Attendance policy

Elements Diocesan Learning Trust

Malvern Parish CE Primary School

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1. Vision

Together we flourish in the love of God

Elements Diocesan Learning Trust values the individual nature of each school within the Trust family. We believe that every person is a unique and precious gift, created with purpose and value. We nurture each person as a child of God and recognise their inherent potential. Through our collective efforts, we inspire hope, nurture faith, and promote the flourishing of each school.

We ensure that every person is seen, valued, and empowered to succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances. Through justice and equity, we foster an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and every person's unique gifts are honoured.

By embracing these principles, we create a culture where every person values themselves, their community, and the world around them to become compassionate, confident, and responsible individuals.

Values

To love, to learn, to serve – through collaboration, honesty and hope.

Our core values underpin all aspects of our Trust as we strive to make a positive difference to the lives of all pupils whilst they are at school and in later life. Through these values, we can be sure our community is one of hope; a place of transformation and trust, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

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Love
We are committed to Compassion and Care: As Christ commands, we strive to love one another deeply, fostering empathy, respect, and kindness. We create a culture where we genuinely care for each other, supporting personal, professional and spiritual growth, as we walk in His love.

Learn
We are committed to Continuous Growth and Wisdom: Following the call to grow in knowledge and understanding, we cultivate a culture of curiosity, adaptability, and continual improvement. We encourage all to seek wisdom and learning, guided by God's truth, that we might serve more effectively.

Serve
We are committed to Service and Impact: Inspired by Christ's example of humble service, we dedicate ourselves to serving others, contributing to the well-being of our schools, communities, and beyond, bringing His light and love into all we do.

Collaboration
We are committed to Unity in Purpose: We value working together in mutual respect, knowing that through collaboration, we can have a greater impact supporting each other to achieve our shared vision.

Honesty
We are committed to Integrity and Truth: Following Christ's call to live in truth, we foster a culture of honesty, transparency, and trust, ensuring that our actions reflect His integrity in all dealings, upholding the highest ethical standards.

Hope
We are committed to Inspiring Hope and Faith: As bearers of Christ's hope, we instil in every individual the belief in their God-given potential to achieve great things, trusting in His plan to bring good out of all circumstances, and inspiring hope for a future filled with His promises.

2. Attendance Principles

Promoting regular attendance is integral to fulfilling our shared vision: **Together we flourish in the love of God**. All schools within Elements Diocesan Learning Trust are united by this vision and committed to creating environments where every child is nurtured, valued, and supported to achieve their full potential. Good attendance is a foundational requirement for this flourishing. Pupils cannot learn, grow, or benefit from the opportunities offered by their school if they are not present.

Absence from school, when avoidable, places pupils at risk of underachievement, disengagement, and reduced future prospects. It may also increase vulnerability in other ways. Ensuring that pupils attend regularly, are safe, and participate fully in their education is therefore a core safeguarding and educational responsibility.

All staff across the Trust have a role in monitoring attendance and promoting high expectations. Attendance is not a standalone issue; it is embedded within each school's curriculum, culture, and daily practice. Creating a climate where pupils feel seen, valued, and motivated to attend is a collective responsibility.

This policy sets out the Trust's commitment to meeting statutory duties relating to school attendance, including those outlined in Department for Education (DfE) guidance. It demonstrates how our whole-school culture and Christian ethos underpin a consistent, values-led approach to securing good attendance for all pupils.

3. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-trust culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

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- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance 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 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The board of directors

The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership for attendance across Elements Diocesan Learning Trust. Through the Quality and Effectiveness (QE) Committee, the Board ensures that attendance remains a high-priority indicator of pupil wellbeing, school effectiveness, and trust-wide performance.

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations for attendance across the Trust and ensuring these expectations are reflected in strategic priorities and trust-wide standards.
- Championing the importance of attendance as a key driver of pupil achievement, safeguarding, and flourishing, ensuring it is embedded within the Trust's ethos and policy framework.
- Monitoring trust-wide attendance performance through regular reports to the QE Committee, identifying trends, patterns, and areas requiring strategic focus.
- Providing strategic challenge and support to the executive team to ensure that attendance remains a central focus of school improvement.
- Reviewing comparative attendance data across schools to identify common issues, strengths, and opportunities for shared learning.
- Setting trust-wide strategic goals or areas of focus for attendance improvement, ensuring alignment with the Trust's vision and values.
- Ensuring effective governance oversight by receiving termly attendance updates from the QE Committee and using these to inform strategic decision-making.

