ST. JOHN FISHER
AMORE DEO
R.C. PRIMARY

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Catholic Academy Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Control Summary

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Summary of Changes

Date	Version	Action	Summary of Changes
Term 1, 25/26	1.0	New Policy	New policy development based on updated statutory guidance.
Term 1, 26/28	1.1	Amendments throughout Minor Amendments	Updated the policy to reflect the latest Department for Education attendance guidance and related statutory updates. Further details guidance for Attendance Codes in Appendix 1.

Contents Page

1.0 Aims 4
2.0 Legislation and Guidance 4
3.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Staff Across the Trust 5
4.0 Recording Attendance 10
5.0 Authorised Unauthorised Absence 13
6.0 Strategies for Promoting Attendance 16
7.0 Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School 18
8.0 Attendance Monitoring 20
9.0 Monitoring Arrangements 22
10.0 Links with Other Policies 23
Appendix 1: Attendance Codes 24

1.0 Aims

Our mission at STOC, as a Catholic Academy Trust, is to Make Christ Known and ensure we are making lives better for our communities, our children and young people and all of our stakeholders. We have a duty as a Catholic school to follow the Church's teaching care for the poor and educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged. There is a duty to make the person of Jesus Christ known and loved, and to place Him and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre. This includes promoting:

- The Search for Excellence
- The Uniqueness of the Individual
- The Education of the Whole Person
- Moral Principles

Our mission as a school is to: **Love Jesus, love learning, Inspiring each other to be the best that we can be.**

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 (updated 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Fostering a welcoming and safe school environment where all pupils feel heard, respected and valued
- Ensuring staff understand that attendance is everyone's responsibility, reinforced through clear roles and responsibilities
- 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
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Adopting a support first approach and 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.

2.0 Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (updated 2026) 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 and the 2024 amendment
- The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- School census guidance
- Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit
- DFE Children Missing Education 2025

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

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Staff Across the Trust

3.1 The Board of Directors:

Through the Trust Attendance Team, and the wider performance team, the Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all trust and school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Ensuring school leaders and Local Governing Bodies understand and fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure all schools in the trust record attendance accurately in the register, and share the required information with the DfE and local authorities
- Making sure all schools in the trust work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keep them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's policies and ethos
- Ensuring the schools' attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Ensuring the trust 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, through half-termly attendance review meetings with each individual school
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Overseeing the effective delivery of attendance processes and ensuring staff and resources are targeted to support pupils who need it most, including those with SEND and from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust 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
- Ensuring all staff receive adequate training on attendance, including with teachers from across the trust, 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 trust'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
- Ensuring dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across the trust and providing regular opportunities for staff from different schools to come together, learn from each other and share resources
- Identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the trust's schools to identify common issues and barriers, and share effective practice between schools
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher:

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Ensuring all staff understand their school's attendance policy and their role and responsibilities in promoting good attendance, whilst contributing to a safe and positive school environment.
- 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 Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance to be able to do so
- Supporting the SENCO 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
- Supporting the SENCO in 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
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Ensuring staff understand that poor attendance and children missing education may be indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and that attendance concerns are considered as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

- 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 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

3.3 The Trust Attendance Team:

The Trust Attendance Team is responsible for:

- Driving attendance improvement across the trust by supporting and challenging all schools
- Working more intensively with schools who require support to improve attendance
- Supporting school staff with legal processes relating to school attendance
- Ensuring all schools maintain and update accurate attendance records
- Supporting with parent / carer meetings for pupil's with/or at risk of declining attendance
- Acting as a central contact point for schools with attendance queries
- Liaising with the DfE's regional teams for advice about wider support programmes

Contact can be made via telephone 0161 705 and/or email jdavies@stoccat.org.uk / Kharrison@stoccat.org.uk.

