Attendance Policy

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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, 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. **Legislation and guidance**

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

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)

- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)](#)

- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

Local Academy Council (LAC)

The LAC is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

    o Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

    o 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:

    o The importance of good attendance

    o That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

    o 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

- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Principal

The Principal 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Assistant Principal to be able to do so

- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

- Liaising with 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Principal, S Thompson, who can be contacted on 01282 615927.

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the Principal / Assistant Principal (authorised by the Prinicpal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Umbreen Zulfequer and can be contacted vis telephone on 01282 615927.

Class teachers/all school staff

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office in the morning by 9:15am and in the afternoon by 1:15pm in order for attendance codes to be collated.

In addition to this, all school staff are responsible for:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children that is a safe and learning environment

- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns

- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance

- Seeing pupils' attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff

- Participating in training regarding school systems and procedures

School Admin/Office Staff

School admin/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 to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Complete first day response by 10am, contacting parents when a reason for absence has not been provided

- Input and update the attendance registers

- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups

- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents

Parents/carers

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/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9 am on the first 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

- Attend meetings related to attendance in school, where needed

- Participate in attendance support meetings and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies, where needed

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

- Speak to parents/teachers when issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance

- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

4. Recording attendance

Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (9am) and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record, for pupils of compulsory school age:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by between 8:50am and 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the afternoon session will be completed by 1:15pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

Parents/carers must contact the school office on 01282 615927 and leave a clear message, stating their child's name and reason for absence.

We will mark absence due to 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 is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

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

Parents/carers must inform the school office of the appointments in advance (not on the day) and should, where possible, bring the relevant appointment card to be copied by the office.

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

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

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

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

- Parents/carers will be informed of any issues regarding punctuality and support will be offered, where needed

Following up on 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/carer 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 school may conduct a home visit to the addresses registered on the school system; leave a letter advising parents/carers to contact school as soon as possible; inform any allocated family workers (where appropriate) or contact the police to conduct a welfare check

- 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

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure 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

- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

See appendix 2 for full details on the school's approach to following up on children who are absent from school.

Reporting to parents/carers

- Weekly attendance of the whole school will be shared with parents/carers via the school newsletter

- Parents/carers of children whose attendance is below is a cause for concern (below 90% except where this has been triggered by an extended leave) will be invited to an attendance support meetings with the school attendance officer.

- All parents receive a half-termly attendance report for their child, as well as face-to-face discussions with their class teacher about attendance as part of biannual parents' evenings.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The CEO of Pendle Education Trust and Local Academy Council have made the decision to refuse all applications for term-time holidays or trips abroad due to the detrimental effect on children's progress. The Principal has discretion to override this decision, but will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- An unavoidable appointment abroad to update the child's passport or visa, where the child is required to attend the appointment in person. Proof of the appointment

must be provided, and time for the absence must be kept to a reasonable minimum (not more than 5 days).

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

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Principal will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.

- Religious observance (up to 3 days annually) – where the day is exclusively set apart 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 apart.

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

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

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by 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

Legal sanctions

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

Penalty notices

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

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

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

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that 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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by acknowledging and rewarding good attendance by all pupils and efforts to improve attendance by individual pupils who have additional needs or challenging circumstances.

7. Monitoring 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

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

Pupil-level absence 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 Local Academy Council.

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 class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

8. 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

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

    o Discuss attendance and engagement at school

    o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

    o Explain the help that is available

    o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

    o Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

- Implement sanctions, where necessary

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Local Academy Council.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Suspensions & Exclusions policy
- Behaviour policy

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

Appendix 2 – Absence Flowchart

Children Absent from Education (CAE) & Children Missing Education (CME)

Children absent from education: Children who are persistently absent (absent repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods).

Children missing education: Children of compulsory school age who aren't registered pupils at a school and aren't receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Day 1 of unexplained absence office staff will:
- Ring/text parents/carers (First day response)

If there is no response from parents/carers by 10:30am office staff will alert the DSL or deputy and:
- Ring other emergency contact numbers provided
- Contact known relatives/friends within the school network (e.g. parents of other children in school)

If the parent/carer is still uncontactable the DSL (or deputy) will:
- Conduct a home visit, leaving a letter to ask parents/carers to contact school immediately if there is no answer at the door.
- Contact other schools that siblings attend (if known)

On Day 1 of absence, if the child has a Social Worker (CLA, CP, CiN) or Family Support Worker (CiN, EHP), or school have other safeguarding concerns, the DSL or deputy will contact the named worker directly or the local duty team or seek advice from CSC.

If the parent/carer is still uncontactable on Day 2 – 10 of unexplained absence repeat the steps above.

If there is reason to believe the child/family are at risk of harm – refer to the Police via 101.

The Lancashire CME team may be contacted for advice: 01257 517333 / cme@lancashire.gov.uk

Office record absence as reason not yet provided (N) for a maximum of 5 days and then amended to unauthorised (O) if an authorised reason is not provided.

Lancashire CME will:
- Record on CME register
- Liaise with school and carry out searches

No later than Day 10 of unexplained absence:

The Principal / DSL will refer to Lancashire CME via the online form: https://lancashire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Notification_of_a_Child_or_Young_Person_Missing_From_Education_Process

If child found by Lancashire CME:
- CME contact school and advise off-roll date.

If child not found by school or CME by 20 school days, school contact CME for off-rolling advice.

Pendle Primary Academy