronically on Arbor in line with the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*;
- ensure pupil level attendance data is shared daily with the DfE, in line with latest regulations.

The School Standards Committee will:

- ensure appropriate strategies are in place to promote and implement the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* throughout the school;
- ensure the policy is well-publicised and that attendance expectations and procedures are understood by parents and pupils;
- review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in response to the data regularly provided via *Ensuring Excellence Reporting*.

The headteacher will:

- ensure the school's vision, values and ethos promote and celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality;
- ensure a member of the Strategic Leadership Team is appointed as 'Attendance Champion' with overall responsibility for driving attendance improvements in school, as per DfE guidance;
- ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* throughout the school;
- ensure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable, through effective use of Pupil Premium funding;
- monitor the school's curriculum offer to ensure delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- regularly monitor attendance and punctuality data;
- make decisions regarding the authorisation of absences in exceptional circumstances;
- set attendance targets with the strategic attendance lead and/or other relevant members of staff directly responsible for attendance.

The strategic attendance lead[4] will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- ensure that section 2 and Appendices 1 and 2 of the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is fully personalised to the school to meet statutory requirements;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*, are well trained to address attendance issues and are aware of the school's current attendance headline data;

[4] Since September 2022, the DfE has required all schools to have a named senior leader who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance. This may well be the Headteacher. Where an Executive Headteacher is in post across multiple schools, each school must have a named strategic attendance lead, who acts as the school's Attendance Champion.

- ensure the *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is consistently applied across the school, starting with the accurate completion and maintenance of the Admissions Register (often called the school roll) and the Attendance Register in line with Chapters 7 and 8 of the DfE's *Working together to improve school attendance* statutory guidance;
- ensure attendance and absence coding is completed for each session, using the latest DfE codes, as detailed in section 6 of this policy;
- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and parents, including ensuring regular use of praise and the issuing of rewards that are valued by pupils;
- with the support of key staff members, analyse attendance and punctuality data at least on a fortnightly, half-termly and termly basis, identifying patterns and trends and preparing evaluative reports as necessary for other school leaders and governors;
- provide the School Standards Committee with regular updates on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% attendance or below) and those who are severely absent (50% attendance or below);
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, ensuring they are followed by all staff;
- oversee attendance intervention, including quality assuring action plans and the arrangements for attendance review meetings;
- ensure appropriate school liaison with the local authority, including full engagement with the School Attendance Support Team, to ensure multi-agency working is effective;
- comply with the DfE's statutory guidance on *Children Missing Education* (CME) by informing the local authority of the details of children who are regularly absent or missing from school following a leave of absence, and prior to removing a child from the school roll;
- comply with the legal requirement to make absence returns to the local authority in accordance with locally agreed arrangements for all compulsory school age pupils who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O or U);
- comply with the legal requirement to make sickness returns to the local authority for all compulsory school age pupils who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively in a year because of sickness, in order to assist both in agreeing provision needed to ensure continuity of education;
- comply with the requirements set out in the local authority's *Code of Conduct* when requesting legal intervention;
- ensure that Arbor is employed effectively and that staff accessing it are appropriately trained to meet all legal and statutory recording requirements so that they can make best use of the system to support effective data analysis and intervention.

Others responsible for attendance, as directed by the Headteacher[5] will:

- monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents of pupils who have been identified as 'at-risk of persistent absenteeism' to challenge absences and to encourage an early return to school;
- ensure that the attendance of pupils attending alternative provision is monitored regularly, that attendance information is received promptly from the provider and recorded appropriately, and that any absence patterns, safeguarding concerns or barriers to attendance are followed up without delay. The school will retain oversight of attendance

[5] Individual schools will have different members of staff in various roles carrying out these responsibilities; it will not necessarily be the same person taking responsibility for each action; the Headteacher will ensure individual staff members know which parts are their responsibility and this will be monitored by the Strategic Attendance Lead.

and work collaboratively with the alternative provision, parents and relevant agencies to secure regular attendance and appropriate support;
- ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in school in prominent places, visible to pupils and staff;
- implement the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance including, where appropriate, carrying out home visits and/or making a referral to the local authority's education welfare service or equivalent contracted service where concern is ongoing and/or where initial interventions are not proving effective;
- where necessary, and in line with school policy, issue appropriate sanctions to pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern;
- in line with school policy, issue appropriate rewards to pupils for whom attendance and/or punctuality has improved;
- with oversight from the strategic leader responsible for attendance, maintain an up-to-date Attendance Risk Register for 'high-risk' pupils, which tracks interventions and their impact;
- where punctuality is a concern, maintain a Punctuality Risk Register as outlined in section 8 of this policy;
- lead attendance interventions, including initiating Attendance Review Meetings and developing Attendance Action Plans involving the child, parent and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or, if applicable, punctuality, falls below the expected level;
- coordinate the support plans for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence;
- if appropriate, co-ordinate other staff members in agreed intervention activities, including mentoring and/or target setting of individuals or groups;
- where necessary, make referrals to appropriate external agencies;
- authorise appointments, as appropriate;
- co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the local authority for pursuing legal intervention;
- ensure that the procedures for making additions to, and removals from, the admissions register follow statutory guidance and that no pupil is removed without the school having full details of their destination and providing this information to the local authority, using agreed local procedures.

