PSA Attendance Policy

Date reviewed: Autumn 2026
Date of next review: Autumn 2027

SAT Sikh Academies Trust
Faith Inspired Education

Working together to improve school attendance

Schools are required to have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand

PSA Attendance Policy 2026-27 – information for parents:

A. Parents are required to ensure that their child attends school every day and on time, with the school day beginning at 8:00am and ending at 2:30pm . In cases of absence, parents must notify the school by 7:45 am on the day of the absence, providing a clear and detailed reason. Parents should also make efforts to schedule appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible, children are expected to attend school before and after the appointment. The school aims to work closely with parents to address any attendance-related issues and encourages timely communication for support.

B. The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Samantha Summerell and can be contacted via s.summerell@psa-bucks.com

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
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies.
- 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

C. The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Meeting the DfE attendance reporting requirements
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Local Authority when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

D. The attendance officer and main office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Listen to messages left and check emails sent to the student services email box, and record the details on the school system

E. Staff:

- Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance accurately using the correct national codes. The statutory attendance register will be taken at the start of the

morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils. Lesson registers may also be taken throughout the day for safeguarding and monitoring purposes.

- Training on attendance is included in the school(s) continued professional development offer for all staff, and attendance is covered in any induction packs. As a minimum this includes all staff understanding:
  - the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
  - the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
  - the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance, and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative support staff and senior leaders. In addition, this should include:

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils.

F. Parents are recognised as:

- 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)

G. Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence before 7:45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- When reporting absence ensure the reason provided is detailed and clear, not all absences are authorised - https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/
- Provide the school with two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day, if unable to do so send the child into school before and/or after the appointment.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the attendance champion, the Head of Year or the Safeguarding team, who can be contacted via telephone number 01753 662009.

H. Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- Present: at school or attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent: the pupil is not present and the reason must be recorded using the appropriate authorised or unauthorised national attendance code.
- 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 codes.

1. 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.

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

3. How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance.

I. The school's day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence:

- Pupils must arrive in school by 8:00am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8:00am and will be kept open until 8:15am
- The statutory afternoon register will be taken once during the afternoon session at the same designated time for all registered pupils and will remain open for 15 minutes.
- Class lesson registers may additionally be taken throughout the day for safeguarding and monitoring purposes.

J. 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
- After the register has closed lateness will result in a lunchtime detention on the same day.

K. Reporting to parents

- The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be on school reports or attendance letters.

L. 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, or regulated employment abroad, attending an interview, Study leave, a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable and exceptional circumstances.
- Requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances will be considered individually by the Headteacher, taking account of the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background of each request. Bereavement of a close family member may constitute an exceptional circumstance depending on the individual circumstances.
- A holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation will not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave of absence can only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances.

- Leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday or travelling abroad due to illness in the family.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form which can be collected from the school's reception.
- If a child is absent and the school has not been informed beforehand, or the reason provided requires clarification, the school will try to contact a parent; where the school cannot reach the family or emergency contacts, a home visit may be necessary.
- The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence, evidence when the travel arrangements were booked, date of departure and date of return in the form of confirmation of booking.
- If no contact can be made to ascertain the child's whereabouts it will result in a referral to the local authority and the children missing in education team.
- A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register where all statutory conditions in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 are met. For 20 continuous school days of unauthorised absence, the school and local authority must jointly make enquiries and, where the pupil is located, both must agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will return before deletion can take place.

M. 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. Where a religious body sets apart one day for an observance, only that day may be recorded using Code R; any additional leave must be considered separately under the appropriate leave-of-absence provisions.
- Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school
- 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 and attending work experience.
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

N. 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 7.45am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school 01753 662009 and selecting the option for reporting student absence, or by emailing studentservices@psa-bucks.com.
- If three days absence is reported via email, the school will call all emergency contacts as part of the safeguarding process to speak to a parent.
- 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 3 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 this is available to all parents via classcharts.

O. 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. Please email Studentservices@psa-bucks.com with details of the appointment.
- 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. PSA will not authorise a whole day for appointments without medical evidence.

