Summerbank Primary Academy

Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy

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1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2026) 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Attendance Officer Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at the setting after the register has closed
- Not attending the setting for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the setting has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during setting hours, for which the setting has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the setting has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the setting day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival after the register has closed
- Absence that is not medical, religious or exceptional
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time
- Leaving for no reason during the day

Persistently absent pupils (PA):

- Missing 38 sessions (19 days) or more across the school year for any reason
- Having attendance of below 90%

Severely absent pupils:

- Missing 190 sessions (95 days) or more across the school year for any reason
- Having attendance below 50%

Child Missing in Education:

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

2. Supporting Attendance at The Societas Trust

Good attendance and punctuality (being in school on time) are vital to pupils reaching their full potential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Our Vision

'At Societas every child's presence is a priority, ensuring that regular attendance paves the way for academic achievement, personal growth, and lifelong success.'

This includes:

1. **Setting High Expectations and Celebrating Success**: Clear expectations for attendance will be communicated to children and families, emphasising its importance for academic achievement and future opportunities. We will celebrate attendance milestones and improvements, reinforcing positive behaviour and recognising the efforts of children and families

2. **Creating a Positive School Culture**: We build a welcoming and inclusive school atmosphere where children feel safe, valued, and motivated to attend daily. Positive relationships between children, staff, and families are at the heart of this culture, promoting a sense of belonging and commitment.

3. **Early Identification and Intervention**: By utilising data-driven approaches, we identify attendance patterns early and intervene promptly. For children at risk of poor attendance, we address underlying issues and provide necessary resources and encouragement. Recognising that chronic absenteeism can be a sign of safeguarding issues or neglect, we will work closely with safeguarding teams to ensure the well-being of all children.

4. **Engaging Families and the Community**: We recognise the critical role families and the wider community play in supporting regular attendance. We will establish strong partnerships with parents and community organisations, ensuring open communication and collaborative efforts to overcome barriers to attendance.

5. **Providing a Rich and Relevant Curriculum**: To keep children engaged and motivated to attend, we will offer a curriculum that is both challenging and relevant to their interests and future aspirations. Enrichment activities and extracurricular opportunities will complement academic learning, making school a place where children are excited to be.

Working Together

Attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide-ranging and can be complex, both within and beyond the school gates. They are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

The Trust recognises that absence is often a symptom of wider barriers experienced by children and families. Our approach is to identify and remove those barriers through partnership, support and early intervention before considering enforcement action.

We work closely with Stoke Local Authority, adhering to their procedures related to pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Promoting good attendance for children of non-statutory school age within nursery provision.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Trust Board** has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the Trust's ethos and policies.
- Regularly reviewing headline attendance data across the Trust.
- Facilitating the sharing of effective practice on attendance management and improvement across settings.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring setting staff receive adequate training on attendance

The **Local Governing Board** has responsibility for:

- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, including:
- whole-school attendance
- persistent absence
- severe absence
- disadvantaged pupils
- SEND pupils
- pupils with social workers
- young carers

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the setting, and distributing these to parents.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Attendance Officer role.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the setting's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

The **Attendance Team** (see page 12) is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in the setting.
- Demonstrating a clear vision for improving attendance.

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the setting day.
- Engaging in training relevant to their role and setting.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at the setting.
- Arriving punctually to lessons.
- Following any support provided by the setting to improve attendance.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the setting with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the setting if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at the setting.
- Promoting good attendance with their children and behaviour and ensure that their child attends the setting every day.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the setting and the LA.
- Notifying the setting as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around setting hours where possible.

- Following any family-based support implemented by the setting to improve attendance.

3. Recording Attendance

The setting uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Attendance registers will be taken at a consistent time for all registered pupils during the morning session and during the afternoon session.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session.

This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Attendance Codes

The setting uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes are used:

= planned whole school closure

/ = Present in the morning

\ = Present in the afternoon

L = Late arrival before the register has closed

C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances

S = Study leave

C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad

C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils

E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made

J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews

I = Illness

M = Medical or dental appointments

K = Attending provision arranged by the LA

R = Religious observance

B = Off-site education activity

G = Unauthorised holiday

O = Unauthorised absence

U = Arrived after registration closed

N = Reason not yet provided

X = Not required to be in school

T = Traveller absence

Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.