Class teachers responsible for morning and afternoon registration will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- ensure that the statutory attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the afternoon session;
- provide regular encouragement and support to the class as a whole and to individual pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure their own register is completed accurately and in a timely manner;
- ensure absence notes or verbal messages relating to attendance and punctuality are provided to the attendance administrator;
- be proactive in noticing and addressing any signs of disaffection or any well-being concern which may result in poor attendance and punctuality, thereby impacting on learning and potentially safety;
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, by providing stimulating teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- support pupils to catch up on essential work missed following absence, thereby removing a potential barrier to re-engagement;
- regularly review class registers and report any absence trends or concerns that they identify.

Attendance administrators will:

- monitor whole school attendance on a daily basis, ensuring all registers are completed accurately and on time and that any missing marks are quickly resolved in order to keep pupils safe;
- be the first point of contact for parents and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments;
- be responsible for ensuring that the parents of non-attenders are notified by text message, or similar system, on the first day and any subsequent days of absence;
- ensure that reasons for absences are provided by parents after each period of absence;
- collate and issue all attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to attendance leaders and strategic leaders, as requested;
- maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and all requests to the LA to issue penalty notices;
- maintain a record of all mid-year arrivals and leavers, including reasons for their moves;
- maintain a log of all pupils whose parents have instructed the school to remove them from roll in order to electively home educate;
- support leaders, where requested, in making attendance referrals to external agencies;
- following approval from the relevant strategic leader, inform the local authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admissions and attendance registers.

All staff members will:

- lead by example, modelling excellent attendance and punctuality, thereby conveying a message about the importance we attach to attendance;
- in line with our *Ensuring Excellence* document, aim to create a positive atmosphere, developing excellent working relationships with pupils which are supportive and encouraging.

Parents/carers will:

- ensure their child attends school every day when the school is open;
- ensure their child arrives to school on time, ready and equipped to learn;
- be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason;
- be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised';
- notify the school as soon as possible and ideally before the start of the school day and on each subsequent day of absence if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return;
- ensure that all appointments, wherever possible, are arranged out of school hours;
- ensure that where an appointment during school time is unavoidable, their child attends for as long as possible prior to and/or returns immediately after the appointment;
- ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible after any period of illness;
- support their child's attendance by avoiding requesting leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances;
- understand that the school is not in a position to authorise a holiday in term time; [6]
- ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made by completing the *Leave of Absence during Term Time Request Form*, where possible at least one month in advance;
- work with the school and other agencies when barriers to their child's attendance are identified;
- be aware that for unauthorised absences the School Standards Committee reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice (a fine);

[6] From August 2023 schools are no longer permitted to authorise holidays in term time. As such, the H code for recording holiday absence has been removed.

- provide the school with a minimum of two emergency contact numbers and ensure they are kept up to date with any changes.

Pupils, at the appropriate developmental level, will:

- strive to achieve an excellent level of attendance and punctuality;
- understand the correlation between high levels of attendance and academic achievement;
- be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality;
- ensure all absence notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff;
- speak with the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems which may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning;
- take responsibility for catching up on all work missed due to absence.

5. Day to Day Process for Registration and Responding to Absences

- The attendance register will be completed at the start of the first session of the day and once during the afternoon session.
- The member of staff with responsibility for taking the session register must record whether each pupil is:
    - Attending the school;
    - Attending a setting other than the school;
    - Absent - with leave of absence;
    - Absent - for other authorised reasons;
    - Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
    - Absent - due to unauthorised circumstances.
- Registers will be completed using the *Department for Education*'s Attendance and Absence Codes, as detailed below.
- Parents should report absences as soon as possible when known and ideally before 8:30 am on the first morning of absence and on each subsequent day of absence until the pupil's return.
- Where a pupil who is expected in school does not arrive, the school will contact parents on the morning of absence by automated text/messaging system or telephone to try to establish the reason for absence.
- The school will prioritise making contact where a child is considered to be vulnerable e.g. those in care, those with Child Protection Plans or those who have previously gone missing.
- When the reason is established, the absence will be marked as authorised or unauthorised depending upon the reason provided.
- If the school is unable to establish the reason for absence, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (O) after five working days.
- If the school is concerned about a pupil's safety or is unable to contact a parent, the school may use other named contacts[7] who may reasonably be able to confirm the child's whereabouts.
- In some cases, where concern is significant, the school may choose to contact the emergency services or other professionals for advice and support. Home visits may also be carried out by the school or external agencies, as appropriate.
- The school will record reasons for lateness or absence, whether received in note form or via email or phone call, using Arbor. Where phone calls home are made, details of the call or messages left will also be recorded.