P. Other Types of Term-time Absences

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

Q. 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 conduct a home visit.
- 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. Where Code N has been used and the reason cannot be established within 5 school days, the entry will be amended to Code O.
- 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 at the local authority.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: school may request the local authority issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

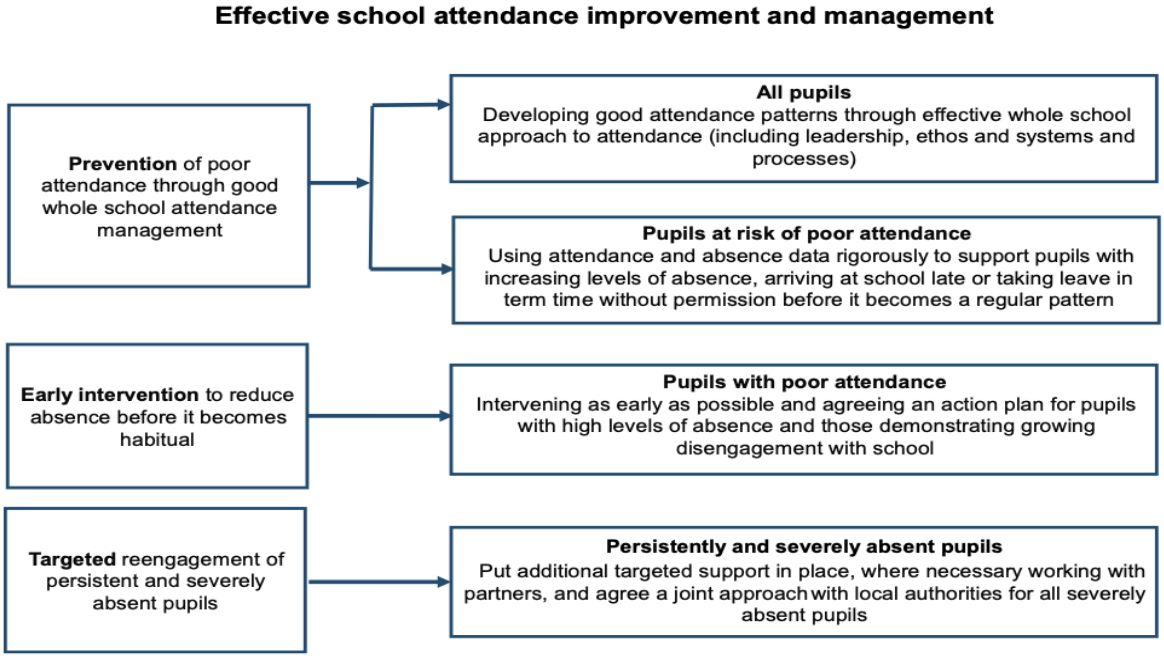
R. Term-time absence

- We recognize that many of our families travel abroad and spend time visiting family and relatives abroad. We appreciate that air fares can be higher during holiday times and this is attractive to parents. However, we cannot authorize this absence. There is no legal provision to

do so. If parents take their child out of school immediately before or after the school holiday periods these will be unauthorized leave and may be reported to the appropriate external agencies. We expect parents to prioritize the education of their child and NOT take their child out of school during these periods.

- We will unauthorize absences taken immediately before the end of a school term and/or in the first days at the start of a term unless medical evidence is supplied.

S. The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most



Attendance is everyone's business.

For all pupils:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required

services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Persistently absent pupils:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and
- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Severely absent pupils:

- Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers:

- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

Support for pupils with a social worker:

- Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.
- Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.
- Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them,

recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.
- Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name to be deleted from the register.

Looked after and previously looked after children:

- Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.
- Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.
- Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.

T. Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- This will be either early intervention or targeted reengagement of persistent and severely absent pupils depending on the circumstances.
- On a student's return, a meeting will be held with parents and the student to agree an action plan.
- An offer of support from the school counsellor or mental health champion will also be made.
- The action plan will specify the support that will be provided and the time period for the support.
- The intervention and support will Additional targeted support will be offered to those who have severe or persistent absence.
- Additional targeted support will be offered to those who have severe or persistent absence and will be focused and time limited to ensure that the impact of the intervention can be evaluated.
- A temporary part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests. It must be agreed with the parent/carer, form part of a wider support, health-care or reintegration plan, include regular review dates and a proposed end date for return to full-time education, and must not be used to manage behaviour. Where the pupil has a social worker they will be kept informed and involved, and where the pupil has an EHCP the arrangement will be discussed with the local authority.
- Time out cards will only be provided to students with a specific medical need.

