Poppy Hill Church of England Multi Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

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Date adopted by Governors/ Academy	
Date to be reviewed	July 2028
Policy Status	Statutory
Responsible member	Mr Gareth Baxter

This policy applies to all schools and stakeholders within Poppy Hill Academy Trust

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Poppy Hill Church of England Multi Academy Trust (Poppy Hill Academy Trust) recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

1.2. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

1.3. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means 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.

1.4. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. This draft School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

1.5. This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

1.6. It has been developed in consultation with school governors, teachers, parents, pupils. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities

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of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

1.7. In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

1.8. Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Head Of School, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

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2. Promoting Regular Attendance

2.1. At Poppy Hill Academy Trust, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for

all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

2.2. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

2.3. To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education and Local Authority, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission, registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

3.1. Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

3.2. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information

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about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

- **Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.3. Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

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4.1. A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

4.2. A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent'**. Pupils within this cohort 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.

5. Absence Procedures

5.1. Please see Annex A for summary of Henlow Church of England Academy (Henlow Academy) contacts for attendance.

5.2. Please see Annex B for summary of Meppershall Church of England Academy (Meppershall Academy) contacts for attendance.

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

5.3. **If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.15 am, when our register closes*;*
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.15 am;

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- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained in the following NHS website https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

5.4. **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral may be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child could be considered to be "missing from education." In certain circumstances this could result in your child being removed from our school roll and you would need to reapply for a place, were one was still available

5.5. **If absence continues we will:**

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 96% / causing concern, and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion, Attendance Officer or the students relevant Head of Year or Tutor.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;

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- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

6. Lateness

6.1. Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

6.2. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

6.3. **The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Henlow Academy are:**

Gates open: 8.30am
Line ups start 8:45am
Registration starts: 8.50am
Registration closes: 9.20am
End of the school day: 3.35pm

6.4. **The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Meppershall Academy are:**

Gates open: 8:40am
Registration starts: 8:55am
Registration closes: 9:15am
End of the school day: 3:30pm

6.5. **How we manage lateness:**

6.6. Henlow Academy

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- The school day starts at **8.30am** when children can begin to come into school;
- Students line up on the playground in forms for **8:45am.**
- Registers are taken at **8.50am;**
- Children arriving after **9.00am** are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into the office and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded;
- At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;

6.7. Meppershall Academy

- The school day starts at **8.40am** when children can begin to come into school;
- Registers are taken at **8.55am;**
- Children arriving after **9.00am** are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them into the office and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded;
- At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record,

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you may be asked to meet with your child's teacher, the school's attendance officer or the head of school. But you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

7. Understanding barriers to attendance

7.1. Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health Service, Early Help Worker/Social Worker/Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

7.2. Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

7.3. Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely

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to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Annex C for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

8. Local Authority attendance support services

8.1. Local Authority School Attendance Officers work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

8.2. Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

9. School Attendance and the Law

9.1. New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

9.2. Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a ‘parent’, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred ‘biological parent’) but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

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9.3. A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

10. National Framework for Penalty Notices

10.1. There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

10.2. Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

10.3. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify

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that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

10.4. It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance by the parent with who the child normally lives with, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Central Bedfordshire Code of Conduct for Fixed Penalty Notices, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Poppy Hill Academy Trust 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

- being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

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10.5. The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

10.6. If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

11. Deletion from Roll

11.1. For any pupil leaving Meppershall Academy Primary School, other than at the end of year 6 and Henlow Academy Secondary School other than at the end of year 11, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from *school*' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

11.2. It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

11.3. Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

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12. Absence Data

12.1. We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education and Local Authority on a daily basis 'Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.' Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

12.2. We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

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Annex A: Attendance Contact Details for Henlow Church of England Academy

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Gareth Baxter

gbaxter@henlowacademy.org.uk

01462 813733

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

School Office

info@henlowacademy.org.uk

01462 813733

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance (Attendance Officer/Pastoral Support Worker/Head of Year etc):

