



THE BASILDON LOWER ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

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All student attendance queries and concerns should be raised via email to:

lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk

or by phone to:

01268 498881

Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles & responsibilities	4
4. Recording attendance	7
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	10
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	13
7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school	14
8. Attendance monitoring	15
9. Monitoring arrangements	17
10. Links with other policies	17
Appendix 1: attendance codes	18
Appendix 2: Working together to improve attendance – steps for all	21
Appendix 3: Summery tables of responsibilities for school attendance	22



1. Aims

The Basildon Lower Academy recognises positive behaviour and good attendance are essential for students to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

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 school.

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

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made> It also refers to:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for all schools in the Trust on at least a termly basis. It holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The names of our linked Trustees with responsibility for monitoring attendance are:

Keith Bobbin & Deirdre O'Donoghue

3.2 The Trust Board

The trust board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students, and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students needs.
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues.
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers.
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners, and keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors and the Trust
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Senior Attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the students needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels

3.4 The designated senior attendance champion responsible for attendance

The designated Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with students, parents/carers, and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for attendance is:



Sydney Killick
skillick@basildonacademies.org.uk

3.5 The Senior attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Senior Attendance Champion responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices.

The Senior Attendance Officer for The Lower Academy is:



Radhika Anand

lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk
01268 498881

3.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the attendance team:

AM registration starts at 8.30am and closes at 8.45am

PM registration for year 8 & 9 starts at 13.00pm and closes at 13.15 pm.

PM registration for year 7 starts at 13.30pm and closes at 13.45 pm.

The school day ends at 15.00pm

3.7 School Attendance Team & Reception staff

School attendance team and reception staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Pastoral team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.8 Parents

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

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Lower Academy Attendance team via lowerattendance@basildonacademies. Alternatively, you can contact the appropriate Student Development Assistant for your child's year group:
 - Year 7: Ms A Hymas
 - Year 8: Mr T Emberson
 - Year 9: Ms S Monangai

3.9 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students onto this register.

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

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

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.00pm

Students must arrive in school by before registration opens at 8.25 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30 am and will be kept open until 8.45 am. The

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by emailing lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk or by calling the school on 01268498881. We monitor and review all student absences, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before *8:30 am, when our register opens*.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *8:30 am*.
- 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 after the third consecutive day or where your child is having multiple periods of absence over the term where attendance has fallen below 95%. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, parents, carers, and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (appendix A).

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 remains your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents or carers 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 will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents or carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be “missing from education.”

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95% and/or where punctuality is a concern.
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Officer or member of staff allocated to support.
- 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.
- 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.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the students parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Requests for leave of absence information and the leave of absence form can be found on the Basildon Lower Academy website in the parent's section under the heading Attendance & Absence. A formal request must be made to the Headteacher using the leave of absence form. All requests must be made at least 4 weeks prior to the planned absence date.

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

The student's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to liaise with subject teachers on their return to school to catch up on any missed work. Where absence has been agreed in advance, it is the student's responsibility to collect their work from the subject teachers prior to the absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

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

Students 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

A student who arrives late:

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

Please see section 4.1 for registration opening and closing times.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.00am** when children can begin to come into school.
- Registers are taken at **8.30am**
- Children arriving after **8.30am** are required to come into school via the school reception. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign in at reception and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- At **8.45am** 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.
- From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.
- 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, you may be asked to meet with the Senior Attendance Officer or member of staff allocated to support.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may send letters home, and a home visit may be made.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the student 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 a notice to improve may be issued. If this is not successful, then a penalty notice could be issued or further legal sanctions.

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels through contact made by the attendance team when concerns over levels of absence have been recognised. All students will receive a bi yearly report their academic progress which will include their attendance and absence data.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow students 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 student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

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

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

We define **'exceptional circumstances'** 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)."

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the lower academy website or via this link [Application for Leave of Absence](#). The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. 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 student is attending educational provision.
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student 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 student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student 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.

5.2 Sanctions

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

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution.
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student'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 student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

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 student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the student'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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good relationships between home and the academies are essential in developing a rise in the level of attendance.

At The Basildon Lower Academy, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our students 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.

- First day absence contact shows the concern of the academy. It enables problems to be dealt with immediately. Parents and carers feel more able to ask for advice and assistance.
- Request to parents and carers that they should inform the academy immediately when they know their child will be absent. Phone, email, text, contact us form and in person are all appropriate methods of contact.
- The expectation is for parents/carers to inform the Academies on each and every day of absence by 8:30am. It is at the Headteacher's discretion to authorise absences.
- If no reasons are received within 30 minutes, The Academies will initiate First Day Calling and may conduct an unannounced home visit.
- Medical evidence will be requested for absences requested in advance of pre-arranged medical appointments, or after the 5th consecutive day of medical related absence.
- Medical evidence will also be requested for periods of absence following early help or school based attendance meetings, for the academy to consider authorizing the absence.
- Contact with parents or carers through information about attendance e.g. through personal attendance target letters, website etc.
- Regular internal truancy audits – spot checks on classrooms to identify internal truants and inform parents/carers.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, 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 and attendance 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.

Rewards and Incentives

- Rewards for 100% attendance

- Attendance information read out in assemblies.
- Reward trips.
- Positive home school liaisons.
- We may issue letters to parents/carers to praise good attendance or to raise concerns.

Working with parents to improve attendance.

The academy will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with students and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. This may include:

- Weekly attendance updates to students via their form tutor
- Letters home
- Planned or unplanned home visits
- Face to face meetings, including Attendance Panels
- Telephone discussions

The school will liaise with other agencies working with students and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services. The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each student wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for contacting adults responsible for a student where the student is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education (by sending letters, discussing via telephone, conducting meetings and home visits) – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance.

If a pattern of absence becomes evident, the attendance and pastoral teams will work collaboratively with the student and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the student from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for student absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

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 Aquinas, the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s

7.1 Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students 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 students; however, we will work with families and students 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.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all students who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND.

Where a student 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 student's needs, the school will inform the local authority. We will also ensure that through meetings with the relevant support staff, linked staff and attached agencies that plans are in place to support attendance to school and the students' timetables all based around the school day and how we can help the student ensure that they attend school and receive the help required in being in school. Further support with the SEND department will be in place as well as follow up meetings and reviews.

Additional Support that may be provided Please see table 7.4

7.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.

In cases of a lengthy absence, schools will work with students and families to establish a support plan:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying reason for absence.
- Consider adjustments to practise and policies to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a student has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the student and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a student is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the student will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the students total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

7.4: Table of Support for students who are absent or returning to school.

Below is a table of the possible support that could be used to support students, it is not an exhaustive list.

Students who are reluctant to attend	Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance	Students absent due to mental or Physical ill health or SEND	Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence.
• Initial contact by attendance team • Meeting with year group SDA • Meeting with Aquinas • Completion of school attendance difficulties assessment form • Referral to Wellbeing centre support • Attendance passport shared with all staff.	• Initial contact from the attendance team • Contact by Aquinas to establish barriers. • Early Help meetings to assess reasons for absence. • Completion of school attendance difficulties assessment form. • TAF meeting if required. • Reintegration plan with pastoral support. • Attendance Passport • Additional support from Wellbeing	• Early help meeting with attendance team. • TAF meeting with all key Parties and services • Reintegration plan completed. • Attendance passport in place • Multi agency approach is required. • Additional support from Wellbeing Centre & SEND department.	• Early help meeting with attendance team & Key pastoral staff. • TAF meeting with relevant professionals • Completion of school attendance difficulties questionnaire with Student and parents • Reintegration plan • attendance passport • Consideration and monitoring of reasonable adjustments made. • Time limited phased return if appropriate

• Regular monitoring with pastoral team. • Signpost for early help support if necessary.	Centre & SEND department.	• Reasonable adjustments made. • Regular monitoring meetings	• Additional support from Wellbeing Centre & SEND department.
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8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team at the Academy monitors attendance daily. We use data to monitor, identify and support individual students or groups of students when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit student attendance data to the Department for Education daily. Persistently and severely absent students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

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.

A student's parents or carer is expected to call the school each morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carers, we will consider the following actions:

- School based attendance meetings
- Assessment of need in terms of barriers to attendance
- Early Help meetings
- Involvement of the local authority attendance specialist team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

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

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the Trust board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance.

The school will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis.
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the pastoral team & where pertinent class teachers to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the trust board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence.

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students 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 students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Attendance Passports to support successful reintegration following extended period of absence.
- Use of attendance contracts between the student, parent, and school and/or local authority
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
 - Penalty Notices
 - Notices to Improve
 - Parenting orders
 - Attendance prosecution

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Senior Attendance Champion. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full trust board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination

X	Not required to be in school	student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention

		- Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or - Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	students travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Working Together to Improve Attendance

Step 1: Expect

We aspire for all students to have high expectations across our academies, building a culture that all can and want to be in school. Readiness to learn is key and our non-teaching pastoral team are committed to removing any barriers to attendance and punctuality.

Step 2: Monitor

Our dedicated Attendance Team use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible, at individual and cohort level. Contact with parents/carers and if necessary, other agencies, will be made as soon as possible to resolve issues before they become entrenched.

Step 3: Listen & Understand

When a pattern is spotted, our Attendance Team will discuss with students and parents/carers. We will listen to help understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Step 4: Facilitate Support

We will help remove barriers in school, accessing early help for students and parents/carers where this is needed. This might include a whole family plan or individual referral where absence is a symptom of a wider issue.

Step 5: 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 improvements in attendance to school. Depending on the circumstances, this could include support through a parenting contract or education supervision order via the local authority.

Step 6: Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working to improve school attendance, enforcing school attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution can be sought to protect a student's right to an education.

Appendix 3

Summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance, Statutory Guidance for Schools, and Local Authorities.

Attendance is everybody's business all parties, students, parents, schools, local authority, and other services should work together to ensure that students receive the correct support to improve attendance.

All students

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.

Students 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.

Persistently absent students

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).

Severely absent students

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 students 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 students 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 students 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 - wherever 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 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.

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)