[7] Parents are expected to provide at least two named contacts for emergencies.

- In line with legislation[8], any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date of the amendment
  - The name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- Every entry on the attendance register will be retained for six years after the date of entry.
- In line with legislation[9], a back-up copy of the admission register and the attendance register will be made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

6. Absence coding

The school records attendance and absence, using national codes which comply with the regulations detailed in *Working together to improve school attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*, August 2024.

CODES WHICH COUNT AS PRESENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Attending the school:

**/ ** Present at the school - / = am session \ = pm session

L Late arrival before registration is closed

Attending a setting other than the school:

K Attending education provision arranged by the LA

V Attending and educational visit or trip

P Participating in a sporting activity

W Attending work experience

B Attending any other approved educational activity

D Dual registered at another school

CODES WHICH ALSO COUNT AS ABSENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Authorised absence - leave of absence:

C1 Leave for participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

M Leave for attending a medical or dental appointment

J1 Leave for attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational establishment

S Leave for studying for a public examination

[8] *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 - Regulation 6 (1))*
[9] *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 - Regulation 5 (3)*

C2 Leave for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

C Leave for exceptional circumstance

Authorised absence - for other authorised reasons:

T parent travelling for occupational purposes

R Religious observance

I Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

E Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

CODES WHICH COUNT AS NEITHER ABSENT NOR PRESENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

X non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend

Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause:

Q Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Y1 Unable to attend – transport normally provided is unavailable

Y2 Unable to attend – widespread travel disruption

Y3 Unable to attend – part of school premises closed

Y4 Unable to attend – whole school site unexpectedly closed

Y5 Unable to attend – Pupil in criminal justice detention

Y6 Unable to attend – In accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7 Unable to attend – Other unavoidable cause

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES CODES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Absent - due to unauthorised circumstances:

G Holiday taken without leave granted by school

N Reason for absence not yet established

O Absent in other or unknown circumstances

U Arrived in school after registration closed

ADMINISTRATIVE CODES - COUNT AS NEITHER ABSENT NOR PRESENT

Z Prospective pupil not on admission register

Planned whole or partial school closure

7. Promoting and incentivising good attendance

School staff work hard to create a positive working environment for our pupils in which they feel safe and supported. The school believes that pupils have the best opportunity to achieve if they feel happy and valued. This approach is at the heart of our school ethos.

We recognise that good attendance is a learned behaviour and that securing this is not a discrete piece of work but rather an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. We also understand the intrinsic connection between excellent attendance and high attainment. We are fully aware that children with low attendance can be at increased risk in terms of safeguarding and well-being. Developing good attendance habits and setting high attendance and punctuality expectations is a key part of our school's vision, values and ethos; as such, the school aims to promote and incentivise high levels of attendance through a range of strategies including the following:

- Prioritising effective primary to secondary transition so that pupils who need additional support at this point receive it to help ensure a smooth and successful start to their secondary education;
- Providing a varied and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, challenging the most able and supporting the pupils who struggle with their learning;
- Ensuring, in partnership with the LA, that, where appropriate, regular review meetings are held to support parents and pupils in raising their attendance levels in order to avoid prosecution;
- Setting personal targets and providing mentoring support for pupils who are struggling to attend regularly;
- Regularly providing parents with information regarding attendance via newsletters, our website and social media, highlighting the educational impact of absence;
- Reporting to parents regularly on their child's attendance, avoiding headline percentages and instead making this understandable for parents (e.g. explaining attendance in terms of days and learning hours missed);
- Informing parents rapidly where we notice attendance is starting to cause concern and providing clear information about available support;
- Continuing to liaise with parents, agreeing action plans and providing targeted support where a pupil's attendance continues to decline;
- Providing individually tailored re-integration programmes, when appropriate, for pupils who have been absent for an extended period;
- Rewarding good and improving attendance, using the school's reward system;
- Taking every opportunity to celebrate excellent and improved attendance, for example through letters and postcards home, praise phone calls, sustained or improved attendance prizes, celebration assemblies or by displaying/reporting individual and class/year group/House achievements.