Attendance Officer - Laura McLelland

lmclelland@henlowacademy.org.uk

01462 813733

Relevant Head of Year or Tutor

https://www.henlowacademy.co.uk/web/teaching_staff/394692

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Keith Callard

Annex B: Attendance Contact Details for Meppershall Church of England Academy

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The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Ellie Corcoran - Head of School

ecorcoran@meppershallacad.org

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

School Office

office@meppershallacad.org

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance:

Ann Halford - School Business Manager

ahalford@meppershallacad.org

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Keith Callard

Annex C: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	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.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	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.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	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.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	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.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	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.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	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 is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans. Proactively engage with the support offered.	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.	Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.	Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care. (LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will: • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance. (If parents feel the school and or local authority have not not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)	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 board or 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.	DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making. Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.	DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction. Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services. Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing

From 19th August 2024 Penalty Notice fines increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.



You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, for things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

For more information go to:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/missing-school

Annex D: Letter Sent to Parents at the start of the academic year

Note – Letters will vary slightly for Meppershall and Henlow

Dear Parents,

For a child to reach their full potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. It is our duty as a school to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children, so we will take every opportunity to convey the importance of regular attendance to you and your child.

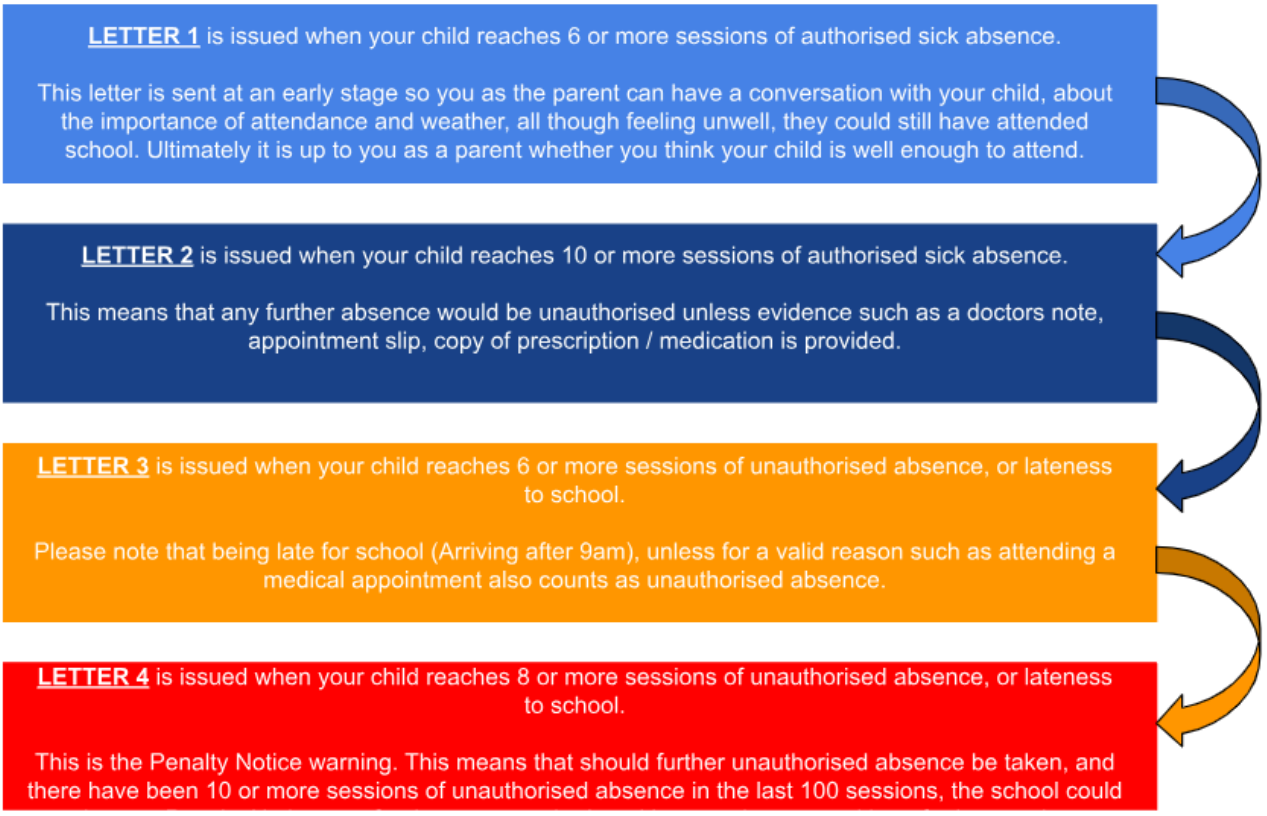
Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 96%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically, and enjoy learning more.
- Regular attenders find school; routines, work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transitioning between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.