3.4 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance:

The Designated Senior Leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Working closely with the Trust Attendance Team, to overcome barriers that may hinder attendance improvement
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Ensuring staff follow the Trust's Challenging and Improving Attendance checklist when supporting attendance improvement for all pupils
- Ensuring the Trust intervention and/or reintegration plans are executed in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers

- Ensuring through the attendance officer and pastoral team, that targeted intervention and support to pupils and families is delivered in the correct timeframe.
- Ensure all staff receive annual attendance training and regular updates to promote a consistent, whole-school approach to improving attendance.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Nicole Hadfield (Headteacher) and can be contacted via telephone 0161 643 3271 or office@stjohnfisher.stoccat.org.uk

The School Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer at each school is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording the absence on Arbor
- Conducting meetings with parents/carers to offer support in improving their child's attendance as early as concerns arise, exploring each family's personal situation and understanding what support is needed
- Building strong relationships and supporting pupils and families with attendance interventions including home visits when required
- Liaising and referring to external support agencies when required.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working closely with the Trust Attendance Team and the Local Authority officers to tackle persistent and severe absence.
- Working closely with the Trust Attendance Team to identify and support pupils at risk of declining attendance.
- Advising the headteacher and/or the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Completing all relevant Local Authority documents in relation to school and pupils' attendance

The Attendance Officer is Nina Jones and can be contacted via telephone on 0161 643 3271 or office@stjohnfisher.stoccat.org.uk

3.6 Form Tutors / Class Teachers

All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily via Arbor, ensuring the correct use of codes (see Appendix 1).

3.7 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

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

3.8 Special Education Needs Co-ordinator

The special educational needs co-ordinator will:

- Work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop tailored attendance support strategies where pupils face in-school barriers related to their SEND.
- Communicate with the Local Authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers that relate to the pupil's need.
- Contribute to attendance and safeguarding meetings for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who are persistently absent.

3.9 Pastoral staff

The pastoral teams will:

- Actively promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- Set individual and group targets for pupils to improve attendance
- Conduct meetings with parents/carers at the earliest stage of attendance concerns to offer support, explore individual family circumstances, and collaboratively complete an Individual Attendance Support Plan with both the pupil and their parents.

3.10 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., who lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, advising school when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Work with school to address any barriers to attendance for their child, including attending all meeting requests to discuss attendance issues
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Nina Jones (Attendance Officer), who can be contacted via telephone number on 0161 643 3271 or office@stjohnfisher.stoccat.org.uk
- Adhere to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority.

3.11 Pupils:

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing any difficulties at school or at home that may affect their attendance
- Follow school procedures upon arriving late to school.

4.0 Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils 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 (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:

- 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 at 3.15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am 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 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before 9am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school via telephone on 0161 643 3271 or office@stjohnfisher.stoccat.org.uk.

Reasons for absence can only be accepted when reported by a parent/carer or person with parental responsibility who is listed as a contact on the school system. Absences reported by any other person will not be accepted and may be recorded as unauthorised.

We will normally authorise absence due to physical or mental illness unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Medical evidence will only be requested where it is considered necessary and appropriate and should only be required in a minority of cases. This may include where there are genuine concerns about the authenticity of an illness or where a pupil has complex, long-term or frequently recurring health needs and further information is required to help the school understand the pupil's needs, consider reasonable adjustments, and identify the most appropriate support. Examples of medical evidence may include a doctor's note, appointment letter, prescription, or other appropriate evidence.

4.3 Planned Absence:

Attending a medical or dental appointment will normally be recorded as an authorised absence where the pupil's parent/carer has notified the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should inform the school by telephone, email or through the school's agreed communication system if their child needs to leave school during the day for a medical or dental appointment. Where possible, parents/carers should provide details of the appointment, including the expected time of departure and return.

The school recognises that medical and dental appointments are sometimes unavoidable during the school day. Supporting evidence will not be routinely requested for individual appointments; however, the school may request appropriate evidence where it is considered necessary and proportionate, for example where there are concerns about frequent or repeated absences, patterns of absence, or where further information is needed to understand the pupil's circumstances and provide appropriate support.