- Promoting the sharing of effective practice between schools, encouraging collaboration and consistency in approaches to attendance.
- Maintaining high aspirations for all pupils, ensuring that strategic decisions support the flourishing of every child, including key groups such as SEND, SEMH and other vulnerable children, in line with the Trust's Christian vision.

5.2 The Local School/Academy Board

The local school/academy board is responsible for:

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

5.3 The Trust Chief School Improvement Officer / Director of Education

The Chief School Improvement Officer / Director of Education provides strategic leadership for attendance across Elements Diocesan Learning Trust. Their role ensures that attendance is embedded within the Trust's school improvement strategy and that leaders across all schools maintain a strong focus on securing high levels of pupil attendance.

The Chief School Improvement Officer / Director of Education is responsible for:

- Leading the strategic direction for attendance across the Trust as part of wider school improvement priorities.
- Ensuring attendance is a core component of school effectiveness, recognising its impact on pupil achievement, safeguarding, and overall flourishing.
- Monitoring trust-wide attendance performance, identifying patterns, trends, and areas requiring strategic focus or intervention.
- Providing strategic guidance and challenge to headteachers and senior leaders to ensure attendance remains a priority within each school's improvement planning.
- Working more intensively with schools requiring additional support, ensuring that attendance concerns are addressed within broader improvement strategies.
- Acting as the central point of contact for school leaders on strategic attendance matters.
- Reporting attendance trends and priorities to the Board of Directors and the Quality of Education (QE) Committee to support informed governance oversight.
- Promoting the sharing of effective practice across the Trust, ensuring schools learn from each other and adopt approaches that support improved attendance.
- Maintaining high aspirations for all pupils, ensuring that strategic decisions support the flourishing of every child in line with the Trust's Christian vision.

5.4 The headteacher/head of school

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

5.5 The school designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the *senior attendance champion*) provides strategic leadership for attendance and ensures that the school maintains high expectations, effective systems, and strong relationships that support good attendance for all pupils. While they may delegate aspects of the role, they retain overall oversight and ensure that all actions uphold the school's vision for improving and sustaining good attendance.

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing, and improving attendance across the school, ensuring it remains a high priority for all staff.
- Setting a clear vision and culture for improving and maintaining good attendance, aligned with the school's Christian vision and values.
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance expectations, systems, and processes, ensuring they are effective, consistent, and understood by all staff.
- Maintaining a strong grasp of attendance and absence data, including oversight of data analysis and interpretation.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance and identifying emerging issues or trends.
- Benchmarking attendance data against trust-wide and national figures to identify areas requiring improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and senior leaders, and escalating concerns where necessary.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and ensuring all staff follow agreed procedures.
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers, and external agencies, where appropriate, to address attendance concerns and remove barriers.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence and support families in improving attendance.
- Deciding when to issue fixed-penalty notices, in line with statutory guidance and trust policy.
- Building close, constructive relationships with parents/carers, ensuring attendance issues are discussed openly and supportively.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers, ensuring tailored support is provided.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families who require additional help to improve attendance.
- Overseeing delegated attendance responsibilities, ensuring staff understand their roles and that practice remains consistent and effective.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Worthington and can be contacted via the school office office@malvernparish.dowmat.education 01684 574084

5.6 Class teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office by the end of the morning and afternoon registration period.

Class teachers are also responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the senior attendance champion where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing additional information to support referrals
- Understanding where SEND/SEMH/other vulnerabilities impact attendance and work with senior colleagues to address them
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Discussing attendance issues at parent/carer consultation evenings where necessary

5.7 school admin/office staff

School office/admin 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 and Wellbeing Lead/senior attendance champion where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Collate and record registration and attendance information
- Contact parents of absent children where no parental contact has been received
- Record details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the senior attendance champion
- Send out standard letters regarding attendance and punctuality

5.8 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 ever day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45am 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. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- 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 school via the school office.

5.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

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

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at3:15 pm

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:15am

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by8:45am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via office@malvernparish.dowmat.education 01684 574084

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 unauthorized and parents will be notified of this in advance.

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment via the school office.

Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

Schools will monitor pupil punctuality on a weekly basis and will contact parents or carers by phone or email when concerns arise regarding lateness. Where punctuality does not improve, the school will arrange a more formal but supportive meeting with parents or carers, involving the headteacher and/or the Senior Mental Health Lead, SENDCo or Thrive practitioner, to identify underlying issues and agree appropriate interventions to address persistent lateness.

6.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's primary named contact on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the primary contact cannot be contacted a voice message will be left where possible asking the parent to contact the school to provide a reason for absence. If contact cannot be made with the primary contact, the school will contact the emergency contacts held on file for the child. Email and Class Dojo messages will also be used with the primary contact to ascertain a reason for a child's absence. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, contact Worcestershire Children's Services or contact the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 9 below) as appropriate.

6.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 5.8 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

In the Autumn term, attendance information will be reported to all parents at the Autumn Term Parents' Evenings.

In the Spring term, attendance information will be reported to parents via the Spring Term Attainment and Progress Review and discussed further at the Spring Term Parents' Evenings.

In the Summer term, attendance information will be reported to parents via the pupil's annual report.

Certain groups of pupils, such as Pupil Premium, SEND, may receive half-termly updates via email. This will be based on ongoing attendance information analysis and dependent on groups of concern at the time.

Parents of children who are persistent or severe absentees will receive weekly contact from the school, either via email or phone call, updating them in progress and any concerns.

We report whole school attendance to parents regularly. Whole school and class attendance is a feature on every newsletter.

7. Authorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

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

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)]

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil 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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

7.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 6.2 and 6.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong (s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

7.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

We celebrate god attendance in our Friday Worship and on our weekly newsletter.

9. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our schools will make use of the full range of support and 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.

9.1 Attendance Contracts

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

9.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

9.3 Notice to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

9.4 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), 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, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

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

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

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

10. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

10.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The trust is committed to working collaboratively with pupils and their families to improve attendance, particularly for vulnerable pupils and those whose attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence) or 50% (severe absence) or where more complex barriers to attendance are identified.

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

Schools will hold regular meetings with parents or carers to review attendance and engagement. These discussions will focus on understanding the barriers preventing regular attendance and agreeing appropriate actions or interventions to address them. Where needed, in school support may be provided, which could include work with pastoral staff, learning mentors, or mental health leads. The pupil's voice will be sought wherever appropriate, and reasonable adaptations may be put in place to support improved attendance. Any adaptations or interventions will be reviewed regularly.

If absence increases or becomes more complex, schools will seek support from wider partners and external professionals to ensure families receive timely and appropriate help. This may include a voluntary Early Help referral so that relevant agencies can work together to support the family.

Where engagement with support becomes challenging, schools will arrange more formal meetings with parents or carers. These meetings will be led by senior school leaders and may include a representative

from the local authority. The purpose of these meetings is to explain the impact of persistent or severe absence, outline potential consequences, and ensure families understand the support available to help improve attendance.

Where voluntary support has not been effective or has not been engaged with, schools will work with the local authority to consider formal measures, which may include:

- A parenting contract
- An education supervision order
- A fixed penalty notice, where appropriate and proportionate
- Statutory children's social care involvement where safeguarding concerns exist, particularly in cases of severe absence
- Prosecution, where all other routes have been exhausted or are not deemed appropriate

Schools will monitor the impact of all interventions and adjust support as needed, in consultation with the pupil, parents or carers, and any professionals involved as part of a whole family plan.

Where pupils have experienced a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, schools will provide support to aid reintegration, rebuild confidence, and address learning gaps. This may include planning and review meetings with the pupil and family, an age appropriate reintegration programme, or direct work with pastoral or mental health staff.

10.2 Pupils absent due to mental, physical ill health, SEND, or other barriers to attendance

Parents should consult the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. This may include pupils with long-term medical conditions, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those that are disadvantaged, those known or previously known to social care or other complex circumstances e.g. young carers. These pupils have the same entitlement to full-time education as any other pupil, and schools maintain the same high attendance ambition for them.

Schools will work with pupils and families where attendance is a concern, putting additional support in place where necessary to help pupils access full-time education. This may include:

- Holding discussions with pupils and families to understand the impact of physical or mental health conditions and to agree appropriate support. This may involve developing or reviewing an individual healthcare plan, providing pastoral or mental health support in school, or seeking advice from external professionals where appropriate.
- Working with parents and carers to identify tailored approaches for pupils with SEND. This may include reviewing the pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with the school's Inclusion Lead and accessing support from external agencies.
- Removing in-school barriers to attendance, including considering reasonable adjustments to routines, expectations, or provision. Additional pastoral support may be offered, and in exceptional circumstances a time-limited phased return may be agreed.