To support this, your child's Head of Year, tutor and the school attendance officer will closely monitor their attendance and send you a series of letters. Below is an explanation of these letters.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, which are recorded at the morning and afternoon tutor sessions.

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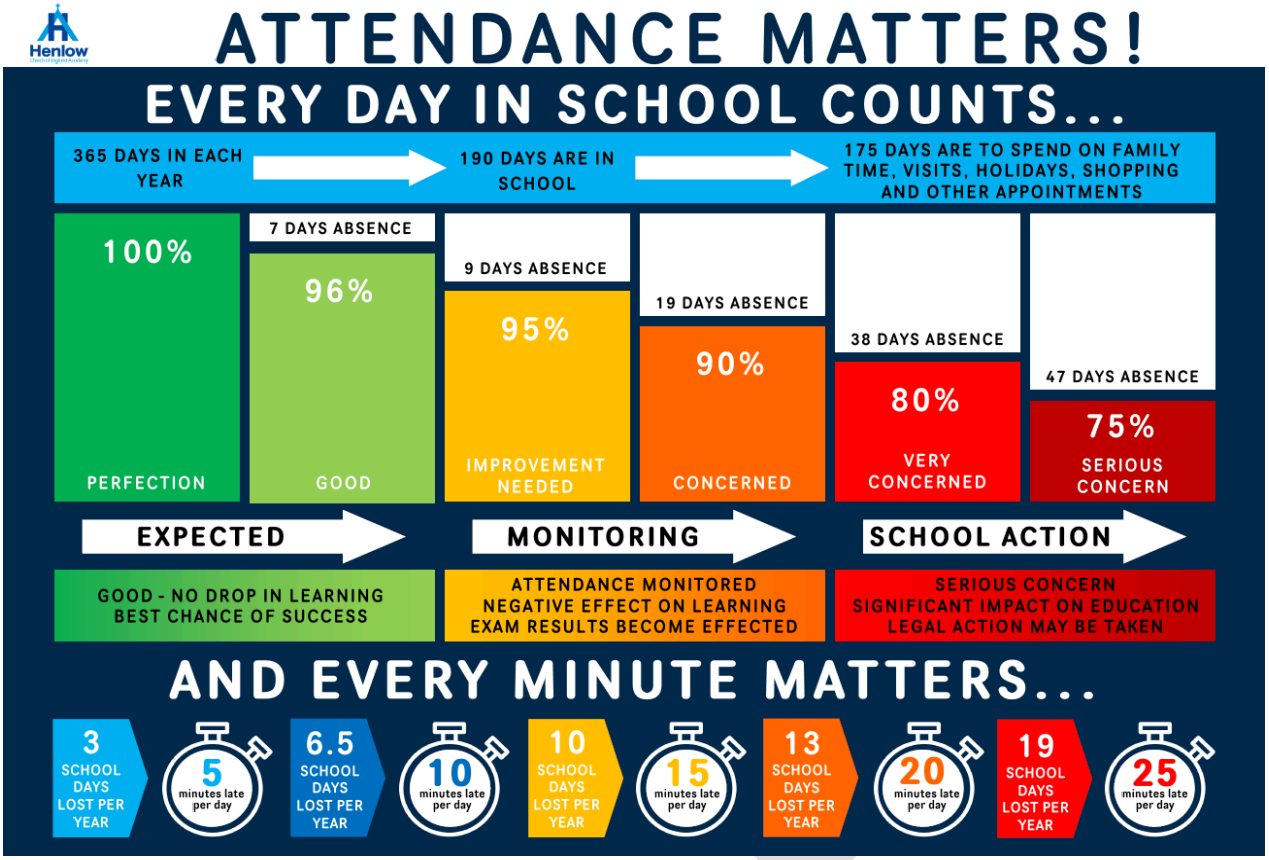