8. Tracking and monitoring attendance

School staff with responsibility for attendance will monitor weekly attendance data so as to rapidly identify pupils and cohorts whose attendance is in decline and respond accordingly. We will routinely monitor key cohorts and pupil groups based on our context and school population. Possible groups might include:

- Whole school
- Individual year groups
- Boys/ girls

- Those eligible for free school meals
- Those with special educational needs or disabilities
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language
- Children who are looked after or who have been looked after previously
- Those with a social worker
- Those who are persistently or severely absent
- Any other groups of pupils or cohorts who have historically had lower attendance than their peers or about whom there is an emerging concern.

All school attendance data is routinely benchmarked against available local, regional and national data, using the DfE's *View Your Education Data* (VYED) portal to access the *Monitor Your School Attendance* tool. Relevant data is routinely shared with pupils, parents, staff teams, governors, the trust, including CAT trustees and the local authority, all with the intention of continuing to improve attendance levels.

Weekly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- analysing data to identify attendance and punctuality concerns and successes within specific cohorts and pupil groups;
- displaying weekly attendance and punctuality data in prominent locations in school to engender a sense of friendly competition amongst staff and pupils;
- intervene with pupils who are regularly late without a good reason, informing parents;
- contacting parents to raise attendance and/or punctuality concerns with them, particularly where issues are repeated;
- contacting parents where attendance for the year to date falls below the school's minimum target for the first time;
- strategic leaders maintaining an overview of weekly attendance across the school.

Fortnightly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- the strategic attendance lead agreeing appropriate intervention strategies with other colleagues who share an attendance remit
- the provision of up-to-date relevant cohort attendance data to class teachers and the provision of current whole school data to SLT.

Half termly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- Attendance administrative staff producing half-termly attendance and punctuality data for attendance leads which will help leaders to analyse areas of concern and success within specific cohorts and pupil groups;

- The strategic leader responsible for attendance:
    - keeping an overview of the Attendance Risk Register across the school;
    - making use of the VYED portal's absence bandings data to support and inform targeted intervention;
    - agreeing appropriate intervention strategies with the Headteacher, if applicable;
    - identifying pupils requiring attendance review meetings;
    - providing the School Standards Committee with half termly data on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistent/severe absentees and about leave of absence requests and their outcomes.

- The updating of the Attendance Risk Register as follows:
    - Pupils on 99-100% attendance are on level 0 (no risk of persistent absence)
    - Pupils on 97-98.9% attendance are on level 1 (low risk of persistent absence)

- Pupils on 95-96.9% attendance are on level 2 (moderate risk of persistent absence)
- Pupils on 92-94.9% attendance are on level 3 (high risk of persistent absence)
- Pupils below 92% attendance are on level 4 (very high risk of persistent absence)

- Arranging attendance review meetings with pupils and parents for those placed on level 4 of the Attendance Risk Register, or the Punctuality Risk Register, if applicable, to:
  - discuss levels of authorised and unauthorised absences;
  - discuss punctuality levels;
  - discuss causes for the levels of absence and lateness;
  - provide challenge and support to improve attendance and punctuality;
  - set an action plan with achievable and realistic attendance and punctuality targets;
  - agree a review date.

Half termly monitoring and punctuality improvement strategies may include the updating of the Punctuality Risk Register as follows:

- Pupils with no late marks in the previous half term are on level 0
- Pupils with 1-6 late marks in the previous half term are on level 1
- Pupils with 7-10 late marks in the previous half term are on level 2
- Pupils with 11-15 late marks in the previous half term are on level 3
- Pupils with 15+ late marks in the previous half term are on level 4

Termly monitoring and attendance improvement strategies should include:

- analysing data, including making use of the DfE's *Attendance Summary Reports*, to identify attendance and punctuality concerns and successes within specific cohorts and pupil groups;
- displaying termly attendance and punctuality data in prominent locations in school visible to staff, pupils and visitors;
- sharing attendance data and information regarding the importance of high levels of attendance with parents;
- issuing letters of concern to parents of pupils with attendance below 96%;
- issuing positive letters to parents of pupils who achieve above minimum expectation for attendance and punctuality or who have significantly improved attendance/attendance above the school target;
- recognising, celebrating and rewarding the above-mentioned pupils in celebration assemblies.

9. Vulnerable pupils including those with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

We recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils with a social worker, those in receipt of Pupil Premium and those who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. These pupils have the same right to an education as any other pupil and as such our attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil.

Nevertheless, we remain sensitive to, and mindful of, the barriers these pupils may face and we will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This includes:

- developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions e.g. by making reasonable adjustments or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed;

- considering whether additional support from external partners would be appropriate;
- where a pupil has a social worker, informing them when the pupil is absent without good reason;
- making referrals in a timely manner and working together with external services to deliver any subsequent support;
- working collaboratively with parents, the local authority and relevant partner agencies to develop a coordinated plan of support where attendance concerns are linked to wider needs or vulnerabilities. This may include the use of Early Help processes, Team Around the Family meetings and other multi-agency approaches to identify, address and review barriers to attendance;
- working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed;
- establishing strategies for removing in-school barriers pupils may face;
- ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance;
- issuing positive letters to parents and recognising, celebrating and rewarding pupils who work hard to attend whenever possible in the light of adversity or other barriers beyond their control.

Where attendance difficulties are linked to anxiety, emotional wellbeing or emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), the school will seek to understand and address the underlying barriers to attendance through a supportive, individualised and graduated approach.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents, instead working with them to understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance. The aim will be to develop individual approaches that meet pupils' specific needs.

Data for the above groups will be proactively and regularly monitored to ensure they remain a key focus and that attendance is maximised.

10. Leave of absence

Education regulations and DfE guidance stipulate the following:

- Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.
- Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
- As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
- Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with; failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are refused will result in the absence being unauthorised. This may result in legal action being taken against the parent.

While a leave of absence may be authorised in extenuating circumstances, parents will also be mindful that often in these difficult family times it can also be beneficial to the child for them to remain in school. In these circumstances a proportionate, minimal time away from school is encouraged.

11. Persistent and Severe Absence

The DfE defines a persistent absentee as a pupil whose attendance is at 90% or lower. This is the equivalent to having one day off every fortnight. As part of the Trust's persistent absence strategy a pupil is placed on Attendance Risk Register if their attendance falls below 92%, thereby ensuring they receive immediate intervention from this point onwards to help avoid becoming a persistent absentee.

Where a pupil's attendance is at 50% or lower, the DfE define this to be 'severe absence' and in these circumstances, where the pupil is missing over half of all learning opportunities, they should receive a more intensive level of support and where appropriate a more urgent level of challenge, including the possible use of legal intervention through the local authority to help secure improvement.

For both persistent and severe absentees, school-led intervention will have taken place and parental meetings will have been initiated with targets for improvement having been set as part of the process. Where agreed strategies have proved unsuccessful, further consultation will take place with local authority attendance services/School Attendance Support Team to agree a way forward. This may include putting formal support in place in the form of an attendance contract, intensifying multi-disciplinary support for families via an Early Help Assessment or through statutory social care involvement, where there are safeguarding concerns or by initiating legal intervention to formalise support and/or enforce attendance where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

While the intention will always be to work with pupils and their families to successfully secure improved attendance so that pupils are no longer persistent or severe absentees, where all attempts to engage with parents have proved unsuccessful and all strategies to secure compliance have been exhausted, the school will have no option but to consider legal action. In these circumstances the school will liaise with the local authority to decide whether issuing a fixed penalty notice, as an alternative to prosecution, would be effective in changing parental behaviour and securing the regular attendance of their child. In such circumstances the local authority's *Code of Conduct* for issuing fixed penalty notices will be followed. Should the relevant agencies agree that a fixed penalty notice is unlikely to change parental behaviour and secure improved attendance, the decision may be made to move directly to prosecution via court action. If there are also safeguarding concerns, support will be sought through the Local Authority's Children's Social Care.

12. Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. As such, the school will respond rapidly at the first sign of a potential child missing education, making enquiries as to the whereabouts of the pupil as soon as concern is raised.

The school will only remove a pupil from the Admissions Register in line with the *Pupil Registration Regulations*. We will follow the local authority's *Children Missing Education* (CME) procedures, making appropriate referrals in all circumstances where:

- a pupil of compulsory school age is absent for ten or more days without the school being able to ascertain the reason for that absence; or
- the whereabouts of the pupil is unknown and the school has been unable to locate them, despite making active enquiries; or
- the family has informed the school that they are leaving the area but there has been no request for the Common Transfer Form from a receiving school.

13. Re-integrations and temporary reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. However, where pupils have been absent through sickness for any extended period of time, the school will discuss with parents/carers the most appropriate way to re-integrate their child back into school. For some pupils it may be appropriate to have work sent home to them to work on, with the understanding that appropriate support will be given by the school upon their return. In these circumstances, upon returning to school, teachers may choose to focus on work in the core subjects, identifying the priority needs of the pupil so as not to hinder future learning. Inclusion support will also be available, as appropriate.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a reduced timetable is considered appropriate by the school, as part of a re-integration package.

A reduced timetable will never be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A reduced timetable will only be used for the shortest time necessary and will never be initiated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit at which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. Formal regular reviews will be held with the pupil and their parents.

In agreeing to a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat those absences as authorised.

14. Escalation of procedures and legal intervention

The school will endeavour to always take a 'support first' approach to managing and improving attendance, working proactively with parents and pupils to remove barriers and improve a pupil's attendance through the range of strategies detailed in this policy. However, if a pupil's attendance continues to decline or if engagement strategies have not had the desired effect, the school will liaise with the local authority and other local partners to help support families with ongoing barriers. This could include Pastoral Support Plans, attendance contracts or involvement with early help or social care.