V = Educational visit or trip

P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person

D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

W = Attending work experience

Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available

Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption

Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed

Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention

Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend

Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.

Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

Remote education will not be regarded as an alternative to regular school attendance and will only be used where appropriate as part of a planned support and reintegration approach.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Deletions of Names from the Admission Register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

Elective Home Education

Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time. This is different to education provided by a local authority other than at a school, for example for children who are too ill to attend school.

As a parent you can choose to engage private tutors or other adults, or online tuition, to assist in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement to do so. There are other settings which may be used, not just the family home. Such settings may well not be regulated in any way so there is no external assurance that they comply with basic standards, such as proper vetting of staff and safeguarding children.

Deciding to educate your child at home instead of sending him or her to school is a step which should not be taken lightly. It will mean a major commitment of time, energy and money. It is especially important that parents consider the nature of the education that will be provided before making the decision to teach him or her at home.

You should inform the school of your intention to home educate in writing in order to avoid misunderstandings around non-attendance. The school will remove your child from the admission register and inform the local authority stating home education as the reason.

4. Attendance Expectations

The Trust has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils are expected to attend punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day and to miss no more than 7.5 days (4%) by the end of the school year.

Attendance Hours

The setting day starts at **8:50am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:50am**.

Pupils will have a morning break at:

Reception/Year 1: 10:15-10:30am

Year 2/Year 3: 10:30-10:45am

Year 4/5/6: 10:45-11:00am

Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

The setting day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

Registers are marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are on site but not in their classroom by this time. This is marked in the register as an L.

The register closes 30 minutes after the academy door/gate closes at the start of the day. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend before this time. This is marked in the register as a U.

After lunch, registers are marked with 10 minutes from returning from lunch. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in school by this time.

The register closes 30 minutes after the end of lunch. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

5. Reporting Absence and Requesting Absence

The Academy Attendance Team

The school's Attendance Officer (the 'Attendance Champion') is Clare Pearson, who works in conjunction with Alison French (Attendance Administrator), the Family Support Worker and the Education Welfare Officer.

It is important that parents know who the best person is to speak to should support be required around attendance.

Should a parent/carer require any support regarding a child's attendance or need someone to talk to about issues around attendance please contact Alison French in the first instance, either via Dojo, telephone or by arranging a face to face appointment.

Improving attendance is in everyone's interest. School and parents want the same thing for the children at Summerbank Primary Academy – for them to be successful personally and academically. This is why it is vital for school and home to work closely together to ensure good attendance. All staff at Summerbank Primary Academy understand the importance of good attendance and will regularly speak to children and parents about this.

How to Report a Child's Absence

We understand that there are times when pupils will need to be absent from school. When this happens, it is vital that we still continue to work together by reporting absence in the correct way.

Parents will be required to contact the school on the first day of absence, this can be done:

By telephone – 01782 233611

By letter – handed to the class teacher or to the academy office

By using the Attendance Dojo

In person at the academy office

Email to the school office

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9am to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Establish the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Schools will not routinely request medical evidence for illness absence. Medical evidence may be requested where there are genuine concerns regarding the authenticity of illness, where attendance has become a cause for concern, or where it will assist in identifying appropriate support.

If a child's absence is not reported, this may result in a home visit as part of our safeguarding procedures.

Where a pupil has not returned to the setting for 10 days after an authorised/known absence, or is absent from the setting without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days and where the school is unable to make contact with parents/carers, the school will contact the LA Child Missing in Education (CME) officer. The setting will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Children of Non-Statutory School Age

If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, or if a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, attempts will be made to contact the child's parents and/or carers and alternative emergency contacts. Providers will consider patterns and trends in a child's absences and their personal circumstances and use their professional judgement when deciding if their absence should be considered as prolonged. Any concerns will be referred to local children's social care services and/or a police welfare check requested.

Parents - Requesting Absence

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to make applications in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. These notices are issued in respect of each parent for each child. The school cannot grant

leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Where a Leave of Absence has been taken, this is kept on record by the setting and will be referred to when making decisions around future requests.