Please note that the trigger points mentioned above are used in the Autumn term. The trigger points will be increased throughout the academic year. The overall objective is that your child is able to reach the end of the academic year with an attendance percentage of 96% or above.

All guidance regarding attendance is in our attendance policy and is accessible through our website. The school website also has other information which you might find helpful in supporting your child's attendance.

The following graph shows how the number of days absent impacts a child's attendance percentage, and why an attendance percentage of 96% or above is fundamental to your child's success in school and beyond.

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If your child is absent from school

Please email the following address: info@henlowacademy.org.uk (It is also helpful if you copy your child's tutor into the email trail), by 9.00am **each** day your child is absent.

If you do not have access to email, telephone the school on 01462 813733 (press 1 to report a student absence) by 9.00am **each** day your child is absent. Please note that if you telephone, you will need to give an explanation for the absence.

If we have not heard from you and your child does not attend morning registration a message will be sent via ParentMail. If the school does not receive an explanation as to why your child is absent, it is possible that the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Annex E: Attendance Letter 1

[Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: [Student's name]'s Attendance

Further to the letter sent to you at the start of the term which explained the process that the school would follow to support and encourage good attendance (A copy of this is available on the website), I am writing to you because **[Student's name]** has had at least **[Number]** sessions absent from school for illness so far this year, if this pattern should continue it could mean that they would fall below the 96% attendance expected at the end of the academic year.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, which are recorded at the morning and afternoon tutor sessions.

The school has a duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance, so that where possible, your child is able to reach the 96% attendance target at the end of the academic year. I am sending this notification at this early stage so that you as a parent can have a conversation with your child about the importance of attendance and whether, although feeling unwell, they could still have attended school.

Please note that ultimately it is up to you as a parent whether you think your child is well enough to attend.

All guidance is in our attendance policy and is accessible through our website, including the next steps that will be taken if attendance drops further. The school website also has other information which you might find helpful, in supporting your child's attendance.

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You may also find the following website useful: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Please see the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- DFE guidance on attendance effects on attainment
- Useful resources from Children's Commissioner for England to support your child back to school

I would very much like to support you and your child, so please contact your child's tutor as soon as possible, if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school, and how your child's attendance might be improved.

Thank you for your support in your child's attendance. I trust that your child's attendance will improve.

Yours sincerely

DRAFT

[Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: [Student's name]'s Attendance

I am writing to you because [**Student's name**] has had at least [Number] sessions absent from school so far this year. If this pattern should continue it could mean that they would fall below the 96% attendance expected at the end of the academic year.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, which are recorded at the morning and afternoon tutor sessions.

Since our previous communication [**Student's name**] attendance has not improved. **I am therefore informing you that the school will not be able to authorise any future absences,** unless medical evidence such as a prescription slip or appointment confirmation is provided.

The school has a duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance, so that where possible, your child is able to reach the 96% attendance target at the end of the academic year.

All guidance is in our attendance policy is accessible through our website, including the next steps that will be taken if attendance drops further, which could include a Penalty Notice being issued, or being referred to the Legal Intervention Team. The school website also has other information which you might find helpful, in supporting your child's attendance.

I enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- DFE guidance on attendance effects on attainment

DRAFT

- Useful resources from Children's Commissioner for England to support your child back to school

I would very much like to support you and your child, so please contact me as soon as possible, if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school, and how your child's attendance might be improved.

Thank you for your support in your child's attendance. I trust that your child's attendance will improve.

Yours sincerely

DRAFT

Annex F: Attendance Letter 3

[Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Re: [Student's name]'s attendance - Warning letter Unauthorised absence

I am writing to you because [Student's name] has had at least [Number of sessions] sessions absent from and/or where they have been late to school which are unauthorised and coded L, U, O, G or N. If this pattern should continue it will/could mean that they would fall below the 96% attendance expected at the end of the academic year.

Please note that each day is made up of two sessions, which are recorded at the morning and afternoon tutor sessions.

The school has a duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance, so that where possible, your child is able to reach the 96% attendance target set by the school.

Parents will receive a Penalty Notice Warning letter if during the last 100 sessions, their child, is marked as being:

- absent for 8 or more half-day sessions, which are unauthorised (coded O, U or G)
- persistently late (coded U) for 8 or more half day sessions after the register has closed; our registration closes at 09:20
- persistently late (coded L) for 8 or more half day sessions before the register has closed: so after 08:50 but before 09:00.

Please note that a combination of unauthorised codes can be used, and these do not need to be on consecutive days.

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All guidance is in our attendance policy is accessible through our website, including the next steps that will be taken if attendance drops further, which could include a Penalty Notice being issued, or being referred to the Legal Intervention Team. The school website also has other information which you might find helpful, in supporting your child's attendance.

I enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- Central Bedfordshire guidance on Penalty Notices
- Resources to support school attendance
- DFE guidance on attendance effects on attainment

I would very much like to support you and your child, so please contact me as soon as possible, if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school, and how your child's attendance might be improved.

Thank you for your support in your child's attendance. I trust that your child's attendance will improve.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gareth Baxter

Attendance Champion

DRAFT

Annex G: Attendance Letter 4

[Date]

Dear [Parent/Carer]

Warning Letter in Respect of a Penalty Notice for Non-Attendance

I am writing with regard to **[Student's name], DOB: [Date],** school attendance and to advise you that despite attempts to resolve the concerns, **[Student's name],** attendance/punctuality remains unsatisfactory.

According to our records your child, has had **[Number] half-day sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness** from The Henry Beaufort School between the period **[Monday [Date] to [Date]].** These unauthorised absences can be found on your child's Edulink account.

You are advised that parents/carers are required by law to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in prosecution under the Education Act 1996, section 444(1), and 444(1A). The Local Authority is empowered to issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers whose children fail to attend school regularly and punctually as the absence has been recorded as unauthorised. As a school we are issuing this warning in line with Central Bedfordshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices.

The purpose of this letter is to warn you that if [Student's name]'s attendance and/or punctuality does not significantly improve and that improvement be maintained, you will be issued with a Penalty Notice or referred to the Legal Intervention Team without further warning.

DRAFT

If you believe you will be unable to ensure your child's regular attendance and punctuality at school, you should contact **[Head of Year's details, Head of Year [Number]] Henlow Church of England Academy, Church Rd, Henlow SG16 6AN** as soon as possible to arrange a meeting to discuss any difficulties and available support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gareth Baxter

Attendance Champion

DRAFT

Annex G: Attendance Register Codes

New Attendance Codes from 2024

Codes	DFE Descriptions
/	Present at the school morning session
\	Present at the school afternoon session
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
G	Holiday not granted by the school
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to an educational institution
L	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Attending a medical or dental appointment
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
P	Participating in a sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date
#	Planned whole school closure-no session to take place