The local authority may choose to exercise its legal powers to address ongoing poor attendance. This might include:

A Notice to Improve

This is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance prior to issuing a penalty notice and runs over a timeframe of between three to six weeks. What constitutes sufficient improvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent.

Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and where support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or where support would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence, such as following an unauthorised holiday in term time.

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 five days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is ten sessions (typically five days) within a rolling period of ten school weeks and incurs a fine of £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 when paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil incurs a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. All fines are paid to the LA and will be administered in line with their local code of conduct. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Education Supervision Orders (ESO)

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education.

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

The local authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with the school attendance order under section 443 of The Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school under section 444 of The Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts

if the parents are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents to a community order or imprisonment for up to three months.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive up to three months of help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance.

15. Removal from Admissions Register and Elective Home Education

Schools are only permitted to remove compulsory school aged children from roll under certain circumstances, detailed in regulation 9 of the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*.

In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6) of the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*, schools must make a return to the local authority as soon as a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register under any of the reasons set out in regulation 9 (1) or 9 (3). This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted after they have completed the school's most senior year.

This school will only delete a pupil's name from the admission register where the specified grounds detailed in the aforementioned regulations are met. Where a pupil's name is deleted from the admissions register, they must be deleted from the attendance register at the same time.

Schools may not retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register as these registers must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

A name of a pupil transferring to another school must be deleted from the admission register as soon as they are entered on the admission register of the new school. The new school must enter the pupil's name on the admission register on the first day that it has agreed the pupil will start attending.

Elective Home Education

In line with best practice and DfE guidance, the school does not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because of poor attendance. However, the school does understand that home education is a parental choice and that there is no requirement for parents to obtain the school's or the local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. As such, on receipt of written notification from a parent of their intention to educate their child other than at school, the school will follow its EHE procedure as detailed in Appendix 1, which includes informing the LA immediately that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register, providing the expected date of deletion, in line with parental wishes.

16. Concluding points

All of our attendance procedures are intended to ensure that:

- we have a consistent recording system of pupil attendance which enables us to meet legal requirements;
- the security and safety of our pupils is a priority;
- trends of lateness and absenteeism are identified and addressed.

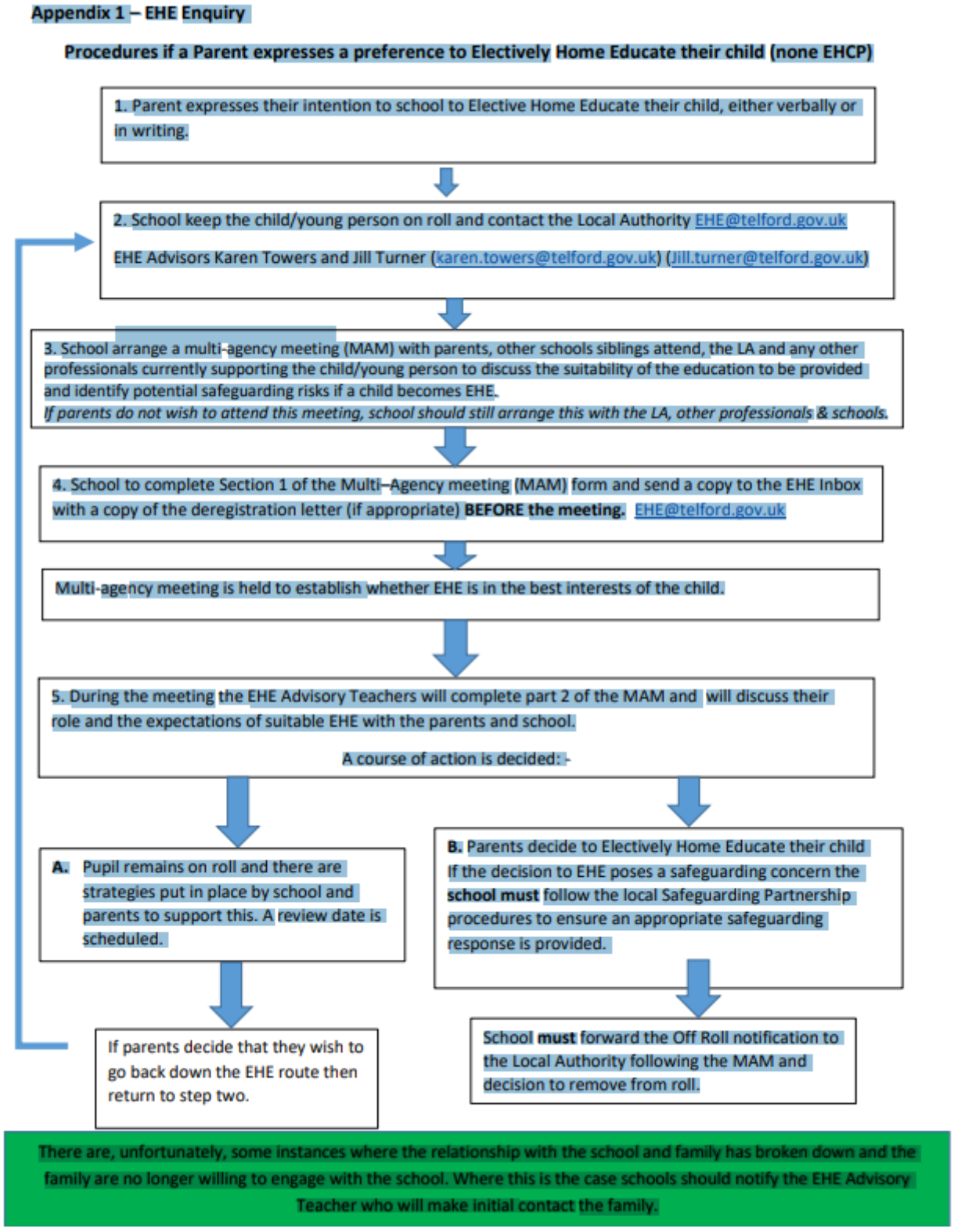
Our *Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is part of a wider set of policies and documents all aimed at ensuring that all our pupils receive a broad, balanced education in a safe, caring environment. This ethos is reflected in the following related documents:

- *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Child on Child Abuse Policy*
- *Equal Opportunities Policy*
- *SEND Policy*
- *Ensuring Excellence* document

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required.

17. Appendix 1 - Grange Park School's process for addressing Elective Home Education (EHE) requests

The aim of this process is to discourage parents from taking their child out of school to electively home educate. Staff members are expected to inform the Head/Deputy Head/Assistant Head/HOY[11] responsible for attendance, if they hear of any pupil whose family are considering EHE.



18.

[11] Edit to name relevant role/colleague, as applicable.

18. Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form

Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time - Exceptional Circumstances Only

Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time - Exceptional Circumstances Only

Request for Leave during Term Time

Date……..

To: The Headteacher of:……..……(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name) ……

from (date) ..…….…. to (date) ……..... for …….. school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) ……..… and (parent/carer)…..……

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) ……. School(s) .....…….....

……

……..

.....

……..

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) …… Signed ……..

Current address……

Mobile No:……..

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) …….. Signed ….....

Current address……

Mobile No:……..

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school ……..……
Current Attendance……% Last Year's Attendance……..…..…%
Number of unauthorised absence sessions during previous 10 school weeks ……
Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed? .....
What action are other schools taking? .....
.....
.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed ……... Job Title……..……

Print Name …… Date ……..…..…

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....

Any notes:

19. Appendix 3 - Example Attendance Risk Register

The following template (or similar) is used by schools, at least fortnightly, to track attendance patterns, interventions used and to help measure their impact:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	Full Name	Yr Group	Reg Group	SEN Status	PP	Last Yrs %	18/09	02/10	16/10	06/11	20/11	04/12	15/01	31/01	26/02	18/03	Comments
2		Year 9	9X		No	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
3		Year 9	9X	SEN Support	Yes	85.47	100	94.74	89.66	89.47	87.37	89.57	88.24	88.14	89.16	88.84	19/11 Bullying issue, HOY sorted
4		Year 9	9Y		No	97.49	100	100	96.55	97.37	95.79	96.52	97.39	97.74	98.03	98.28	
5		Year 9	9Y	SEN Support	No	88.02	88.89	76.32	84.48	85.53	86.32	82.61	83.01	78.53	78.82	77.25	01/10 Sickness
6		Year 9	9Y	SEN Support	Yes	90.33	77.78	73.68	79.31	84.21	86.32	86.96	84.97	87.01	85.71	86.7	10/09 2 days off ill
7		Year 9	9Z		No	93.3	100	100	100	100	100	99.13	96.73	97.18	95.57	95.71	
8		Year 9	9H		No	94.13	100	100	100	81.58	85.26	87.83	89.54	90.96	92.12	93.13	09/11 Unauthorised holiday
9		Year 9	9W		No	95.53	100	89.47	93.1	94.74	93.68	84.35	86.93	84.75	85.71	85.84	01/12 COVID

A template for this spreadsheet can be obtained from the Trust's Director of Behaviour and Safeguarding.

20. Appendix 4 – Attendance Risk Register Snapshot - Proforma

Please enter raw data (**a number, not a percentage**) to provide a snapshot of the number of pupils at each attendance level from September to the end of each specific half term.