Where possible, pupils should:

- Attend school before and/or after their appointment wherever practical.
- Be absent from school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- Return to school promptly following their appointment.
- Wear school uniform to their appointment where they are returning to school afterwards, to support a smooth return to learning.

The school encourages parents/carers to arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible, as regular attendance is important to support pupils' learning, progress and wellbeing.

For all other requests for absence during term time, parents/carers must apply in advance and provide details of the circumstances. The school will consider requests in line with statutory guidance and the criteria set out in Section 5 of this policy regarding authorised and unauthorised absence.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality:

Timely arrival at school is of paramount importance, as it establishes a productive tone for the day and ensures that learning can commence without disruption. It is the expectation that all pupils attend school punctually each day.

The school monitors patterns of lateness and early collection to ensure pupils receive their full entitlement to education. Regular lateness or leaving school early can result in pupils missing valuable learning time, key information and social opportunities. Where concerns are identified, the school will work with parents/carers to understand any barriers and support improvements in attendance and punctuality.

Parents/carers should not collect their child early without prior agreement from the school. Where a child is marked present and then regularly removed from school without authorisation, this may impact on their education and may be considered a failure to attend school regularly under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code 'L'
- After the register has closed but before the end of the session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence using the appropriate code 'U' where no reason for the lateness has been provided, or where the school is not satisfied that the reason provided meets the criteria for an authorised absence code.
- Where a pupil arrives late after the register has closed, the school will consider the reason provided and apply the most appropriate attendance code in line with the Department for Education attendance guidance.

A 'U' code contributes to a pupil's overall absence figure and will be included when reviewing attendance concerns and considering whether the threshold for formal attendance intervention, including a Notice to Improve, has been met.

Parents/carers should ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day. Where patterns of lateness are identified, the school will work with pupils and families to understand any barriers and provide appropriate support to improve punctuality.

4.5 Following up Unexplained Absence including Children Missing Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at significant risk of harm, including abuse, neglect, child exploitation, and other safeguarding concerns. Any unexplained absence will be treated as a potential safeguarding concern, and appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the pupil's whereabouts as quickly as possible. Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, or a pupil has stopped attending without explanation, the school will work with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies in accordance with statutory guidance and local Children Missing Education (CME) procedures.

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, they may conduct a home visit
- Liaise with the school safeguarding team and/or external support agencies if the pupil is deemed a vulnerable learner. If the family is supported by a social worker, then the social worker will be informed of the absence
- Where relevant the school will report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not. Absences will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input this 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
- Maintain accurate records of attendance, contact attempts, actions taken, referrals and outcomes in line with the school's record retention procedures.
- In the event of continued unexplained absences, the school will make daily contact with the parent or carer for the duration of the absence to ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed. If no satisfactory explanation is provided, a home visit will be undertaken on the third day of absence and every three days thereafter if the absence continues.
- Where there are serious concerns for a pupil's welfare and contact cannot be established, the school may request a welfare check from the police.
- Where a pupil's whereabouts remains unknown despite reasonable enquiries, the school will refer the case to the Local Authority's Children Missing Education (CME) service in accordance with local procedures. The school will not remove a pupil from the admission register until it has complied with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations and any applicable Local Authority procedures.
- 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 referral
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school will consider issuing a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as deemed appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to Parents:

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.10 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels through a range of communication methods. Attendance information will include both the child's attendance percentage and the number of school days missed, to help parents/carers understand the impact of absence on their child's education and learning opportunities.

Communication may include:

- Half-termly attendance report cards indicating their child's current attendance level, along with the corresponding attendance category
- Parent evenings
- Text messages, emails, letters and telephone calls
- Arbor App
- Attendance support meetings

5.0 Authorised Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

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

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

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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via contacting the school office on 0161 643 3271 or office@stjohnfisher.stoccat.org.uk . 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 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
- The pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

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 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 schools, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Supporting Pupils with poor Attendance

School 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. School will always adopt a 'support first' approach, providing gradual and continual support to families before resorting to legal sanctions.

5.3 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 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 (ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten 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.

5.4 Notices to Improve

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

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

They will include:

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

6.0 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The Trust recognises that poor attendance is often a sign of difficulties or trauma in a child's life. Absence can result from various challenges at home, in school, or both, and some children struggle more than others to attend regularly. Every child's situation is unique and may require additional understanding and support.

The Trust implements a Twin-Track Model to promote high attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence. This approach ensures both early prevention and targeted intervention by addressing issues before they escalate and providing intensive support where absence is already entrenched.

Track 1: Early Identification and Preventative Support (Attendance Below 95%)

- Attendance is monitored closely, with half-termly attendance report cards sent to all parents/carers. This ensures families are regularly informed and can take early action if concerns arise
- Weekly attendance monitoring identifies pupils whose attendance has declined during the previous week. Staff will not rely solely on attendance percentages or national thresholds when identifying concerns. Any decline from a pupil's expected attendance pattern, repeated absence, emerging punctuality concerns or changes in attendance behaviour will prompt professional curiosity and, where appropriate, early discussion with the pupil and their family. This enables staff to identify emerging concerns at the earliest opportunity, understand and address any barriers to attendance, and implement timely, proportionate support before patterns of absence become established.
- Regular communication with parents/carers and pupils to highlight and celebrate attendance and achievements
- Open evenings
- Pastoral and wellbeing support
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents/carers may be invited to an Attendance Support Meeting. This meeting provides an opportunity to explore the reasons behind the absences, identify any early signs of disengagement, and offer early help if needed
- Individual Consideration and Sensitivity. Each case is handled with professional judgement, acknowledging personal circumstances (e.g. bereavement, medical needs)

- Ongoing Support and Early Help. If concerns continue, a personalised Attendance Support Plan is created and reviewed regularly. If there is no improvement or attendance worsens, a follow-up meeting will be held with the Trust Attendance Team and/or a Senior Leader. The plan will be reviewed, additional support considered, and a new target set. Partnership is emphasised, and the possibility of formal action, such as a Notice to Improve, will be clearly communicated.

Track 2: Intensive Intervention for pupils who are persistently absent (attendance below 90%) or severely absent (attendance below 50%)

- Pupils who are persistently absent (below 90%) or severely absent (below 50%) require immediate, coordinated, and sustained intervention. These pupils are at increased risk of educational disengagement, social isolation, and unmet safeguarding or welfare needs.
- Attendance monitoring and concerns are a standing item in weekly safeguarding meetings. This consistent approach enables schools to share contextual information, coordinate support, and take timely, multi-agency action.
- Support begins with early family engagement, including home visits where appropriate and a thorough risk assessment to explore root causes—whether linked to medical needs, mental health, SEND, or social care. A tailored Attendance Support Plan is developed in consultation with parents/carers, outlining clear steps for gradual reintegration, emotional support, and academic re-engagement.
- Work collaboratively with partner agencies, including the Local Authority, Health Services, School Nursing Services, CAMHS, Children's Social Care, Early Help, Youth Justice Services, the Virtual School, Alternative Provision providers and other relevant professionals to coordinate support and remove barriers to attendance.

Other support strategies may include:

- Individual reintegration plans with short term, reviewed part-time timetables
- CAMHS referrals
- School health referrals
- Educational Psychologist referrals
- EHCP application and reviews
- Referrals to external support agencies
- Addressing emotional barriers to attendance (EBSA/EBNA)
- Additional learning support/SEND assessments
- Multiple transition visits for primary school visits
- Staff training and regular staff briefings to discuss whole school attendance
- Extra-curricular events and activities
- Liaison with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/or has a social worker
- Pupil voice activities

By adopting the Twin-Track Model, the Trust and schools ensure no pupil is overlooked. Attendance concerns are addressed promptly, proportionately, and with compassion—balancing early intervention

with clear accountability. This approach actively monitors and supports pupils with severe absences, giving them every opportunity to re-engage with education in a safe, positive way.