U. Pupils absent due to a need (mental, ill health or SEND)

- 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 work with partners to secure the intervention the child needs.
- The school will work with parents and medical professions to ensure the child is being supported and plans are in place to ensure the child can access education.
- Regular reviews, team around the child meetings and conversations with the child will take place. All records of meetings with actions taken will be made and kept.
- Where appropriate teaching staff will be informed to ensure the lessons that are attended are accessible for the individual.
- When unable to attend school, alternative provisions will be sought and the pupils will be re-integrated as soon as possible.

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

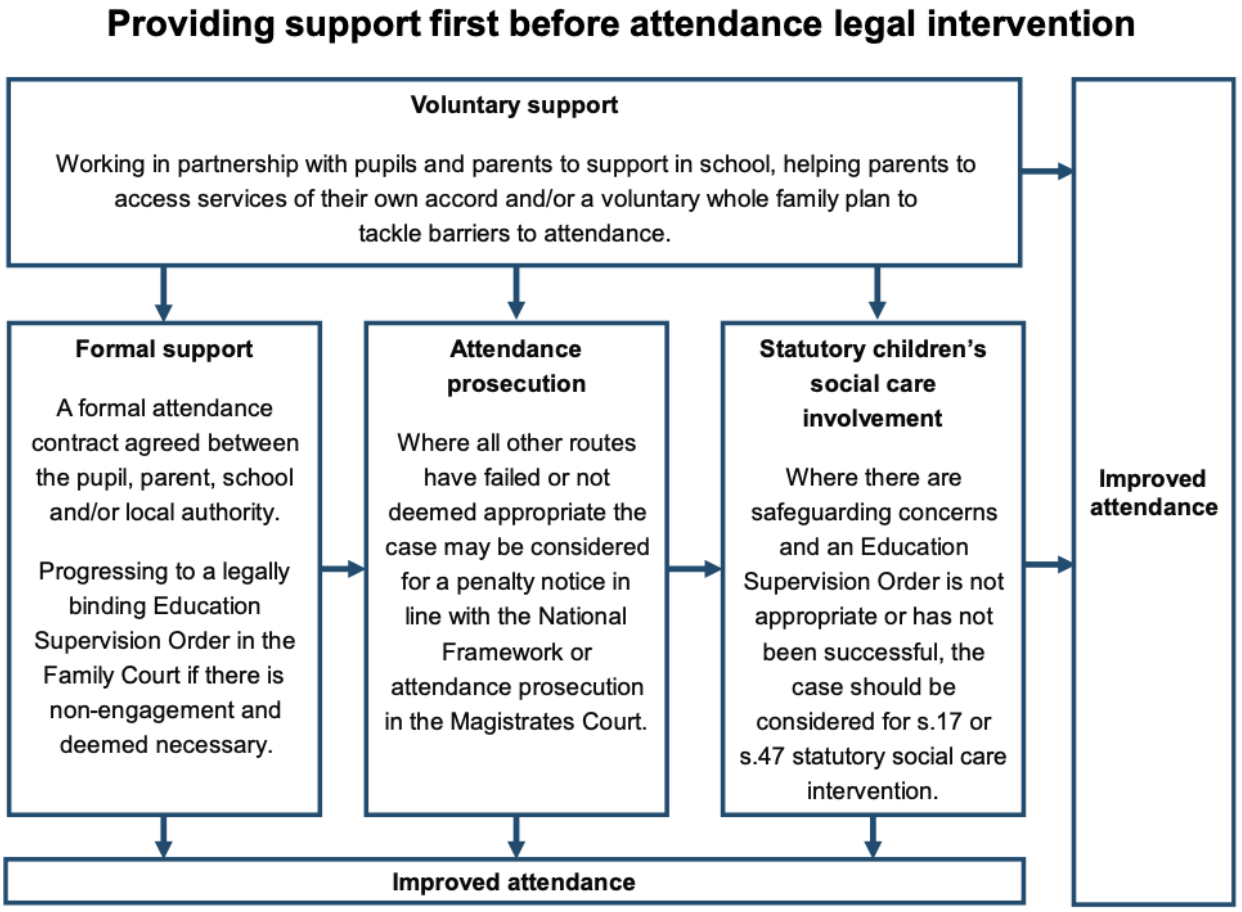
- Discussions with the pupil, parents and the local authority will be held to look at provisions that can be put in place to ensure the child has the opportunity to catch up on missed education.

W. The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence,

- Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.
- We will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.
- Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely
- absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their
- regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range
- of partners.
- A concerted effort is needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support –this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.
- If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and
- other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education,
- health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons
- continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.
- Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- In all cases, schools and local authorities are expected to make patterns of both
- persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils.
- and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent
- and severe absence should also be central to school strategies for improving attendance.
- The school will:
    - Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
    - Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
    - Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
        - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
        - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
        - Explain the help that is available
        - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
        - Review any existing actions or interventions
    - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

X. Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices and when Notices to Improve, penalty notices or other legal interventions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for a holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.



- Schools and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:
  - Attendance contracts
  - Education supervision orders
  - Attendance Prosecution
  - Parenting Orders
  - Penalty Notices
  - Where they are used, it should be clear that it is the most appropriate intervention to change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, headteachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Schools and local authorities should decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention, but this should usually be the parent or parents who have allowed th absence.

Penalty notices

- Every local authority must draw up, and is expected to publish on their website, a Local Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalty notices which must be adhered to by all schools, the police and any local authority officer issuing a penalty notice. In producing or amending the Local Code of Conduct the local authority must consult with schools and the police.
- The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.
- Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
    - A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).
    - Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
    - The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.
    - If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
    - If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
    - A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

Summary of PSA's approach to Attendance:

a. Positive Reinforcement:

- Rewards and Recognition: Celebrate good attendance with certificates or special privileges. Publicly acknowledge students with consistent attendance.
- Make School Engaging: Create a positive and stimulating learning environment that fosters a love of learning and keeps students engaged.
- Positive Communication: Focus on the importance of attendance and its connection to success.

b. Collaboration and Support:

- Strong Parent-Teacher Relationships: Maintain open communication with parents about attendance expectations and offer support to address underlying issues.
- Early Intervention: Identify students at risk of absenteeism early on and work with them and their families to develop solutions.

c. Clear Expectations and Policies:

- Clear Attendance Policy: Have a well-defined policy outlining acceptable absences, reporting procedures, and consequences for non-attendance.
- Consistent Enforcement: Enforce attendance policies fairly and consistently for all students.
- Track and Monitor: Regularly monitor attendance data to identify patterns and intervene where necessary.

d. Monitoring attendance

- The school will monitor and analyse attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level, alongside half-termly, termly and yearly analysis.
- Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE.
- The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.
- Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.
- The school will benchmark its attendance data against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Trustees.

e. Analyzing 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 to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and develop strategies to address the concerns.

f. Work collaboratively and using data to improve attendance

- The school will develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support where necessary working with partners to those students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year, the governing board, school leaders (including those with responsibility for special educational needs, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium.
- 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, partners and local authorities.

Statutory guidance

A. To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- 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.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.

B. ***Summary of responsibilities for school attendance***

- The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school-based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.
- The governing academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

- Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.
- Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.

C. ***The guidance has been updated to:***

- Be clearer on the link between improving attendance and wider school culture, including the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance.
- Reflect changes to the law on keeping school attendance and admission registers including a revised set of codes, granting leaves of absence and access to, and sharing of, attendance information introduced through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Set out the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices and reflect changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Change 'parenting contracts' for attendance to 'attendance contracts' to better reflect the agreement between parents, schools and/or local authorities.

D. The expectations of schools have been updated to:

- the section on pupils who are prevented from attending school due to physical or mental ill health to be clear where schools' role starts and ends, provide further clarification around medical evidence, additional support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and part-time timetables.
- the new requirements for schools on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- provide clarification of the expectations of schools' senior attendance champions.
- expect schools to inform a pupil's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences.

E. The expectations of local authorities have been updated to:

- Provide further detail to clarify additional attendance services that may be traded with schools, local authority responsibilities in relation to cross-border pupils and how to hold effective Targeting Support Meetings.
- Provide further detail on cross partnership ownership of attendance improvement.

F. Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE:

Attending the school

Statistically present

Code / \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
Code L	Late arrival before the register is closed

Attending a place other than the school

If in attendance statistically present

Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Code V	Attending an educational visit or trip
Code P	Participating in a sporting activity
Code W	Attending work experience
Code B	Attending any other approved **supervised** educational activity
Code D	Dual registered at another school

Absent - leave of absence

Statistically not present

Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
Code M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Code J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
Code X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

Absent - other authorised reasons

Statistically not present

Code T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Code R	Religious observance
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
Code E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Statistically not present

Code Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Code Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent - unauthorised absence

Statistically not present

Code G	Holiday not granted by the school
Code N	Reason for absence not yet established
Code O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

Not collected

Code Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
Code #	Planned whole school closure