Holidays

The Societas Trust's aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to only take holidays during the school holidays. Requests for absence due to holiday will not be authorised. Therefore, taking a pupil out of school due to a holiday will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. These notices are issued in respect of each parent for each child.

Where a Holiday has been taken during term, this is kept on record by the setting and will be referred to if future holidays are taken. See Section 10. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention.

Medical and Dental appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received through an appointment card or hospital letter. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible. Half a day absence is much better than a full day in these circumstances.

Other reasons for absence: Special occasions

Requests relating to significant family events during school time will be considered individually against the statutory test of exceptional circumstances. Parents will be notified of the Head's decision.

Other reasons for absence: Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

Other reasons for absence: Days of Religious observance

We recognise the importance of religious observance to families and that children and staff of many faiths attend our schools. One day's absence is authorised when the celebration falls on a school day (for example EID, Diwali etc). We may seek advice from the appropriate religious body where there is doubt over a request.

Other reasons for absence: Young Carers

We understand the difficulties that can face young carers and will support them in any way possible to ensure their attendance, attainment and future life chances are

not affected. We endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the setting and throughout their time at the setting. We take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Other reasons for absence: Performances and activities, including paid work

All children of compulsory school age require a Child Performance Licences to take part in any performance or activity that including films, television, radio, commercials, theatre, amateur dramatics, dance groups and any sporting events or modelling assignments where the child is paid. Some performances may be exempt for needing a full performance license but would need to apply for an exemption to licensing. It is the responsibility of the production company to apply to the LA for these Licences or exemptions.

Applications for performance Licences and exemptions should be submitted at least 21 days before the date of the first performance to the Local Authority in which the child resides. A child taking part in a performance or an activity under a licence, or a rehearsal during the licensing period, must be supervised at all times during the performance, activity or rehearsal by a chaperone that has been approved by the licensing authority, unless they are under the direct supervision of their parent, or a person who has parental responsibility for the child, or their teacher.

Under section 37(3)(b) of the 1963 Act, a licence is not required where the performance in which the child is taking part is given under the arrangements made by a school. The deciding factor is whether the school is responsible for organising and producing the performance.

If time off school is required to take part in the performance or activity, permission is required from the Head Teacher, this will need to be submitted to the Local Authority with the application forms and supporting documents.

The local authority should only issue a child performance licence if they are satisfied that the child's education will not suffer, and that the producer has made suitable and sufficient arrangements to protect the child.

Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Other reasons for absence: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

Other reasons for absence: Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents wishing to remove their child at lunchtime should speak to the School Office, the request will then be referred to the headteacher. The headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request. If approved, parents will be required to meet their child at the school office – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the signing out/in procedure at the school office.

The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where a pupil displays poor conduct of behaviour when off the premises, or where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision.

6. Other Reasons for Absence

SEND and Health-related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

Part-time Timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.

- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

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 record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:50am** and at the start of the afternoon session, where the teacher will record the attendance. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out at the school office and signed back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The penalty notice will be charged at £160, but reduced to £80 if it is paid within 21 days of the notice being issued.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Missing Children – missing during the school day

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the SLT immediately.

The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.

A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher/SLT.

Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

If the pupil has not been found after **10 minutes**, then the parents of the pupil will be notified. The setting will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.

If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten consecutive school days after a leave of absence or is absent from school for reasons recorded as unauthorised absence for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil's name can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to find out the location and circumstances of the child or have succeeded but agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe that they will attend the school again. In deciding there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again both school and local authority must agree, including that there are no reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. Neither ground for deletion applies if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

7. Strategies for Supporting Good Attendance and Punctuality

There are a variety of approaches at the school to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality:

- Attendance is given a high priority in all classrooms and is regularly discussed with pupils.
- The attendance team (including the EWO) meet every half term to discuss individual children/classes on concern and allocate actions to the relevant staff member to address these
- All parents receive a letter half-termly updating them on current attendance.
- A weekly attendance trophy is given to the class with the highest attendance in assembly, this also earns the class an extra breaktime
- Children with full attendance receive a voucher at the end of the academic year
- Children with improved attendance are recognised by awards

8. Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The Attendance Officer/Attendance Team will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

Attendance data will also be reviewed for vulnerable groups including young carers, pupils with a social worker, looked-after children, previously looked-after children and pupils with SEND.

The Attendance Officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Officer/Team will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Attendance Officer/Team will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

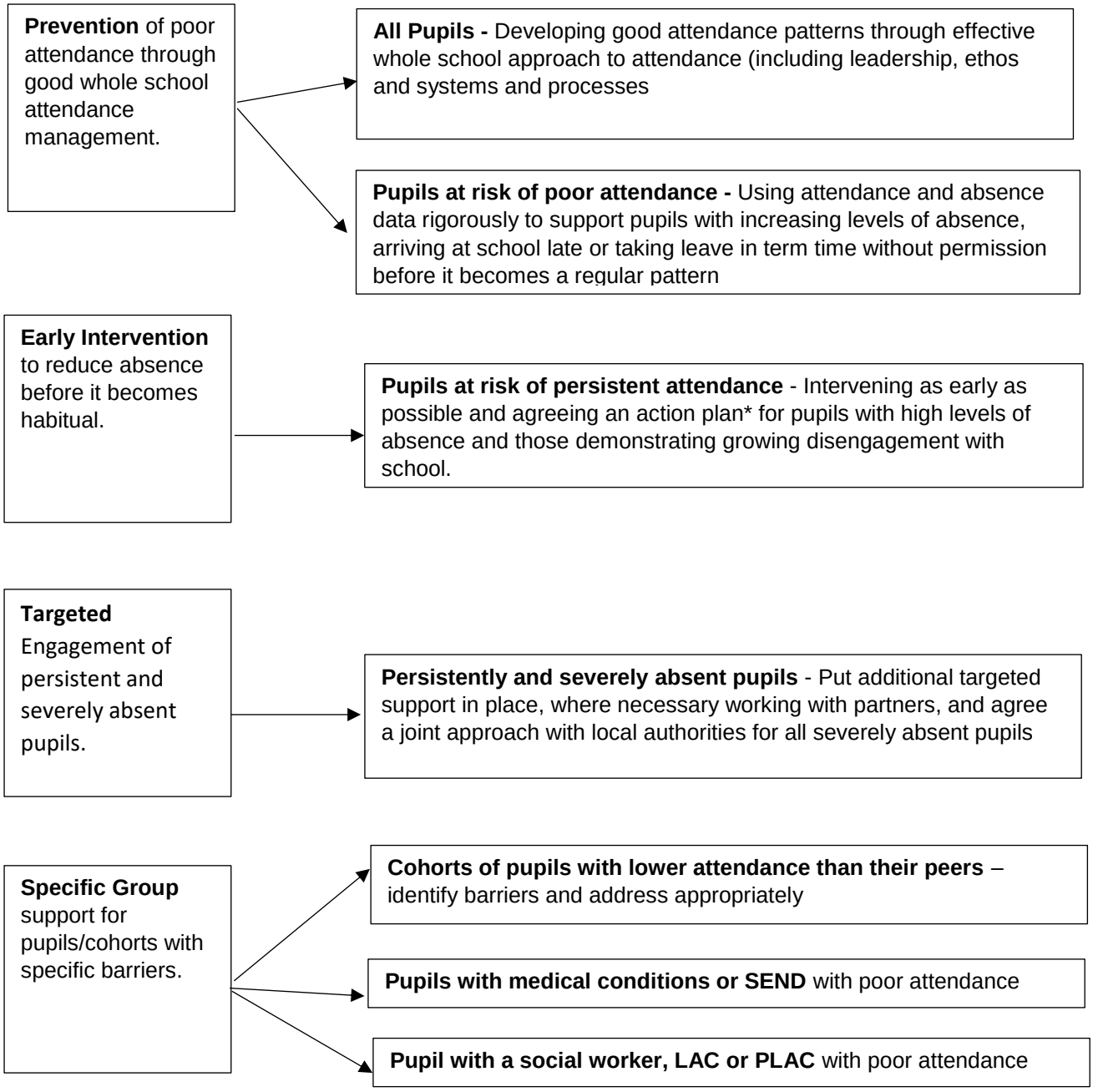
The Governing Board will regularly review attendance data, including current trends and trends over time and support and challenge the setting to secure good attendance.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The Local Authority has responsibility for organising Targeted Support Meetings where a named LA Officer meets with the Attendance Team to analyse data, identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.