- All schools follow a consistent and supportive framework to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. This includes strong relationships with families, a tiered communication strategy, and early identification of needs.
- Tailored support is provided for pupils with SEND and those facing disadvantage, ensuring circumstances beyond their control do not hinder their access to education.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate openly with the school about any difficulties or changes in circumstances, so that appropriate support can be identified and accessed in partnership with the family.
- Where attendance fails to improve despite comprehensive support—or if there is persistent lack of parental engagement—the school may escalate to formal intervention, including legal enforcement, in line with Trust and local authority policy. Enforcement is always a last resort, used only when all other avenues of partnership working have been exhausted.

7.0 Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

7.1 Pupils Absent Due to Complex Barriers to Attendance

Some pupils may find attending school difficult due to emotional or personal challenges. While these feelings are often a normal part of growing up, regular attendance remains important, as being in school can help address underlying concerns. In some cases, attendance may be affected by a range of complex factors. The school is committed to understanding these barriers and will work collaboratively with pupils, families, and both internal and external services to provide appropriate support and facilitate a successful return to school. (See section 6)

7.2 Pupils Absent due to Mental or Physical Ill Health or SEND or Other Barriers to Attendance

The school recognises that some pupils may experience additional barriers to regular attendance, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils known to or previously known to children's social care, young carers, and pupils experiencing other individual circumstances.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the Local Authority where appropriate. The school will work collaboratively with the pupil, parents/carers and the Local Authority to review the EHCP and ensure that any additional or revised support required to improve attendance is identified and implemented.

The school takes an inclusive and individualised approach to attendance, working in partnership with pupils and families to understand the barriers affecting attendance and develop tailored support plans. Reasonable adjustments and appropriate interventions will be identified, implemented and reviewed to ensure they are timely, effective and responsive to the pupil's needs.

Support may include:

- Pastoral and wellbeing support.
- Reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010, agreed and reviewed with the pupil and family.
- Liaison with health professionals and external agencies supporting the pupil.

- A phased return, including consideration of a part-time timetable where appropriate (see below).
- Additional early help or targeted support to address specific barriers to attendance.

Where a pupil has long-term physical or mental health needs, the school will work with the pupil, family and relevant professionals to support their return to education. If a pupil is expected to miss 15 or more school days due to illness, the school will submit a sickness return to the Local Authority to support the coordination of appropriate provision.

7.3 Part-time Timetables

A part-time timetable is a temporary and exceptional arrangement that should only be used where it is in the best interests of the pupil and where full-time attendance is not currently possible due to identified needs, such as a medical condition, reintegration following an extended absence, or agreed specialist support. A part-time timetable must not be used as a behaviour management strategy or as a way of managing exclusion.

Any part-time timetable must:

- Be agreed by the Headteacher and the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.
- Have a clear rationale, be time-limited and form part of a documented Attendance Support Plan and reintegration plan.
- Be part of a wider package of support, including pastoral, SEND, health or other specialist support where appropriate.
- Include clear arrangements for review with the pupil and parents/carers, with a focus on progress towards full-time education.
- Set out an expectation that the pupil will return to full-time education at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- Only be extended in exceptional circumstances following a formal review.
- Be carefully considered for pupils with SEND or medical needs to ensure the arrangement is necessary, proportionate and regularly reviewed.

Where a part-time timetable is implemented, schools must ensure:

- Headteacher approval is recorded.
- A written Attendance Support Plan is in place.
- A risk assessment is completed and reviewed.
- Parents/carers receive written confirmation of the arrangement.
- The Local Authority is informed in line with statutory expectations.
- Attendance Officers and relevant staff are aware of the correct procedures for recording attendance, including arrival and departure times.
- Attendance codes are applied accurately and routinely audited throughout the duration of the timetable.

All part-time timetables must be reviewed at least fortnightly, with reviews focusing on the pupil's progress, ongoing need for the arrangement and steps towards reintegration into full-time education.

7.4 Pupils Returning to School After a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

The school is committed to supporting all pupils who have been absent, regardless of the reason, by helping them reintegrate smoothly and confidently. A range of strategies will be used to ensure each child receives the right support to feel safe, rebuild confidence, and re-engage with learning.