Attendance data for pupils with SEND or medical needs will be monitored regularly by the headteacher and shared with the Local School Committee and the local authority through Targeting Support Meetings.

Where pupils have long-term illness or other health needs that require alternative provision arranged by the local authority, the school will work closely with all agencies and the family to ensure a smooth and appropriate transition.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes concerned about barriers affecting attendance, the school will work with parents, the local authority, and relevant professionals to review the plan and ensure appropriate support is in place.

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

Where a pupil returns to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school will implement a reintegration plan to support the pupil and their family. This will include a meeting with the pupil and parents or carers to identify any adaptations needed to help the pupil settle back into school. Adaptations may include a planned and time-limited build-up to full-time attendance, adjustments to routines or classroom arrangements, provision of required equipment or risk assessments, and additional pastoral support where appropriate.

The reintegration plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the agreed actions are meeting the pupil's needs and supporting a successful return to full-time education.

10.4 Prolonged absence for pupils in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy which can be viewed on the school website) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

11. Attendance monitoring

The senior attendance champion will monitor pupil absence on a fortnightly basis. When a pupil's attendance first becomes a concern, the school will notify parents or carers in writing and invite them to contact the school to discuss any issues. If attendance does not improve and no legitimate reason is provided, a follow-up letter will be issued explaining that the pupil's attendance will be formally monitored and that future absence may not be authorised without medical evidence. Parents will also be informed that continued low attendance may result in involvement from the local authority and, where necessary, legal intervention.

Daily monitoring will include routine telephone contact with parents or carers where no information has been received about a pupil's absence. Where concerns persist, a formal meeting will be arranged with parents or carers.

Pupil-level attendance data will be collected and analysed half-termly, term and year to identify patterns and trends. This analysis will be used to target improvement efforts for individual pupils or specific cohorts. Cohorts monitored include:

- Boys
- Girls
- Pupils eligible for Free School Meals
- Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium
- Pupils with a social worker, including Children Looked After
- Pupils on the SEND register

The headteacher will benchmark school attendance data against published local, regional and national figures to identify areas for improvement. A full attendance report will be shared with the Local School Committee each term.

Following data analysis, targeted improvement work will be undertaken for individual pupils, identified cohorts, or persistent/severe absentees. This may include:

- Attendance incentives
- Additional training for staff
- Meetings with parents to offer guidance and support
- Multi-agency meetings to ensure families receive appropriate help
- Early Help support
- Working with the local authority to promote good attendance

The Executive Team and Directors of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust will provide strategic support and challenge to schools by:

- Reviewing attendance data at board meetings, including recent and historic trends, and benchmarking against comparator schools locally, regionally and nationally. Schools will report attendance information to the board at least termly.
- Paying particular attention to attendance within pupil cohorts that have historically experienced low attendance or face entrenched barriers.
- Working with school leaders to set attendance goals or areas of focus and providing support and challenge around progress.
- Supporting schools with lower attendance to develop and regularly review a comprehensive attendance action plan. This may form part of wider school improvement planning and may include school-to-school support.
- Holding termly attendance review meetings with individual schools where required.

Half-termly school development impact days will provide opportunities for staff across the Trust to share effective practice, learn from each other, and access training or resources related to attendance improvement.

11.1 Monitoring attendance

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

Specific pupil 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 trust and its member schools will benchmark its attendance data at whole trust/ school year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the [board of directors for the trust sand /local committee for the schools.

11.2 Analysing attendance

The trust and its members schools will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Identify attendance patterns across the trust to identify common issues and barriers and share effective practice between schools

11.3 Using data to improve attendance

The trust and its member schools will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 11.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the [board of directors and its local committees and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other trusts and schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

11.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the trusts and its member schools strategy for improving attendance.

The trust and its member schools 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 pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 9, above)

12. Staff Training and Professional Development

Schools ensures that all staff receive the training and professional development they need, including:

- The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
- The laws and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
- The processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it

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

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

13. Monitoring arrangements

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

14. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Anti-bullying policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy
- Suspension and permanent exclusion policy
- Pupil mental health and wellbeing
- EYFS policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

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

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays