Wimbledon Chase Primary School

Empowering individuals to thrive and contribute positively in a diverse and ever-changing world

Attendance Policy

September 2026-28

At Wimbledon Chase Primary School, policies are designed to ensure that the child is at the centre of all our decision making. All staff are aware that whole school and class systems are established to ensure that every child is able to share and express their concerns in a safe and confidential manner. We constantly strive to ensure that all children know their worries and views will be taken seriously by all staff and that every child will be treated with respect.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance and the importance it has on children's progress, attainment, enjoyment of learning and relationships within school, including:

- 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
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Recognising that some pupils may experience difficulties that could be caused by a wide variety of factors and explore ways to support them
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Roles and responsibilities

See **Appendix 1** for details of the roles and responsibilities of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Body holds leaders to account for attendance strategy and outcomes.
- The Headteacher ensures the policy is implemented and resources allocated.
- The Senior Attendance Champion / Attendance Officer leads day-to-day practice, analysis and family contact.
- Class teachers take registers accurately and follow through with classroom-level concerns.
- Office staff record contacts and evidence via MCAS, telephone and email.
- Parents must notify the school of absence by 08:45 on the first day and keep the school informed.
- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on time (where appropriate to their age and stage).

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

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

The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm (Reception, Years 1and 2) 3.30pm (Years 3,4,5 and 6)

Pupils should arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, at 8.50am and once during the second session, at 1.25pm.

Registers will stay open for 30 minutes.

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 or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

See **Appendix 2** 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 or the nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (and give some indication of a return date, whenever possible), by telephone, the Parent App (MCAS) or by using the absence email absence@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk.

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

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

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

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. In order to allocate the correct mark for such an absence we ask parents to supply evidence of the appointment.

The parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 4, term-time absences the school can authorise and how to request this.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day:

Register taken at 8.50am – the registers close at 9.20pm

Register taken at 1.25pm – the registers close at 1.40pm

Any pupil arriving after 8.50am or 1.25pm is required to sign in at the School Office.

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 will be marked as absent, using the using the U code. This denotes an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late for school is disruptive for the teachers and pupils. Pupils may miss important lesson input and lateness can lead to children feeling anxious.

Where consistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents will be informed by letter and may be invited to a meeting to resolve the issue. Parents are asked to approach the school at any time for support or advice if they are having difficulties with getting to school on time.

Late Collection

As a school we take responsibility to look after pupils until the end of the school day: 3.20pm for Reception, Years 1 and 2 and 3.30pm for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Parents should contact the School Office as soon as possible if they are going to be late collecting their child.

Where a pupil is not collected in a reasonable time we will follow the London Borough of Merton policy relating to children who are not collected from school.

Pupils collected from school after these times will need to be signed out at the School Office.

3.5 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 parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the attendance officer will inform the Safeguarding Team, who will make any necessary actions.
- 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. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance, which could include a home visit
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via:

- The Parent App (MCAS)
- Annual School reports
- Attendance letters, as necessary – the school will explain attendance in terms that parents can understand (for example time missed and impact on learning rather than headline percentages alone).

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 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 activity
- Attending an interview
- 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:

- Funeral of immediate family member - the Headteacher will use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set aside
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or Domestic Abuse
- Wedding of an immediate family member (but not days for travelling to/from wedding)

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

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 far in advance as possible and where possible at least 2 weeks before the absence. The Leave of Absence request form can be accessed via the Parent App or downloaded from the school's website. The Headteacher will then consider each case individually.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 for more detail)
- 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
- 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

See **Appendix 3** for the School's Absence and Exceptional Leave Policy.

4.2 Sanctions

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

- Penalty Notices (Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024).
- Notices to Improve and other attendance casework escalations through the local authority.

See **Appendix 4** for details on sanctions.

The school will always seek to put in place early help support for families to over barriers in children's non-attendance.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

- End of year attendance summaries included in academic reports.
- Whole-school assemblies promoting the value of attendance.
- Regular reminders in the Headteacher's newsletters.
- Attendance information, expectations and guidance on the school website and via MCAS.

- Targeted interventions (mentoring, pastoral support, attendance support plans) for pupils and families identified as at risk.
- Professional development for staff on attendance and early identification.

5.2 Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

5.3 Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary (6 weeks or less) and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. This agreement will be confirmed in writing between the school and home, with regular review meetings.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school, due to mental/ill health, SEND needs and other barriers to attendance

We recognise that some pupils may have attendance problems that could be caused by a variety of factors, which may include chronic illness; anxiety; family issues, SEND etc.
We aim to support pupils in a variety of ways including:

- Hold meetings with parents and multi-agency professionals to plan support.

- Use pastoral support plans, graduated adjustments and reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND.
- Offer part-time timetables only as a short-term re-integration measure with regular review.
- Make referrals to external agencies (CAMHS, EWO, social care, family support) where appropriate.
- Provide tailored return-to-school plans after prolonged absence, including catch-up and wellbeing support.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring and Analysing attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) 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.

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 Governing Body.

See **Appendix 5** - How the school analyses and uses data to improve attendance.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body.

9. Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Wimbledon Chase Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide us with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

10. Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Management of Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy
- SEN/D policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs

12. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963
- 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

School Development Area Leader:	**Linked Governor:**
Headteacher: Caroline Gibbins	**Signed: Mr K Patel**
Date agreed: September 2026	**Review date: September 2028**

Appendix 1: Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body 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 authority
    - 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
- 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

The Governors Whole School Community Committee review school attendance termly.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary
- 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
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer (with the Parent Support Advisor)

Are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the senior leader responsible for attendance (Headteacher)
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue penalty notices
- Parent Support Advisor is Siân Dotchin and can be contacted via the school office or email parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk

Class Teachers

- 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 closing the electronic register.

School office staff

- School office staff will:
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff when necessary, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

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 everyday on time
- 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
- 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 Siân Dotchin, Parent Support Advisor, who can be contacted via the school office or email parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Appendix 2: 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

- 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

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

Wimbledon Chase Primary School
ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY

The Governors of Wimbledon Chase Primary School believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

The School Attendance (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2024 state that *headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted*.

With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.

2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form (available on the Parent App, school website or from the school office). Verbal requests will be recorded in writing.

3. This must include the reason why you feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to you within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued and/or prosecution under s4441 Education Act 1996, by the London Borough of Merton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160.

School Development Area Leader: **Linked Governor:**

Headteacher: Mrs C Gibbins **Signed: Fiona Hunter**

Date agreed: September 2026

Review date: September 2028

Appendix 4: Sanctions

Penalty notices

- The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.
- If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.
- Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions (one session is equivalent to a half day absence) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

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

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

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

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

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

Notices to improve

- If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
- Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

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

Appendix 5: How the school analyses and uses data to improve attendance

Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

Using data to improve attendance

The school 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 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to the senior leadership team, SENDCO and Safeguarding Team to facilitate discussions with pupils and families and to the Governing Body. 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

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 school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Write to parents where attendance is becoming a concern

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school and the 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
    - Support parents with use of an Attendance Contract
- 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 **Appendix 4**)