Staff will take a personalised approach, identifying and addressing individual barriers to attendance so that every pupil feels secure, valued, and ready to return to the classroom.

Throughout any period of absence, the school will maintain regular contact with parents and carers to monitor wellbeing and offer support. Where appropriate, home visits may be conducted, unless deemed unsuitable by the Senior Leadership Team.

On returning to school, pupils will receive a tailored support plan based on their needs. This may include, but is not limited to:

- A phased return to school, supported by a personalised reintegration plan where appropriate
- Pastoral support to promote emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging
- Regular check-ins with a trusted adult or key member of staff
- A designated safe space in school for pupils to use if they feel overwhelmed
- Academic catch-up sessions or additional learning support
- Adjustments to the school timetable or workload where necessary
- Collaboration with external agencies or professionals, where appropriate
- Support for parents/carers to help sustain improved attendance

8.0 Attendance Monitoring

8.1 Monitoring Attendance:

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

The school Attendance Officer and pastoral staff will monitor pupil attendance and absence on a daily basis.
Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DFE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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

The school will benchmark its attendance data 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 Attendance Team and governing board.

8.2 Analysing Attendance

The School and the Trust will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Use live attendance information and regular monitoring to identify emerging patterns of absence, declining attendance, repeated lateness and changes in attendance behaviour, ensuring concerns are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of weekly, 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, inform Trust-wide improvement strategies and share effective practice between schools.

8.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance:

The school and the Trust will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups, or cohorts that have been 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 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board 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 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.

8.4 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 Trust and school's strategy for improving attendance.

The School and the Trust 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
- Implement all monitoring procedures
- 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.

- Engage fully in all targeted Support meetings with the Local Authority
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Follow the Twin Track model to promote high attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence (see section 6).

9.0 Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs J Davies, Trust Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Trust Board of Directors.

10.0 Links with Other Policies

Both the Trust and the school believe that every pupil has the right to learn in an enjoyable, safe, and nurturing environment, free from harm. We collectively respect and value all children, and we are fully committed to providing a caring, friendly, and secure atmosphere where every pupil can thrive, participate fully in school life, and enjoy their learning in a relaxed and supportive setting.

We recognise that regular school attendance is vital for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, particularly when they are not in the care of their parents or carers. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the Trust, the school, and our wider community. It includes offering early help and support to children and families when needed. Issues such as poor or irregular attendance, persistent lateness, or children missing from education may indicate underlying challenges and, in some cases, may raise safeguarding concerns if a child is at risk of harm.

To help us fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities effectively, it is essential that parents and carers keep the school informed of their current contact details and provide at least one additional emergency contact. It is equally important that any specific vulnerabilities affecting a child, or their home circumstances are shared with the school, as this information helps us to better support the child's safety and well-being.

Further details about our approach to safeguarding and protecting children can be found in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which reflects the shared commitment of both the Trust and the school to ensuring the safety of every pupil.

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	The 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	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.
P	Participating in a sporting activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.
W	Attending work experience	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education.
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	The Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered at another school	The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.
Absent – Leave of Absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	The Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	The Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	The Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	The Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Schools can grant a leave of absence, for a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a Part-time timetable	The Pupil is not in school due to having a part- time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	The Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – Other Authorised Reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	The Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The Pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made. Alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion.

Absent – Unable to Attend School Because of Unavoidable Cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home to school travel for the pupil and they have not done so (including where they are in the process of doing so but have not yet done it), or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	The Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil is absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The 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	Unable to attend in accordance with Public health guidance or law	The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend their school.
Y7	Unable to attend because of 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	The school has not granted a leave of absence, and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.
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	Where no reason for the absence is established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	The Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session and either no reason for the lateness is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.
Administrative Codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must follow this up and try to establish the reason for absence.
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, such as: • days between terms; • half terms; • occasional days (for example, bank holidays); 97 • weekends (where it is required by the management information system); • up to 5 non-educational days; and • use of the whole school as a polling station.