	End of Autumn 1	End of Autumn 2	End of Spring 1	End of Spring 2	End of Summer 1	End of Summer 2
Level 0 99-100% no risk						
Level 1 97-98.9% low risk						
Level 2 95-96.9% moderate risk						
Level 3 92-94.9% high risk						
Level 4 <92% very high risk						

21. Appendix 5 – Punctuality Risk Register Snapshot – Proforma

Please enter raw data (**a number, not a percentage**) to provide a snapshot of the number of pupils at each punctuality level from the start to the end of each specific half term

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Level 0 No L or U codes						
Level 1 1-6 L or U codes						
Level 2 7-10 L or U codes						
Level 3 11-15 L or U codes						
Level 4 15+ L or U codes						

22. Appendix 6 – Absence data chart

Attendance data	This might indicate . . .	Associated risk
98% + Fewer than 4 school days absent per year	Outstanding attendance Fully able to access all learning opportunities	No risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
97 - 97.9% 4-6 school days absent per year	Excellent attendance Up to six learning days lost over the year Minimal learning opportunities missed	Very low risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
96 - 96.9% 6-8 school days absent per year	Good attendance Up to eight learning days lost over the year Very few learning opportunities missed	Low risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
95 - 95.9% 8-10 school days absent per year	Increasing concern if further absences occur Up to 10 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities are likely to have an impact on attainment and progress	Moderate risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
92 - 94.9% 10-15 school days absent per year	Significant concern. Attendance levels require improvement Up to 16 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities will now have a significant impact on attainment and progress	High risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
Below 92% More than 15 school days (3 school weeks) absent per year	Urgent concern. Attendance levels are now critical Over 16 learning days lost over the year Missed learning opportunities will now have a significant impact on attainment and progress	Very high risk of becoming a persistent or severe absentee
Below 90% More than 19 school days (4 school weeks) absent per year	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 19 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement	Persistent Absentee
85% 29 school days (or 6 school weeks) absent per year	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 28 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Persistent Absentee
80% 38 school days (or 8 school weeks) absent per year	Urgent concern. Attendance levels now critical Pupil is flagged as being a Persistent Absentee Over 38 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Persistent Absentee
50% or below At least 95 school days (or 19 school weeks) absent per year	Education is at critical risk Pupil is flagged as being a Severe Absentee Over 97/195 learning days lost over the year Extreme risk of significant underachievement Potential increased safeguarding risk	Severe Absentee

Absence over seven primary school years - Further impact statistics	
85 - 90% attendance	Equivalent of over 27 weeks (⅔ of a year) absent from primary school
80% attendance	Equivalent of 55 weeks (a full year and a term) absent from primary school
1 day a week absent	Equivalent of over three years missed over full school career
10 days holiday a year	Equivalent of two terms of education missed over full school career
15 minutes late a day	Equivalent of two terms of education missed over full school career

Attendance Policy, School website & correspondence regarding leave in term time

In July 2026 the DfE reviewed and amended the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' statutory guidance. This guidance sits alongside the 'National Framework for Penalty Notices' which the Government introduced in August 2024 and 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

In Telford & Wrekin it is the delegated responsibility of the Attendance Support Team to issues Penalty Notices following referrals from schools, and only they can issue Penalty Notices relating to school absence.

It is only the Headteacher (or delegated member of School Staff) who has the discretion to authorise any request for leave in term time and it is also they that decide the duration of that leave. Parents must submit a request for leave in term time to the school, allowing ample time for consideration to be given. Any circumstances that parents wish to be considered should be included in the request. Holidays should not be booked before permission is granted. The legislation does not allow for any school to adopt a blanket ban, all requests for leave in term time will be considered to determine if there are exceptional circumstances and parents must be notified of that decision.

The government introduced changes in legislation from August 2024 that parents need to be aware of:

- ***If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and sessions do not have to be consecutive.***
- ***If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met, so for eight sessions of unauthorised absence. This might apply for example, when parent(s) are deliberately or purposefully avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for events such as birthdays and taking their child out of school, or when there are only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday***
- ***Penalty Notices increased to £160 from August 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.***
- ***Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160***
- ***A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.***
- ***Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been***

engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. as is usually the case for an unauthorised holiday in term time).

- ***In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included in schools' attendance policy and on school's website, or a warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.***

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence)'.

In developing and publishing the National Framework, the Government renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this initiative. The legislation does not allow for blanket bans, therefore all requests for leave in term time will be considered. However, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance - July 2026, National Framework for Penalty Notices 2024 and local Code of Conduct, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (amended July 2026) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 37.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent, emailed to the registered email address of the parent held on school records or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10 week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Please follow the links below for more detailed information:

Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/resources-for-families/



Leave of Absence
Leaflet - Sept 26 Up(