9. Strategies to Address Issues Around Attendance and Punctuality

Academies within the Societas Trust use a tiered approach to meeting the needs of pupils and families to support attendance.



The attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, academy trusts and governing bodies, and local authorities which support this are outlined below (adapted from 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities' (DfE, August 2024).

All Pupils - Prevention

Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**	**Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:**	**Local authorities are expected to:**
Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.	Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.	Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed. Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. Training will cover at least the following: • The importance of good attendance • That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances • The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers • The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance • The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it	Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent – Early Intervention

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. The joint production of a 'Partnership Agreement' (See Appendix D) may be supportive at this stage. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils (pupils that are absent more than 19 days over the year/Attendance below 90%) - Targeted

Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**	**Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:**	**Local authorities are expected to:**
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. The joint production of a 'Partnership Agreement' (See Appendix D) would at this stage. Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

Severely absent pupils (pupils that are absent more than 95 days over the year/Attendance below 50%) - Targeted

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

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers – Specific Group

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance - Specific Group

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Support for pupils with a social worker - Specific Group

Parents are expected to:	**Schools are expected to:**	**Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:**	**Local authorities are expected to:**
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: • Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. • Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. • Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children - Specific Group

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

10.Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the attendance team will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Notice to Improve

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue **a notice to improve** as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. This letter is issued jointly by the Headteacher and Education Welfare service. The setting will ensure they provide the Education Welfare Service with the evidence of support which has already taken place and details of current attendance in line with the Stoke procedures. The Education Welfare service will decide whether the issuing of the Notice to Improve is appropriate, if so then they will then provide a letter to issue to the family.

Penalty Notices

When a school becomes aware that the national threshold has been met, they must consider whether a penalty notice can and should be issued or not.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not need to be consecutive and may comprise different types of unauthorised absence. The 10 school week period may span different terms or school years.

The national framework for penalty notices is based on the principles that penalty notices should only be used in cases where:

- support is not appropriate (e.g. a term time holiday)
- where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked (i.e. the use of a Notice to Improve has not had impact)

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. For example, in a family with 2 adults who take 3 children on a holiday during term time where the issuing of a Penalty Notice is appropriate, then each adult would be liable for 3 x the penalty.

Penalty Notices only apply to pupils who are of statutory attendance age.

There is no right of appeal for a parent against a Penalty Notice once it has been issued.

Issuing a Penalty Notice where support is not appropriate (e.g. a term time holiday)

The issuing of a Penalty Notice as a result of a holiday could occur for a number of reasons:

- The school may have received a request from a family for term time absence, however Headteachers are unable to authorise requests for holidays during term time.
- Family that have gone away during term time but have not requested term time absence in advance – this cannot be authorised retrospectively.
- Where evidence suggests that a family has taken a holiday/travelled during term time but have not informed the school.

Where the threshold has been met due to one of the above reasons, it will not have been necessary to have issued a Notice to Improve prior to requesting a Penalty Notice.

To request the issuing of a Penalty Notice, the school should follow the Stoke Local Authority procedures. Schools should ensure they provide all of the requested evidence to support the request.

If approved, a penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance

Issuing a Penalty Notice where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked (i.e. the use of a Notice to Improve has not had impact)

A Penalty Notice issued in this circumstance will take place only after significant actions at an informal and then more formal level (Notice to Improve issued) have been put in place with insufficient impact.

To request the issuing of a Penalty Notice, the school should follow the Stoke Local Authority procedures. Schools should ensure they provide all of the requested evidence to support the request.

If approved, a penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty Notice - Escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

11.Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board. The next date for review is Summer 2027.

Appendix A: Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices

This code sets out the criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice.

Legal Framework:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006.

- The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes if an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the setting. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means 10 sessions (usually 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period.

- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the headteacher (e.g. family holiday)

- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 12 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.

- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions.

- Penalty Notices can be issued twice for unauthorised leave of absence in any academic year.

- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for each parent for each child so for e.g. a family with two parents and three children could receive in total 6 Penalty Notices.